

This booklet is an offering at the holy feet of Divinity Incarnate Sadgurudev Sri Swami Chidananda Saraswatiji Maharaj on the auspicious occasion of his birth centenary with immense love and regard.

In the words of Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, saints and sages are devoid of ‘mine-ness’ and ‘I-ness’. They are free from lust, anger and greed. They love all beings as their own Self and are full of dispassion and mercy. They always speak what is true, sweet and beneficial for all. Without getting involved in others’ complaints or criticism, they regard all impartially. Ever peaceful, serene, joyful, fearless and generous, they never ask for anything but always believe in giving. Compassion, love, charity and kindness become their nature and they always return good for evil. In the entire world, such a genuine sage and his company are very rare.

Just as the spring season delights and fascinates the world by its fragrant, gentle breeze and newly born twigs and blossoms, so also, the great saints who have crossed the ocean of this Samsara, bestow happiness, peace and Ananda on mankind by making them cross this formidable ocean.

Once Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj told Swami Yajnavalkyanandaji, “You do not know him (Swami Chidananda) truly; rarely does one get to know him. He is beyond anybody’s imagination. Your intellect will fail to comprehend him; he is such a great soul. I have come here to prove his greatness.”

On seeing a supra-human being who is endowed with extraordinary purity, righteousness, generosity, nobility, goodness, philanthropy, lofty character and knowledge, we say that if such a supra-human being exists in the universe, how can we deny the existence of God Almighty? Otherwise, where would one find such rare traits? When we see such qualities, we have the feeling that we may not have seen God but we have surely seen godliness.

To truly understand a saint like Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, one should himself be a saint like Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj or Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. It is simply impossible for this Sevak (servant) to pen down anything regarding Guru Maharaj, nevertheless, whatever I have beheld, while I was in his service, is being presented here so that we all may learn something from his holiness’ life. We all believe that the life of Swamiji Maharaj is a living example of the Vedanta philosophy. Swamiji Maharaj has not only delivered discourses on scriptures like

the Gita and the Upanishads, but has practically lived that in his life. We all are indeed blessed that we have gained the opportunity to be in his presence.

(‘Guru Maharaj’, ‘Swamiji Maharaj’ and ‘Swamiji’ should be understood for Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj.)

OM

It must be around 8.30 P.M. in December, 1994. The car of Guru Maharaj stopped at Sivananda Centenary Boys' High School Guru Kutir at Khandgiri in Bhubaneshwar. It must have been 6-7 metres distance between the gate and the Guru Kutir with a width of 3-4 meters. Marigold plants were glorifying the path on either side. The plants of Dahlia, roses etc. could also be seen. There was a little light in the veranda of Guru Kutir that was dimly illuminating the path. Guru Maharaj got down from the car and the Sevak present there bowed before him. But Guru Maharaj, saying Om Namo Narayanaya to all, sat down on the path-way then and there only; as if he were engrossed somewhere else. In the beginning, no one understood what the matter was. Guru Maharaj constantly stared at one of the plants of marigold. Suddenly, everyone realised that a small twig of the plant had somehow snapped off with its head hanging on one side.

Torch and gas-light were brought. After inspecting thoroughly in the light, Guru Maharaj said, "Bring a card-board and thread." The Sevaks said, "Swamiji, we shall bandage the twig carefully. Please come inside and take a little rest." The reason was Guru Maharaj had travelled a long distance of 120 kilometres by car. But Guru Maharaj did not reply. Sevak brought thread and cardboard. Guru Maharaj very cautiously bandaged the twig with the help of cardboard just as a person's fractured limb is plastered. Swamiji asked Sevak to hold the cardboard and tied the thread with his own hands. Only after having assured himself did he take rest. It took Guru Maharaj nearly 20-25 minutes to accomplish the task. Indeed, this incident cannot be described, nor can it be penned down because the intense feeling, devotion, dedication and concentration with which Guru Maharaj did this, cannot be truly related in words. What a non-dual vision Guru Maharaj has! As if he himself undergoes the agony felt by the plants and trees and understands their language! In the words of Narsi Mehta:

*Vaishnava jana to tene kahiye,
Je peer paraai jaane re.*

Know them to be true Vaishnavites i.e. devotees of the Lord, who feel the suffering of the others.

To put it in the words of the Srimad Bhagavadgita:

*Yo Mam Pashyati Sarvatra
Sarvam cha mayi pashyati
Tasyaham na pranashyami
Sa cha me na pranashyati. (Gita: 6.30)*

He who sees me everywhere, and sees everything in Me, he never becomes separated from Me, nor do I become separated from him.

OM

In October 2004, Swamiji Maharaj was taking a stroll in Shanti Niwas, Dehradun, from the gate up to the lawn. It must be around 5 P.M. Two Sevak swamijis were walking on either side of Swamiji Maharaj while the others were following him. Two Sevaks were flying off flies and mosquitoes from around Swamiji Maharaj with help of a folded dhoti. At this moment, one mosquito was seen hovering around the feet of Swamiji Maharaj. Efforts were made to ward it off but it would not budge, as if it was intent on following Swamiji Maharaj. All eyes were on that mosquito; Swamiji Maharaj walking to and fro from the gate up to the lawn, the mosquito regularly following him. When Swamiji Maharaj was made aware of this fact, he said, "This mortal coil (indicating his body) must, in some way, be indebted to it, that is why it is following me. When

the debt will be clear, it will fly away.” While Swamiji Maharaj was saying so, the mosquito came and touched (or bit), Swamiji Maharaj and flew away. Swamiji Maharaj resumed his walk. Now, the mosquito was not there. Perhaps, the secret behind the words of Guru Maharaj is: If a mosquito can be free after following Guru Maharaj, then we are sure to attain emancipation if we follow the path shown by Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Guru Maharaj.

OM

One day, in 1995, during the stay of Guru Maharaj in the Guru Kutir of Sivananda Centenary Boys’ High School, Guru Maharaj was about to have filter coffee (Madras coffee). He had not yet started having it, when a dog was heard coughing. The coughing was extraordinarily long as if the dog was crying. Guru Maharaj uttered ‘Om, Om’ to call Prashant Mishraji from his room. As the latter came, Swamiji said, “A dog is coughing behind the Kutir. Take along 4-5 pieces of bread and give him one by one to eat.” Mishraji and Sevak took bread behind the Kutir but did not find any dog there. We searched around the Kutir, hostel and the school also, but failed to locate it. By the time we returned, Guru Maharaj had already finished the coffee. We informed his good

self that the dog was nowhere to be seen in the entire campus.

After a little while, Guru Maharaj came out to go on the terrace for a little walk. As he was about to ascend the step, the dog was heard howling again. It was a little dark by now. There was no boundary wall around Guru Kutir as it is there now. Bamboo sticks alone were erected to serve the purpose. Guru Maharaj went towards the rear side of the Kutir and started searching for it with the help of torch and gas-light. Bread was also brought for the dog. Suddenly, the dog appeared just where Guru Maharaj was standing holding the bamboo-stick. It appeared as if the dog was familiar with Guru Maharaj and wanted to accept the ‘Prasad’ from his holy hands only. Hence, when Guru Maharaj did not come out, it did not come into view and now approached on seeing Guru Maharaj. Guru Maharaj sat down and fed it with his own hands, gently moving his hand over its forehead. The dog was very sick and had lost much hair over its body and was too ugly to look at! We would, perhaps, have felt reluctant to touch it even. The same night, someone had an appointment with Guru Maharaj, but he seemed to be in no hurry. After a little while, Guru Maharaj got up and went up the terrace. The dog also went away. The incident reveals the indescribable yearning of the dog and the

compassion and pity shown by Swamiji Maharaj. The dog was fortunate enough indeed! After that, it was never seen again.

*Shuni chaiva shwapaake cha Panditah
samadarshinah*

Sages look with an equal eye a Brahmana, a dog and an outcaste. They see in all of them One Immortal Self.

OM

Normally, a person is known by his behaviour. Everyone exhibits his love and pays regard to someone who is more important, more respectable and senior to him. Rarely does one show love and respect towards one who is somehow low in cadre as compared to them. Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj has said in the Universal Prayer—

*Let us behold Thee in all these names
and forms.*

*Let us serve Thee in all these names
and forms.*

Whatever Swamiji Maharaj taught others, he followed it in his own life.

At Shanti Niwas, in Dehradun, a barber named Qayyum, used to come for Swamiji's Mundan (shaving of the head). Those who have been to Shanti Niwas, must have seen that

Swamiji used to have Mundan where his wheel chair is kept. That place is narrow in width but it has more depth. The paraphernalia for Mundan was kept ready in time. During winters, the place was kept warm through a room-heater. After having his breakfast, Qayyum used to wait for Swamiji. As Swamiji Maharaj came out of his room, he used to say, “Allah-hu-Akbar-Bismilla-hir-Rehmaanir Rahim Alahamdu Lillahi Rabbil Aalmin!”

By that time, Guru Maharaj used to reach the place. Then he used to bow low and greet Qayyum with folded hands, saying, “Assalaam Alekum!” Qayyum also reciprocated Swamiji by saying, “Walekum Assalaam!”

Getting seated, Guru Maharaj used to call Qayyum and place his head on his feet. He would ask Qayyum to lift one of his feet taking support of the wall. As he lifted his foot, Guru Maharaj would apply the dust of his foot over his head and eyes. Then Qayyum was asked to lift the other foot. The same was repeated with the other foot. Two envelopes and two packets of Prasad were kept ready beforehand to be given to him. One of the envelopes bore the honorarium with his name ‘Qayyumji’ written over it, while the other one bore the Bakhshish with ‘Qayyumji’ written over it. Guru Maharaj himself used to write it in Hindi.

Both the envelopes were prepared on different occasions bearing the amount accordingly. On festivals like Holi, Eid, Diwali, Muharram, Ramzan, the amount was comparatively larger. One of the packets of the Prasad was for Qayyum's children containing a variety of chocolates and biscuits. The other packet was the usual one containing Soan-Papri, two packets of namkeen and two packets of biscuits. This being done, Swamiji Maharaj used to sit straight closing his eyes as if he were meditating. A cloth was put around him before Mundan and then the ceremony started. Qayyum was too loving and careful while doing Swamiji's Mundan. After the Mundan, the Sevaks around Swamiji Maharaj used to examine if it was done properly or not. Then Swamiji Maharaj used to bow before him in the same manner as he did in the beginning and never forgot to pay thanks to him. He used to tell him, "You make all look handsome; it appears as if the age gets reduced by some years." Sometimes he used to ask, "You read Namaz daily? On Fridays, go to the mosque and read Namaz. If you are unable to go, read it wherever you are at the moment." Once, at the time of Namaz, an Asana and cap were purchased and gifted to him. Conveying thanks, Swamiji Maharaj used to go into his room. This is the external vision through which we beheld all this.

But Swamiji's gestures are simply inexplicable. *Amanināa manadena*—to be devoid of egoism and pay regard to others can be learnt only from Swamiji Maharaj.

*Trinadapi suneechenā tarorāpi sahishnūna
Amanināa manadena keertaneeyā sada
Harih*

One who is humbler than blade of grass, more tolerant than a tree, who does not seek honour for himself but gives respect to all is worthy to sing the name of Lord.

OM

The chief priest of Badrinath is known as Rawalji. Once, the Rawalji, having sought permission, came with some of his assistants to have Darshan of Swamiji Maharaj. Swamiji Maharaj had already instructed the Sevaks regarding the seats on which Rawalji and his assistants would be seated. A white cloth was to be spread over the chair on which Rawalji was to sit. After everyone's getting seated, Filter coffee was to be served. Swamiji had also instructed that the Prasad should comprise of a variety of dry fruits, a basket of fruits for Rawalji, garlands etc. The seat reserved for Rawalji was to be placed on the right side of Swamiji's seat. Rawalji reached Shanti Niwas along with his assistants in right time. They were, perhaps, seventeen in all. Sevak

started preparing Madras coffee and packets of Prasad for everyone. Before the coffee and the Prasad packets were ready, Guru Maharaj came out of his room into the hall, saying, “Jai Badri Vishal!”

As Guru Maharaj entered the hall, he took off his shawl and cap and prostrated before Rawalji thrice, saying, “Jai Badri Vishal!” Rawalji also prostrated before Swamiji. Swamiji Maharaj garlanded Rawalji with a huge rose garland, presented him the shawl and gave the Pranami-envelope. When Swamiji was seated, Rawalji presented Swamiji the Prasadi Uttareeya of Bhagawan Badrinath along with sandalwood, Tulsi-Prasad etc. Swamiji reverentially accepted the Prasad and kept it in a plate. He asked all of us to offer the Pranami-envelope to Rawalji. Envelopes bearing money were already handed over to us beforehand. Everyone including Brigadier Sabbarwalji prostrated before Rawalji one by one and offered the envelope. In the end, this Sevak prostrated before Rawalji. As Sevak was about to offer the envelope, another Sevak called this self by name and said, “The entire coffee has spilled out over the gas-burner. Although this self had slowed down the gas, still it got spilled out. These words distracted the attention of Sevak. Actually, at that moment, Sevak was holding the envelope in his right hand,

the other hand was away and, instead of looking at Rawalji, Sevak was looking towards the kitchen. Sevak was at a distance of about a foot from Swamiji. Swamiji Maharaj was observing this behaviour of Sevak. Suddenly Swamiji Maharaj roared, “What is this?” Such a thundering voice diverted the attention of Sevak and the envelope fell down from the hand. Quickly it was lifted from the ground. Swamiji said, “What’s this? Is this the manner of presenting something to a reverend person? As if a postman is handing over the letter! You yourself are not aware as to whom you are offering something. Even the person, to whom you are to offer, has not seen you. You did not even give it in his hands. It should be held with both the hands and offered with great reverence. Then you should prostrate before him. Why are you behaving mechanically?”

Sevak begged forgiveness from Swamiji with folded hands, “Sorry, Swamiji, it was my fault.” Swamiji Maharaj kept quiet at that moment. Obeying him, the envelope was offered to Rawalji with both the hands and later Sevak prostrated before him. He felt dejected as his behaviour was not up to the mark that day and consequently Guru Maharaj was displeased with him. But at the same time, he felt happy also because Guru Maharaj had corrected the mistake on the part of

Sevak. This instruction will ever remain unforgettable in Sevak's life.

Sevak resumed the work and prepared filter coffee for everyone. Coffee was to be brought for everyone in the hall, and that too, in front of Swamiji Maharaj. Lurking fear was there in the mind lest there should be some mistake again. Remembering Gurudev, Sevak, along with a Swamiji, brought coffee in the hall. First of all, it was served to Rawalji and later on, to others. Filter coffee has an excellent aroma. Swamiji Maharaj said, "Prepare coffee for me too." Normally, coffee, milk, sugar etc. are served separately. Swamiji Maharaj usually prepares it himself. Swamiji Maharaj was served coffee in his cup. Everyone had coffee. Numerous discussions were held on this occasion—the penance of Nara-Narayana, Lord Krishna's sending away Uddhavaji to Badri Vishal for penance, installation of Badrinathji's idol by Adi Sankaracharya etc. Sevak had, by that time, prepared packets of Prasad for everyone. Swamiji Maharaj presented the basket of fruits to Rawalji and gave Prasad to others too.

As Rawalji got up to go back, Swamiji Maharaj rose from his seat and prostrated before him. Some rose petals were scattered around Rawalji. When Swamiji stood up, he collected those petals and said, "Oji, place these Prasadi

flowers in a small plate and keep it at the Puja-Sthal. The flower petals were duly kept at the place of worship. Such a wonderful thought, such a lofty state, deep feeling and sublime vision is worth pondering over! Swamiji Maharaj came out to see off Rawalji. This Sevak got the rare opportunity to help Swamiji Maharaj wear his sandals. At that moment, Swamiji Maharaj gently moved his hand over the head of Sevak. Sevak looked up at Swamiji Maharaj and Swamiji also looked down at Sevak. That look had an affection of worth crores of mothers which is simply indescribable.

OM

There is a temple of Jagannathji in the Madhuvan Ashram near Kailash Ashram in Rishikesh. Each year Ratha-Yatra is organised there. Sri Swami Bhaktiyogaji Maharaj of Madhuvan Ashram had come to Shanti Niwas , Dehradun in 2005 to have Darshan of Swamiji Maharaj. As Guru Maharaj entered the hall, he lay prostrate before Swami Bhaktiyogaji, saying, “Jai Jagannath! Jai Balabhadra! Jai Subhadra Mata!” Sri Swami Bhaktiyogaji also prostrated before Swamiji Maharaj. Later on, Swami Bhaktiyogaji said, “Swamiji, you are akin to our Guru, quite senior to us. It does not look nice that you should bow before this servant.”

Guru Maharaj said, “You are the servant of Bhagavan Jagannath Mahaprabhu. That is why I bow before you. The right way to have the vision of the Lord is through inner eyes. Mortal eyes only reveal God’s Maya and His Power. To behold God in whatever we perceive is the right way of perception. God seated within you dwells inside each and everyone. This thought should ever be kept in mind.”

More such discussions were held. Later on, Guru Maharaj gifted him ‘Vairagya Mala’ by Gurudrv Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj along with a fruit-basket.

OM

Those who have been to Puri for Darshan of Jagannath Maha Prabhu must have noticed the finger-prints of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu on the wall behind the Garuda Stambha inside the temple. These had got imprinted while Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was overwhelmed having Darshan of Lord Sri Jagannath. It looks that the pillar was not made of stone, but of mud or butter as if! Sevak wondered during childhood whether this could happen at all!

Swamiji Maharaj used to come out of his room for a walk every day. First, he used to do Pranam before Gurudev’s chair kept at Puja-Sthal in the hall. The bungalow – Shanti Niwas initially

belonged to Sri B.N.Kaul. He donated it to the ashram. It was Sarakeshwari Mataji's intense desire that Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj should sanctify their house by visiting it. Once, when Kaul Sahab and Mataji were away, Sadguru Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj came to Shanti Niwas with some of his disciples. He sat on the sofa kept in the hall and did a little Kirtan. He had Madras coffee too. When Kaul Sahab and Mataji came to know that Gurudev had come to their house, did Kirtan and had coffee, their joy knew no bounds. A picture of Gurudev was placed on the sofa where Gurudev had sat, so that no one else should sit there. Later on, it was replaced by Gurudev's Paduka. Since then, Swamiji Maharaj used to place his head on Gurudev's Paduka and offer Pranam. This took Swamiji around 20 minutes to do so. When Swamiji Maharaj was not keeping good health, then also he used to come on wheel-chair and offer Pranam to Gurudev while sitting on it. It took the same duration of about 20-25 minutes. After offering prayers in the hall, Swamiji used to bow before Tulsi-chaura outside the veranda. Swamiji had got Tulsi-chaura built at this spot. He used to say that Tulsi is no plant, but 'Bhagavati-incarnate'.

*Vrindavrindaavani vishwapoojita
vishwapavani
Pushpasaaraa nandini cha Tulsi
krishnajeevani*

*Mahaprasaadajanani sarvasaubhagya
vardhini
Aadhivyadhi hara nityam Tulsi twaam
namostute*

*Vrindayai tulasidevyai priyayai keshavasya
cha
Vishnubhaktiprade devi satyavatyai namo
namah*

On the Chaura, Swamiji Maharaj first planted the Tulsi plant and then offered Arghya, Gandha (incense), Kumkum, Pushpa (flowers), Dhoop-deep and then did Arati. Then Swamiji Maharaj used to circumambulate around Tulsi three times. It was at that time that Swamiji had given instructions for the prayers to be offered there twice a day – morning and evening which is being followed till date.

Every day, it took nearly thirty minutes for Swamiji Maharaj to offer prayers and do circumambulation of Tulsi three times. Since the time he started using wheel chair, he could not do its Parikrama but even then it took thirty minutes for him to offer prayers. During this, Swamiji

Maharaj used to chant some Stotras as if he were conversing with Tulsi Mataji. He used to pray for the welfare of the world; that everyone should be rid of pains and sorrows – all this was done very slowly and with deep Bhava. Various Mudras and gestures of Swamiji's hands expressed a lot. But it was beyond our understanding. After this, he used to have a little walk—sometimes on the ground-floor and sometimes on the terrace. After the walk, Swamiji Maharaj again used to chant some Stotras and Mantras before the Puja-Sthal and repeat the prayers. His wheel-chair used to face the place of worship and, folding his hands, he offered prayers with great love and devotion.

*Tvam hi Vishnurviramchistvam tvam cha devo
maheshwarah*

*Tvameva shaktirooposi nirgunastvam
sanatanah*

*Yasya deve parabhaktiryatha deve tatha
gurau*

*Tasyaite kathitaa hyarthah prakashante
mahatmanah.*

*Yachchakinchijjagatsarvam drishyate
shrooyate'pi vaa*

*Antarbahishcha tatsarvam vyapya narayanah
sthithah*

*Jale vishnuh sthale vishnuh vishnuh
parvatamastake
Jwaalamaalaakule vishnuh sarvam
vishnumayam jagat*

*Namo'stwanantaaya sahasramoortaye
sahasrapadakshishirorubahave
Sahasranamne purushaaya shashvate
sahasrakotiyugadharine namah*

*Namo brahmanya devaya gobraahmana
hitaaya cha
Jagadditaaya krishnaaya Govindaaya namo
namah.*

Swamiji used to repeat some Stotras with deep Bhava. Many a time, he was witnessed doing prayers and chanting Stotras, but such Prema, such Bhava, and such devotion was not seen earlier. We all used to stand with hands folded. Sevak was devoid of any Bhava of prayer and simply kept standing and observed Swamiji Maharaj intently. The body underwent numerous sensations— shivering, shedding tears, thrill etc. – eight spiritual symptoms. Words are meagre to explain it. It triggered the memory that the finger-marks of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in Jagannath temple are no impossibility but it is cent-percent possible. That state of Swamiji Maharaj is beyond the discernment of Sevak. Here too, Swamiji took around twenty minutes. After

offering Pranams, Swamiji used to go back into his room.

One day, while offering Pranams, Swamiji Maharaj had said, “Oji, in the morning and evening, whenever you do Arati, offer Pranams to Gurudev; offer it on behalf of Sarakeshwari Kaul Mataji too.”

OM

Each day, Swamiji Maharaj used to offer Pranams at Tulsi-chaura before going for his walk. Whenever it rained, Swamiji Maharaj used to offer Pranams to Tulsiji from the veranda itself in Shanti Niwas. It is a challenging task to protect the Tulsi from extreme cold during December and January. Sometimes, it used to be covered during night, sometimes it was placed in a mud-pot (Gamla) and sometimes, it was kept under the sun during the day to keep it healthy, even then it was difficult to be preserved. In the first week of April, 2008, a small Tulsi plant was planted over the Chaura. In the evening, when Swamiji Maharaj came for worship, he said, “I am unable to have Darshan of Mataji. Make her visible by placing some mud.” Then and there, some more mud was put in order to raise the level of Tulsiji so that Swamiji Maharaj could have her Darshan. Then Swamiji Maharaj bowed before her. Tulsi grew leaps and bounds. Till July-August, it was full

grown. On 28th August, at 7 P.M., Sevak offered prayers before Tulsi like every day. The same night, at 8:11, Swamiji Maharaj entered Mahasamadhi. The next day, after the Jal-Samadhi of Swamiji Maharaj, we reached Shanti Niwas at 10:00 A.M. Before going inside, as Sevak went to bow before the Tulsi, the spectacle was simply unbelievable; it appeared as if mother Tulsi had dried many days ago. The plant was fully green a day earlier in the evening. Surprising! There is no reason for a plant or tree to get dried during the rainy season. One of the Swamijis said that along with Swamiji Maharaj, Tulsi Mataji had also left. Let Tulsi Mataji be kept in Swamiji's room. Today also, the same Tulsi plant is kept at the place where Swamiji Maharaj used to offer worship.

Jaya Jaya Maa Tulsi
Jaya Maa Vrindavati.

OM

In the year 1997, there was a student in VII class in Sivananda Centenary Boys' High School who was very dull in studies but was highly mischievous and was involved in evil deeds like telling a lie, theft etc. Every day, there were complaints against him. Many a time did Sevak try to reform him, but no use! One day, Sevak caught him red-handed, but the boy would not

confess his fault. He was punished. Sevak did not feel comfortable after that; the mind was too disturbed; after all, he is a child; he should have been given a little more guidance. Sevak went to his room and put the cassette player on. Sevak had already listened to half the talk by Guru Maharaj—*Laukik Jivan Me Alaukik Sadhana*. As the player was on, the first sentence was – “Do not raise hands on anyone.” But Sevak has just now returned having done the same. And Guru Maharaj is saying, “Do not raise hands on anyone.” Sevak felt very bad; put the cassette player off and pondered over thoughts like – a teacher should guide the student, he should be properly made to understand the difference between right and wrong, and tell him, why one should not get involved in evil deeds and also tell the consequences of doing so etc. The thought came in the mind that next time when Guru Maharaj will come to the school, guidance will be sought whether students should be punished in order to be reformed, if such a situation arises. But the thought lay hidden in the mind itself and was not mentioned to anyone.

Some months later, Guru Maharaj visited the school for 4-5 days. The thought was there in the mind to get the query satisfied during Swamiji's leisure, but the day he arrived in the school, the same evening, after the prayer, he came in the

prayer-hall to meet the inmates and asked Sevak, “Boil a little cumin in water, strain it and bring it in the prayer-hall. A little while later, Sevak brought cumin-water in a thermo-flask along with a glass and bowl and sat down in the Pandal after keeping it beside Guru Maharaj. At that moment, Guru Maharaj was explaining the Universal Prayer written by Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj:

“Let us behold Thee in all these names and
forms,
Let us serve Thee in all these names and
forms.

God dwells in your mother, father, uncle, aunt, teacher, your fellow students and siblings. Hence, one should pay respect and bow before them. Do not have a feeling of disrespect for anyone. Always keep God’s name in mind. The image of God that you cherish in the mind should always be worshipped. Remember God whenever you get leisure during your studies. Right action should be performed at the right time. One who wastes the present moment, wastes his future. Hence, do not indulge in useless work or talk. All of you have come here to gain knowledge, therefore, utilise time properly.” In the end, Guru Maharaj asked if anyone who wasted one’s own as well as others’ time by not studying or by indulging in mischief, should be punished or not?

Some students collectively replied, “Yes, they should.”

Guru Maharaj said, “Be it your parents or teacher, all wish for your welfare. You should obey them and be good. One who confesses one’s fault cuts short his bad habits, ultimately becoming a good person, whereas one, who hides one’s faults, grows in bad habits and becomes a bad person. Parents or teacher can punish you under certain specific conditions only to rectify your faults and bring you on the right path, not because of anger or frustration. Just as a potter supports the pot from below with one hand and strikes it with a stick lovingly in order to bring it into the right shape, so also the teachers punish you for your good. You all are good students; you should not be mischievous, I suppose!” In the end, Guru Maharaj distributed Balushahi among all that he had brought along with him.

Sevak had got the answers to all his queries without even asking. Perhaps, this was the reason why Guru Maharaj had asked for cumin water, otherwise, Sevak would have remained in the Guru Kutir. Om Sri Antaryamine Namah!

OM

One day, in Shanti Niwas, Swamiji Maharaj had asked for beans and bottle gourd (Lauki) to be cooked for dinner. It used to be a simple

preparation boiled in salt and turmeric. The beans brought from the market were over-ripe and infected with worms. Bottle-gourd was fresh. Some beans were collected from Shanti Niwas vegetable-garden but these were infected too. It was difficult to decide what to do. Sevak had not paid heed earlier. Swamiji had given instructions at 11:00 A.M. and Sevak started cutting vegetables at 6:00 P.M. Swamiji Maharaj will be having dinner around 7:30 P.M. There was not enough time to bring vegetables from the market even. Reflecting over this, Sevak started cutting bottle gourd. Looking at a small photograph of Gurudev kept in the kitchen, Sevak prayed for guidance. Just then, a Sevak came and said, Guru Maharaj has asked to check the beans before cutting; if they are not infected with worms, only then it should be cooked. ”

Sevak was rid of his dilemma and followed the instruction carefully. The vegetable was finally cooked. Swamiji Maharaj had dinner at the scheduled hour. It is worth pondering that Swamiji had asked about the vegetables to be cooked for dinner; Sevak started the preparation by evening. Many a time earlier, beans were prepared, but Swamiji Maharaj had never said anything. Sevak did not express his thoughts but the Antaryamin understood and solved the problem.

OM

Once, a Mahamandaleshwar of a very renowned Ashram came to Shanti Niwas with two disciples. Many years back, the same Swamiji used to live in Swarga Ashram while Gurudev was alive in his physical frame. Sometimes, he used to visit the Sivananda Ashram Library; at times, he used to attend Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's Satsang and sometimes, he used to come to collect medicines from the dispensary of the hospital. Since then, he is known to Swamiji Maharaj. When the Mahamandaleshwar title was conferred upon him, Swamiji Maharaj was also there. As they were discussing bygone times, Mahamandaleshwar Swamiji said to Guru Maharaj, "Swamiji, I have a doubt in mind. None other than you can clear it. It will be beneficial, not only for me, but for everyone present here. I humbly put that doubt before you for everyone's benefit."

Mahamandaleshwarji said, "One feels glad to meet someone who is on a higher post or someone who is reputed around or is spiritually enlightened, and we pay regard to him too. But sometimes, the feeling of jealousy towards them crops up in the mind. What should be done so that we are rid of that feeling of jealousy? We have studied Veda-Vedanta, Upanishads etc., became

Mahamandaleshwar, became the head of the monastery, had innumerable disciples, but the purpose for which we had embraced Sannyasa is not fulfilled. I cannot put it before anyone else; hence I have kept it before you. Kindly guide me.”

Swamiji Maharaj kept silent for a while and said, “The solution is very simple and easy. God dwells in everyone, always have this feeling. This should be practised off and on to be brought into habit. If you behold God in everyone, how can you be jealous of anyone? Otherwise, prostrate before one for whom you have developed jealousy and ask forgiveness by folding your hands. Tell him that you are jealous of him and that he should forgive you. Like this, the feeling of jealousy will disappear quickly. If you are unable to do this, bow before him mentally, ask forgiveness and, at the same time, pray to God intently. Keep on practising it. The feeling with which you have told me this, have you ever prayed before God with the same Bhava?”

“You should shut yourself in your room in seclusion and pray to God or Ishta-dev like a child. You have innumerable responsibilities in your Ashram and have many disciples too. You may not find seclusion there. If you are unable to find such a place in the Ashram, then you should go away to some uninhabited place and try it. You should bend your knees and pray to Him with a

heart full of devotion and shed tears out of intense devotion.

O Lord! Your grace made me study all this but I could not overcome the feeling of jealousy. All the studies and reflecting-over was done for the sake of self-knowledge but in vain. You are all-capable. What is all this for you? Have mercy on me, my lord!

Your prayer should not be like the acting of an actor but it should come from the core of the heart, crying with profound longing. Deeper the longing, speedier the success will be. But egoism is the greatest obstacle. At the same time, whatever you have studied and gained in life should be followed in practical life. Your life should be like that. It will lead to speedy success.”

Other such discussions were also held.

OM

Swami Shanmukhanandaji of Sivananda Ashram was a great devotee of Shirdi Sai Baba. He was also the Guru-Bhai of Swamiji Maharaj. Swami Shanmukhanandaji used to visit the Sai temple at Sheesham Jhaari in Rishikesh. Daily, he used to distribute some Prasad there. On the request of Swami Shanmukhanandaji, Swamiji Maharaj had gone there.

Swamiji Maharaj had taken along with him Samosa, Gulabjamun, Kaju-Barfi, Chocolates etc. from Dehradun. In the temple, Swamiji Maharaj bowed before Sai Baba, garlanded him, offered incense and Naivedya and did Arati. The arrangement of Prasad was done there too. That Prasad and the one brought by Swamiji was served to all the children. Swamiji Maharaj distributed some coins among the children also. All the children relished the Prasad immensely.

There is a Sai temple situated at Rajpur Road, Dehradun. Swamiji Maharaj had invited Swami Shanmukhanandaji on 1st Janauary 2004 to go to Sai temple. He arrived at Shanti Niwas in time along with another Swamiji. At 11:00 A.M., Swamiji Maharaj, along with Swami Shanmukhanandaji, Brigadier Sabbarwalji, Mahesh Babbarji and the Sevaks, headed for Sai temple. But as we arrived there, we saw a big rush of devotees in the temple. It would have been difficult for Swamiji to have Darshan of Sai Baba. It being the New Year, there was a long queue and moreover, it was Thursday. Swamiji Maharaj said that he would come the next day on 2nd January and we came back. On Friday, around 11:00 A.M., we reached the temple. As per Swamiji's instructions, we had taken along a shawl, a huge garland and a basket of fruits for Sai Babaji. Though it was too cold, yet Swamiji Maharaj took

off his socks before entering the temple. He prostrated before Sai Baba. We also did the same. There were very few people in the temple that day. Swamiji Maharaj was leading us followed by Swami Shanmukhanandaji, and we were following them. Swamiji Maharaj bowed at the feet of Sai Baba. A donation box was kept nearby. Swamiji dropped some money into it and said, “You all should donate something.” The basket of fruits, garland and the shawl were placed on the Vedi. Two priests were there. Both of them were familiar with Swamiji Maharaj. One of the priests engarlanded Swamiji Maharaj with the garland that was brought for Sai Baba. One of the Swamijis remarked, “Swamiji had brought this garland for Sai Baba. You offered that to Swamiji?” The priest instantly took it out and engarlanded Sai Baba. Swamiji again said, “How did you garland Sai Baba with the same garland that you offered to Swamiji?” The priest appeared to be a little nervous. Suddenly, he took out the garland that was offered to Sai Baba and garlanded Swamiji Maharaj.

Swamiji became sombre and serious, and indicating his own self, said lovingly, “There is no difference between me and Sai Baba”. After remaining silent for a few seconds, he said, “The same God dwells in Sai Baba, in me and all of

you.” Then he partook of the Charanamrit kept there and gave it to all.

Till then it was time for Sai Baba’s Madhyanha Bhog. The priest offered incense, light (Deep) and Naivedya and the fly-whisk (Chaamar) service was given over to Swamiji. Swamiji Maharaj gave all of us the chance to do Chaamar -Seva. Arati was performed. Swamiji Maharaj took the Arati and bowed. We also did the same. The priest gave us the Prasad of Chana-Batasha. Swami prostrated before the Akhanda Dhooni in the outer premises of the temple. The Dhooni had nearly extinguished. Swamiji pushed the wood log inside and blew it afire. Swamiji besmeared his forehead with the Vibhuti and asked us to do the same. We obeyed and came out after doing circumambulation.

There was Bhandara in the temple that day. Prasad was being distributed near the gate. The Prasad consisted of Puri, Halwa and vegetable of potato, pumpkin and gram-pulse (Chane ki dal). One of the Sevaks had brought Prasad in a leaf-plate. After reaching Shanti Niwas, Swamiji Maharaj took a little stroll under the sun. Then he sat in the veranda and asked for the Prasad. He called Brigadier Sabbarwalji, Mahesh Babbarji near him. He asked Sabbarwalji to stand on his knees and look up. He fed him a little Halwa with a spoon. The same he did with Babbarji. Both of

them felt blessed. Swamiji gave away a little Prasad for their family members too. Keeping a little Prasad for himself, he asked the rest to be distributed among all.

OM

In 2008, after taking a stroll in the veranda in the evening in Shanti Niwas, Swamiji Maharaj was chanting some Stotras before the altar in the hall.

*Namo'stvanaantaaya...sahasrakotiyugadhaar
ne namah.*

He kept repeating it. A swamiji said, “The way Swamiji is chanting, it appears as if Swamiji himself is Sahasramurti, Sahasrapada and Ananta.”

Guru Maharaj heard this and immediately remarked, “Yes!”

Putting his hand over his chest, he said, “The same God dwells here and everywhere, who is Ananta, Omnipresent, Sahasramurti! Prostrations unto Him again and again!” Then Guru Maharaj chanted some Stotras and went into his room.

OM

Swami Bhaskaranandaji Maharaj of Maa Anandamayee Ashram had come to Shanti Niwas

in April 2004 to have Darshan of Guru Maharaj. Swamiji Maharaj bowed before Swami Bhaskarananda, saying, "Jaya Maa!" and Swami Bhaskaranandaji also bowed before Guru Maharaj. Guru Maharaj was having Darshan of Ma Anandamayee in Swami Bhaskaranandaji as if! They discussed many incidents of the past.

Guru Maharaj related an incident of the past while he was on his return journey to the Ashram. When he got down from the train at Haridwar, he came to know that Maa Anandamayee was there in her Ashram at Kankhal. Guru Maharaj sent the luggage to the Ashram through one of his Sevaks and proceeded to Kankhal for Maa's Darshan. It was too cold early in the morning. Guru Maharaj directly went near Maa's room. One of the Sevikas of Maa informed Maa that Baba had arrived from Sivananda Ashram. Everyone used to address her as Maa. Guru Maharaj also called her Maa. Maa Anandamayee addressed Guru Maharaj as Baba. Maa instantly came out of her room. Guru Maharaj prostrated before Maa. Maa said, "Baba, whom do you bow before? Here, neither you, nor I, nor anyone else is! Why this Pranam, then? Here, everything is transient and ephemeral. Only He exists everywhere. Where, then, is the need of such formality?"

Guru Maharaj kept silent with his head bowed down. Maa called Guru Maharaj inside and

made him seated. Innumerable discussions were held. Guru Maharaj was offered milk. While taking leave, Guru Maharaj begged forgiveness from Maa with hands folded and said, “Maa, I had not thought of coming here. I was going to Rishikesh, came to know about your stay here, and hence came straight over to have your Darshan. I could not bring anything to offer you at such an early morning hour, hence came empty-handed. Maa, please forgive me.”

Maa said, “Baba, you call me Maa, and speak like this? For Maa, meeting Baba is the greatest gift. Where, then, is the need for any inanimate thing?”

Having taken leave of Maa, Guru Maharaj came to Guru Niwas. A few months later, it was time for Samyam Saptah (Sadhana Saptah). On the request of Maa, Guru Maharaj used to go to Kankhal for Samyam Saptah. Guru Maharaj kept a sack filled with Batasha and took it along with him when he went there. First of all, he went near Maa’s room . Maa’s Sevika went inside and informed Maa, “Baba from Sivananda Ashram has brought something in a huge sack. Maa said to her, “Surely, he must have brought Batasha.” Go quickly and ask Poorna (a Sevak of Maa) not to bring Batasha from the market. I have just now asked him to bring it. Hurry! Otherwise he will be gone.”

Maa came out of her room. Guru Maharaj fell prostrate before her. Maa welcomed Guru Maharaj to come inside. The Sevika came with the information that Poorna had already left for the market. A little while later, Poorna came back and said, “The shop is closed today; couldn’t get Batasha.”

Maa said, “Baba has brought Batasha along with him. Where is the need then?”

After the conclusion of the Samyam Saptah, Maa used to distribute a handkerchief and Batasha to all the devotees. As the discussions were going on, a foreigner who had arrived with Swami Bhaskaranandaji, asked Guru Maharaj, “I meditate like this. But according to you, how should I meditate?” Guru Maharaj told her, “There is no spiritual treasure like meditation. Before entering into it, its ground-work is necessary. First of all, Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama etc. should be practised; especially Yama and Niyama. There are five Yamas—Truthfulness (Satya), Non-violence (Ahimsa), Celibacy (Brahmacharya), non-covetousness of wealth (Aparigraha), non-stealing (Asteya). There are five Niyamas – Purity (Shauch), Contentment (Santosh), Austerity (Tapa), Study of the Holy Scriptures (Swadhyaya), Surrender to God (Ishwar Pranidhana).

These should be practically followed in life. One should practise sitting in one posture for a long period. Pranayama should be practised. It is easy to control vital breath with the help of Pranayama. Vital breath helps in controlling the mind. Only then, meditation is successful and one rises in it. You continue meditating the way you are doing, but along with that, practise it too. You are a little weak in Sadhana. Moreover, having arrived on a Tapobhoomi like Haridwar, Rishikesh, you should avail the opportunity. Do two hundred malas of Japa. Recite some verses of the Gita along with their meanings. Read Maharshi Patanjali's 'Raja Yoga', 'Bhakti Yoga' and 'Dhyana Yoga'. Be constant in your Sadhana." Later on, Guru Maharaj distributed Prasad to all.

OM

After his arrival in the Ashram, Guru Maharaj had not gone to Badrinath for many years. When Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji came to know this, he said, "Each year you send a number of devotees to Badrinath, give them detailed guidance for journey, but you have not gone there yourself. Go for Badrinathji's Darshan first." Guru Maharaj said, "Some work of the ashram is pending. After its completion, I will go." But Gurudev said, "Work will continue. First, go and have Darshan of

Badrinathji.” Swamiji Maharaj had to obey Gurudev.

Gurudev sent a hill-boy with Swamiji Maharaj to help him with the luggage. At that time, the journey used to be on feet. Along with some money, Gurudev gave tea-leaves, sugar and match-sticks. Gurudev asked the boy to look after Swamiji Maharaj. Swamiji Maharaj handed over the work to Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj and Swami Venkatesanandaji Maharaj, and having taken blessings of Gurudev, left for Badrinath. At that time, Swamiji Maharaj had only one pair of socks. On feeling cold, he used to cover his feet and the same pair of socks served to cover the hands when the hands suffered cold. After some days, he had Darshan of Sri Badri Vishal in Badrinath. One or two Sadhus were sick in Badrinath at that time. Swamiji Maharaj started serving those Sadhus. Some medicines were required. Like today, there was no market or medical stores at that time. Swamiji Maharaj sent Shambhu Prasad to the ashram to bring some medicines and arranged for their victuals too. After some days, Shambhu Prasad came back with the medicines. The Sadhus also regained health. Swamiji Maharaj returned to the ashram after some days. Since then, Shambhu Prasad used to visit Swamiji Maharaj off and on. But, the busy schedule and foreign tours of Swamiji

Maharaj created a long gap. This was told by Swamiji Maharaj during some reference.

Swamiji Maharaj remembered Shambhu Prasad after many years. Shambhu Prasad must also have remembered Swamiji Maharaj during his phase of financial problems. Swamiji Maharaj was also not keeping good health. One day, a relative of Shambhu Prasad came to Shanti Niwas and informed about his illness. He also said that Shambhu Prasad was longing to have Darshan of Swamiji Maharaj. But it was not feasible because of Swamiji Maharaj's illness. Later on, when Swamiji Maharaj was informed about his eagerness to meet Swamiji, Swamiji said, "I was remembering him for the last many days. But I did not have any contact number. How to locate him? Those who were familiar with Shambhu Prasad in the ashram were enquired, but in vain! Some months later, Shambhu Prasad came to know that Swamiji Maharaj wanted to meet him.

One day, Shambhu Prasad reached Shanti Niwas before evening. Swamiji Maharaj was informed about the same. Instantly Swamiji Maharaj called him. Swamiji Maharaj and Shambhu Prasad's meeting each other was like the 'mother and son meet' who were away from each other for years together. Shambhu Prasad was too overwhelmed with tears flowing from his eyes. He used to live in Raipur, Dehradun with his

wife. His son had got married and was working elsewhere. Having asked his welfare, Swamiji Maharaj saw him off with some financial aid. He asked Shambhu Prasad to come over some time with his family.

A few months later, Shambhu Prasad fell ill. As soon as Guru Maharaj came to know this, he immediately called Dr. Gilhotraji and asked him to get Shambhu Prasad hospitalized and treat him. Dr. Gilhotraji took good care of him. Shambhu Prasad had the habit of having tea and smoking a number of times a day which was fatal for him. He used to lose temper over the hospital staff also but Dr. Gilhotraji used to pacify him and give him food and medicines lovingly. Finally, he came home after getting well.

Once, Swamiji Maharaj expressed his desire to go to the house of Shambhu Prasad. One of the Swamijis was sent to locate his house. The next day, Swamiji Maharaj visited Shambhu Prasad's house. Shambhu Prasad was astonished to see Swamiji Maharaj. Swamiji Maharaj kept his hand on Shambhu Prasad's shoulder and sat beside him. Like a parent, Swamiji guided him thoroughly regarding the latter's health. Swamiji advised him to repeat the Lord's name at all times. While returning, Swamiji Maharaj said, "The unhygienic cot that he is lying upon can make anyone sick." The next day, a mattress, pillow,

blanket, quilt etc. were purchased and sent over to him. Whenever he fell ill, Swamiji Maharaj arranged for his proper treatment. In the last days of his life, when Shambhu Prasad fell ill, Swamiji Maharaj asked for the worship and Havan to be performed in the Vishwanath Mandir. Shambhu Prasad passed away after that. At that moment also, Swamiji prayed for his Atma Shanti and Atma Kalyan.

Yogakshemem Vahamyaham. (Gita: 9.22)

OM

During his spiritual tours, Guru Maharaj had gone to Chennai many a time. One has to reach Pattamadai via Chennai. Some people used to come to receive Guru Maharaj and see him off. One person had the habit of saying, “Sashtang Pranam” on seeing Guru Maharaj, although he kept standing and never prostrated actually. Once, Guru Maharaj came from Pattamadai to Chennai by train. The train stopped at Chennai, Egmore station. It was raining. The platform was all wet. As Guru Maharaj got down from the train, that person, folding his hands, said, “Sashtang Pranam, Swamiji!” Instantly, Guru Maharaj lay prostrate before that person on that muddy platform. Everyone was stunned. Guru Maharaj stood up. All his clothes were soiled. Having gone a few steps ahead, Swamiji Maharaj said to that

man, “This is called Sashtang Pranam. While prostrating, eight limbs of your body should touch the ground. That is said to be Sashtang Pranam.” Then he proceeded towards his destination. Since then, that person never uttered those words. Whenever he saw Guru Maharaj, he used to fall prostrate before him.

OM

Some construction work was under progress in Shanti Niwas. The mason and labourers had come from Sivananda Ashram, Rishikesh. One more hand was required. Hence, a labourer Named Raksha Ram was hired from Dehradun. But he was too young for such work. He belonged to a place near Faizabad and had appeared for ninth class examination. His family members had refused to get his studies continued. But Raksha Ram was keen to pursue his studies further. As a labourer does not get adequate wages in a village, he came to Dehradun to his brother-in-law so that he could earn some money during summer vacation and save as well.

As Guru Maharaj came to know this, he called Raksha Ram in his room and enquired. Raksha Ram told Swamiji that he needed around seven thousand rupees to complete the High school studies. Guru Maharaj asked, “What do you intend to do after High school?” Rakhsa Ram

said, "I shall go for I.S.C. and B.Sc." Swamiji Maharaj asked, "Is there any college in your village? If not, which is the nearest one?" Raksha Ram said, "There is no college in our village but there is one in Faizabad near our village. It must be around thirty kilometres from the village. Swamiji Maharaj said, "We shall give you seven thousand rupees for High school studies. But just now, you go to your village and ask some teacher of your school about the expenditure that will be incurred on the five year course of I.S.C. and B.Sc. Get an idea about the tentative amount including college fee, dress, hostel fee, computer fee, tuition-fee, coming and going; note it down and bring it to me." Raksha Ram was given the fare for going back and having food on the way.

Raksha Ram was informed that Guru Maharaj wanted to provide him the expenditure for five-year studies. He was asked to get his single or joint (in case of minority) bank account opened with a deposit of Rs.7000/- . Raksha Ram went to the village and came back a few days later with the details of the joint account. He also brought a rough estimate of the expenditure worth Rs.75, 000/- for two-year Intermediate course. The Sevak Swamijis in Shanti Niwas discussed the matter among themselves and consulting a Professor, prepared a rough draft of the expenses (much more than actually required)

to be incurred. The details were handed over to Guru Maharaj. Guru Maharaj got a bank draft of the same amount prepared and wrote a letter to the bank manager of the bank on his letter-head so that Raksha Ram may not have any problem in future.

Instead of showing reluctance to give so much money to a small boy, Guru Maharaj gave full financial support to Raksha Ram. Raksha Ram also went happily hereafter and studied further.

OM

Guru Maharaj had gone to Maan Anandamayee Ashram, Vindhya Chal to attend a programme. Vindhya Chal Ashram is located in a mountain region. Guru Maharaj was staying near the Ashram. Behind the room, a distant track led up to a village. It was a meandering and steep way. One day, as Guru Maharaj was washing his hands after lunch, he happened to see through the window that an old man and a small boy were pulling a cart full of grams. The boy must be around ten years old and the old man must be above sixty. The old man was pushing the cart up and the boy was pulling it up. It was an arduous

task on such a winding path in such scorching heat. The godly heart melted to witness the scene. Immediately, one of the swamijis was asked to bring some fruits, biscuits, a water-bottle and some money. Having said so, Guru Maharaj rushed towards the spot. Swamiji, having kept those things in a small bag, followed Guru Maharaj. A raised mound of five feet stood like a wall between Guru Maharaj and the old man. Howsoever, Guru Maharaj, on the insistence of Swamiji, ascended the latter's back and managed to climb up. The Swamiji also managed to do so, somehow. Having reached them, Guru Maharaj started pushing the cart up with the old man and Swamiji helped the boy in pulling it up. There was a tree at some distance by the side of the track. When they reached that spot, Guru Maharaj asked them to rest for a little while. Having set the cart properly, all sat down under the shade of the tree.

Guru Maharaj very informally and lovingly offered them fruits and biscuits to eat. The old man was overwhelmed with love and regard for Guru Maharaj. They quenched their thirst by water brought by Guru Maharaj. Both, the old man and the boy were satisfied after having the Prasad. There was enough money in the bag. Guru Maharaj rolled the currency notes and stuck them up around the waist in the fold of dhoti of

the old man. Guru Maharaj said, “Please accept a small offering on behalf of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. We are his Sevaks. His Ashram is situated at Muni ki Reti near the banks of Mother Ganga. We live there only.”

After taking rest, Guru Maharaj and the old man again pushed the cart up with the boy and Swamiji pulling it up. They finally succeeded in crossing the steep heights. They were near their village and felt no problem in reaching their home from there. Having assured himself that they will face no further difficulty, Guru Maharaj told the old man, “Continue with your daily routine and constantly take the name of the Lord. Work in hand and Lord’s name on the lips!” Guru Maharaj blessed them and they went away happily.

*Para upakaara vachana mana kayaa
Santa sahaja subhaaoo khagarayaa*

It is the spontaneous nature of the saints to be constantly engaged in the welfare of others through thoughts, words and deeds.

—*Ramacharitamanas*

OM

There is Swami Sivananda Centenary Charitable Hospital in Pattamadai, the birth-place of Swami Sivanandaji, since the time of his birth centenary. Each year, Swamiji Maharaj spends

some time there. During his stay, Swamiji Maharaj attends the assembly prayers in the morning and evening.

The assembly prayers are held before the Pratima of Sadgurudev Swami Sivanandaji in the O.P.D. hall. There is a small discourse by Swamiji Maharaj after the prayers. Afterwards, everyone gets Prasad from Swamiji Maharaj.

On the last day, during Swamiji's stay, when the Morning Prayer was over, Swamiji Maharaj gave the discourse and distributed Prasad. After everyone got Prasad, Swamiji Maharaj continued to sit holding Prasad in his hands. He looked around as if he was searching for someone.

A devotee asked others, "Has everyone got the Prasad? Or is there anyone left?" Swamiji Maharaj said, "Every day a girl used to come to take Prasad. She has not come today. She used to wear white clothes with red border. She used to wear a nose-pin and used to sit in the row behind you. Has anyone seen her?"

Swami Saranabhavanandaji and the other Sevaks of Swamiji refused to have seen her that day. Everyone present there asked one other, searched inside and outside, but no one had seen her.

Then Swamiji Maharaj said, "She was Mata Kanyakumari, surely! This being the birth-place

of Gurudev, is divine indeed; it is the more blessed by the blessings and the dust of the holy feet of Mother Kanyakumari. This land is blessed by the blessings of Mataji!"

Everyone was astonished. The thought worth pondering over is the Mother's adopting a human form and her willingness to accept Prasad from the hands of Swamiji Maharaj.

OM

While Swamiji Maharaj was staying in Pattamadai, a family from district Ganjam—mother, father and son, came to have Swamiji's blessings. Their son was suffering from blood cancer. He was undergoing treatment but the recovery was minimal. In such distress, Guru Maharaj was the only solace and support. They were trying to find some way to communicate their grief to Guru Maharaj but were unable to find such an opportunity. One day, they got the news that Guru Maharaj was in Pattamadai, hence they came there with their son.

Guru Maharaj was informed about their anguish. The day next, Guru Maharaj walked up to the gate of the Hospital. The Swamijis serving in the hospital, volunteers, Swamiji's Sevaks and other devotees were there with Guru Maharaj. Behind everyone, were standing the parents and their son. Guru Maharaj turned behind and called

the boy. Keeping both his hands upon the boy's head, Guru Maharaj chanted some Mantras for a few minutes. He was praying like the compassionate Lord Buddha! In the end, he said, "May Sadgurudev Swami Sivanandaji bless you! May he grant you long life!" Then he talked to the father of that boy. Tears rolled down the cheeks of the parents out of love and regard and they felt blessed. Next day, the family left Pattamadai for their home. Some years later, the news reached that the boy was completely cured and was leading a normal life.

OM

Whenever Swamiji Maharaj was in the Ashram, he used to attend the Satsang in the Samadhi Mandir during morning and evening. After the night Satsang, Swamiji Maharaj used to bless the guests, visitors and devotees by conversing with them. Many years back, Swamiji Maharaj was seated on his Asana and was blessing the devotees and the residents sitting around him. The devotees, who were in the front, were sitting while those at the back were standing. Swamiji Maharaj was talking to them one by one. Suddenly, Swamiji Maharaj called a Mataji. That Mataji was standing behind all. The Mataji standing in front of her thought that Swamiji Maharaj was calling her. She started coming

towards Swamiji, but Swamiji said, “No, no, the Mataji who is standing behind you!”

That Mataji was elated and called her son (perhaps) near her. She seemed to belong to some village but was Bhaktimati. She bowed before Swamiji reverentially in the limited space available. Swamiji Maharaj talked to that Mataji for a long time and asked about everyone’s welfare in Jhumritalaiya, taking their names. In the end, Swamiji Maharaj gave her some Prasad also. Mataji suddenly recalled having brought something for Swamiji Maharaj and started searching around. Somebody asked, pointing towards a glass-jar, “Is this the one?” Mataji said, “Yes, that’s the one.” As Swamiji Maharaj had called her, she felt so happy that she forgot to bring that jar to be offered to Swamiji. The jar contained Gulab-jamuns which she had prepared with her own hands. Offering the jar to Swamiji Maharaj, she said, “I have brought it for you, Swamiji!”

Swamiji Maharaj held the jar in his hands, gestured towards the devotees who were standing or sitting near the Samadhi, to stand aside. Then, opening the lid of the jar, he lifted it with both the hands and offered the Bhog to Gurudev.

He asked for a spoon to be brought and ate two Gulab-jamuns one after the other. Swamiji Maharaj never used to have anything at an

unusual hour except for his medicines. Whatever was to be had, he had it with his meals. Perhaps, such transgression is witnessed where true devotion exists. Seeing this, Mataji was overwhelmed and tears of regard flowed down her eyes.

Having had two Gulab-jamuns, Swamiji Maharaj said, "Distribute it among all." A Swamiji started distributing the Prasad to everyone one by one. Sevak thought that perhaps the Prasad may be insufficient as the number of devotees was large and the sweets were limited, so this rare Prasad should be had beforehand. Sevak went forward and took the Prasad. All eyes were on Swamiji Maharaj but Sevak had his eyes on the Prasad. Though everyone had got the Prasad, yet four Gulab-jamuns were left in the jar. It was kept before Swamiji Maharaj. Seeing the jar, Swamiji Maharaj said, "Take it to Guru Niwas." Having blessed the other devotees, Swamiji Maharaj went to Guru Niwas.

Many years ago, Swamiji Maharaj had gone to Kainchi, near Nainital with some devotees to have Darshan of Baba Neem Karoli. He took along some oranges with him in a small basket. Baba was sitting in his room with some devotees when Swamiji reached there. Swamiji Maharaj bowed before Baba and kept the basket beside him. Baba gave an orange as Prasad to each and everyone

present there. The number of devotees was double the number of oranges in the basket. Still some oranges were left in the basket. The same incident was repeated today. Swamiji used to relate this incident to others but never revealed himself.

OM

Once, two disciples of Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj had a dispute over some matter and exchanged hot words with each other. When Gurudev Sivanandaji Maharaj came to know this, he remained Nirahara without telling anyone and asked forgiveness from God for them and prayed for their Sad-buddhi. Guru Maharaj also did the same in such circumstances and prayed to God for the Sanmati of his disciples. At the same time, he used to sing the song: ‘Immanence of Ram’ composed by Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and asked them to repeat it after him:

Om Sri Ram, Jaya Ram, Jaya Jaya Ram
Sri Ram, Jaya Ram, Jaya Jaya Ram.
In earth, water, fire, air and ether is Ram,
In the heart, mind, Prana and senses is Ram,
In the breath, blood, nerves and brain is Ram,
In sentiment, thought, word and action is
Ram,
Within is Ram, without is Ram, in front is
Ram,

Above is Ram, below is Ram, behind is Ram,
To the right is Ram, to the left is Ram,
everywhere is Ram,
Vyapak is Ram, Vibhu is Ram, Poornam
is Ram.

(Sri Ram Jaya Ram...)

Sat is Ram, Chit is Ram, Anand is Ram,
Santi is Ram, Sakti is Ram, Jyoti is Ram,
Prem is Ram, mercy is Ram, beauty is Ram,
Bliss is Ram, joy is Ram, purity is Ram,
Refuge, solace, path, Lord, witness is Ram,
Father, mother, friend, relative, Guru is Ram,
Support, source, centre, ideal, goal is Ram,
Creator, preserver, destroyer, redeemer
is Ram.

(Sri Ram Jaya Ram...)

The goal ultimate of one and all is Ram,
Attainable through Sraddha, Prem, worship
is Ram,
Accessible to devotion and surrender is Ram,
Approachable by prayer, Japa and Kirtan
is Ram,

Hosanna to Ram, glory to Ram, victory to
Ram,

Adorations to Ram, salutations to Ram,
prostrations to Ram.

(Sri Ram Jaya Ram...)

Perhaps it connotes—When animate and inanimate, visible or invisible—everything is Ram, then who should we be in enmity with? Whom should we get angry over? To show enmity or anger over someone is to bear enmity with God Himself! One should love all.

Once, Swamiji Maharaj was going around Shanti Niwas on wheel chair. We, Sevaks and Brigadier Sabbarwalji were following him. Some discussion was going on Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Brigadier Sabbarwalji asked Swamiji Maharaj—“Swamiji, when Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was in Jagannath Puri, he had never been to Vrindavan. First of all, he sent his disciples to revivify those spots where Lord Krishna had carried out his respective exploits. How did he know as to where had Lord Krishna performed which one of his exploits?”

Swamiji Maharaj said, “Look... Realized souls can know anything that they want to know, be it of the past; just as one watches television or the way I am seeing you and conversing with you. Immediately Sabbarwalji asked, “Swamiji can also envision like this?”

Swamiji Maharaj did not utter a word. The remaining time he was with us, he kept perfectly

quiet. The reason is Swamiji Maharaj never reveals himself.

OM

One day, Swamiji Maharaj was sitting on the terrace and telling about Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. Ramakrishna Paramahamsa was the only saint who realized God by following different paths through his Sadhana. Whichever path he followed, he was fully engrossed in that.

A Swamiji asked, “Ramakrishna Paramahamsa is not alive in body. He was Brahmaleen many years ago. Can a realized soul willingly witness those moments of the past?”

Swamiji Maharaj said, “Yes...Yes...Surely he can.” Instantly Swamiji switched over to some other topic.

OM

In December 2007, some students of the River Dale School, Dehradun, came to Shanti Niwas for Darshan of Swamiji Maharaj along with their Principal Surjeet Ahluwalia Mataji. Mataji was regular in coming with some students for Swamiji’s Darshan every year in December. This time, the students sang carols. Swamiji also accompanied them. The children sang Nirvanashatakam by Sri Sankaracharya, recited the fifteenth chapter of the Bhagavadgita and

sang ‘He Prabhu Anandadata’. Swamiji Maharaj was very happy. He told them, “Respect your parents and teachers. Obey them. God resides in all. Parents and teachers are God in manifest form. Have the feeling of mercy and friendliness towards everyone. You should not hate anyone, nor show anger towards anyone. Anger is one’s own enemy. One who loses one’s temper harms himself and others too. God dwells in all. If you get angry over someone or cultivate hatred, it is akin to getting angry over God. You should never tell a lie. It is sinful. Time is most precious; hence, never waste your time. You should utilise your time. Whatever you do at a time, should be done with full devotion. Only then you will succeed in life. May you all speak truth! May you all be righteous! Read the biographies of great personalities. Mind is fickle. Always keep it busy in good actions.”

Two students among them were Muslims. Swamiji Maharaj enquired them if they went to the mosque every Friday to read Namaz.

Both of them answered, “Yes, we do.” Swamiji Maharaj said, “You should read Namaz daily, especially on Fridays.” Later on, Swamiji Maharaj did Kirtan and Shanti Path and gave Prasad to all.

Once, during winter, Swamiji Maharaj was going to Guru Niwas after the night Satsang in Samadhi Mandir. There are some shops in front of Guru Niwas. A man wrapped in a blanket was asleep in the veranda of one of the shops. As the car reached Guru Niwas, Swamiji Maharaj happened to see him. He said, "One blanket is not sufficient in such a wintry night. Go and put one more blanket over him. But, be careful, lest you should awake him. Do it very gently." Swamiji gave a heavy blanket to the Sevak. Sevak went and quietly put the blanket over him without disturbing him. Perhaps, Guru Maharaj meant to teach us that service should be done with full concentration and total dedication, without disturbing the other. The one whom you are serving should remain unaware as to who has helped him.

OM

Swamiji's diet has always been very meagre. Gradually it got even more reduced. Since 2006, Swamiji's diet comprised of half the glass butter-milk during the day and Horlicks in the same quantity of milk at night. At times, he did not even have that completely. This was his only diet during twenty four hours. The body had

grown too weak. Sometimes, he fell ill also. At that time, if someone had an appointment with Swamiji, Swamiji never postponed it. While blessing the devotees by conversing with them, Swamiji Maharaj was totally unaware of his body and time. He used to feel tired after that; so tired that he did not even want to have that half glass butter-milk or the cup of Horlicks that he used to have. This made him even weaker than earlier. At such a moment, he wanted to take complete rest. Sometimes, Swamiji Maharaj used to set the time-duration for seeing a devotee and asked us to make him aware when the scheduled time was over. But sometimes, Swamiji himself prolonged the hour. The devotees used to think that Swamiji's voice was good; he was perfectly well. But the reality lay on the other side.

OM

In 2005, Chandan Singhji of Ludhiana came to Shanti Niwas to have Darshan of Guru Maharaj. Chandan Singhji had been able to pursue his studies in his youth owing to the financial aid extended by Swamiji Maharaj. Later on, he got training in tailoring in Rishikesh. He did his business in Ludhiana. After getting his son married, he had now come to Guru Maharaj for his blessings.

Guru Maharaj asked for their welfare. Swamiji told him to respect those elder to him and love the younger ones. Swamiji asked him to feed the hungry, the poor, birds, old people and sick ones according to his capacity before having his meals. He further said, “Never insult food and never waste it. Anna is Brahma. As much as possible, do Paropakara. Do good to others. You should serve others with the feeling of *Paropakaraaya idam shareerem*—This body is for others’ welfare. Service should be selfless. This will purify you. You will reap what you have sown. Always remember God. Chant the name of the Lord during your daily routine whenever you have time. God has given us the tongue to speak sweetly and chant His glories. One should not criticise anyone, nor should one hurt anyone by his speech or action. Whatever you see, hear or taste, feel the presence of God in it. See God in all. Practise it again and again.” Swamiji, then, did Kirtan and distributed Prasad.

OM

Brigadier Mehtaji often used to come to Shanti Niwas for Swamiji’s health check-up. Once he asked Swamiji, “Any instruction for me, Swamiji?” Swamiji Maharaj said, “To serve the sick is serving God Himself.” God dwells in all. Whenever you serve the sick, always have the

feeling that you are worshipping God in him. Selfless service is the actual worship of God. Never shirk from the duty allotted to you. A doctor's words should be such that the patient may feel half-cured. Just as our body needs to be fed daily, likewise good health is required for the soul. Read Holy Scriptures daily. Study a few verses of the Bhagavadgita along with their meanings and ponder over them. It should become a part of your daily Sadhana.

OM

On 18th November, 2004, when Swamiji Maharaj was taking a stroll in the afternoon, Dharma Singhji from Sivananda Satsang Bhavan, Delhi, brought some goods for Swamiji. While conversing with him, Swamiji Maharaj said, "Oji, remember God at all times. Chant His name during all hours. Sadgurudev Swami Sivanandaji has said in the Universal Prayer:

"Let us behold Thee in all these names
and forms.

Let us serve Thee in all these names and
forms.

Let us ever sing Thy glories.

Let Thy name be ever on our lips.

Let us abide in Thee forever and ever."

"Feel the presence of God in plants, trees,
from ant to man. See God in everyone and bow

before them. Serve all creatures. God is not somewhere far away; He is ever present with everyone. He is inside and outside us. He is everywhere. Feel Him at all times. Practise it time and again. Do your duty as the service and worship of God. In this Kali Yuga, great glory is in God's name. Hence, His name should be repeated at all times. Always remember God before you start the work, in the midst of the work and after completing it. The more the remembrance of God will be there, the purer you will become. Continue the work and keep on taking His name." Other instructions were also given to them by Swamiji Maharaj.

OM

In 2005, two young brothers, Siddhartha Kaul and Sagar Kaul came to Shanti Niwas for Swamiji's Darshan. They were basically the devotees of Anandashram, Kanhangad (Kerala). They had certain doubts in their minds. In 1991, both of them had got initiation from Papa Ramdas through audio cassette in Anandashram. Some years later, a saint of Anandashram told them that Papa Ramdas was not their guru, but Swami Rama was. (Swami Rama is a saint of Maharashtra). Swami Rama often used to visit

their house. Hence, they were doubtful about their real guru.

Swamiji Maharaj said, “Each family has its own Kula-Guru. Without the Kula-Guru, none of the sixteen Samskaras is possible. Right from the Garbha-samskara up to the Agnidaah-samskara, Kula-Guru is a must. But Sadguru is different from them. Sadguru is one from whom a person takes initiation and heads towards the noble path of liberation and attains self-realization. You can keep the photographs of both of them at your place of worship, but your Sadguru is Papa Ramdas only.”

They asked, “Lord Krishna was the Ishta Dev of Papa Ramdas. Who is our Ishta dev?”

Swamiji Maharaj said, “Yes, Papa Ramdas used to meditate over Lord Sri Krishna. Lord Krishna gave him Darshan while dancing and playing flute. But Papa Ramdasji prayed to Him humbly, “O Prarabrahma! I want to have your Darshan, not only in this form but the omnipresent form. Sarvam Brahmanyam.”

One of the brothers said, “I saw a dream in which you chanted the Ishta Mantra ‘Sri Ram Jaya Ram Jaya Jaya Ram’ thrice in my ear. I said, “I want to become a Jivanmukta like you. Shall I

be able to become so or not?" You replied in the dream, "The stream I am floating in, you shall also float in that." Then he asked Swamiji, "Will you give us initiation?"

Swamiji Maharaj said, "No, no! You are already initiated. Chant that same Mantra. I can only guide you into spirituality. You should have faith and dedication towards your Guru and chant your Ishta Mantra with the same Bhava.

They asked, "Swamiji, both of us are studying in the college. Be it the atmosphere in the college or the world outside, it is too polluted now-a-days. How can we save ourselves in such an atmosphere? How can we attain God? Kindly guide us into this."

Swamiji Maharaj said, "Remember God at all times. Don't waste time. Let all your actions be transformed into His worship. Surrender all your actions and their fruits unto Him. Keep a small picture of your Ishta and Gurudev in your pocket. At every half an hour or whenever you have time, take it out and see it. This will help in the remembrance of God. Always have the Goal in your mind. Do Japa or Likhit-japa in the leisure between two periods. Always keep a diary with you for Likhit-japa, so that whenever you have time,

you may write the Mantra. But you should have your mind in studies while you are studying and at other times, full concentration should be there on God. Mind only is the cause of bondage and liberation. Having concentrated the mind, it should be completely focussed on God. Do not indulge in idle gossip. Behold God in everyone. Then you will not commit any mistake and all will be well with you.”

They said, “Swamiji, please bless us. Bestow benedictions on us.”

Swamiji Maharaj said, “May Lord Almighty, Papa Ramdasji, Mata Krishnabaiji, Swami Ram Tirthaji, Ramana Maharshiji, Sri Sri Anandamayeeji, Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji and all the great saints and sages of Bharatavarsha shower their benedictions on both of you!”

They said, “The way Papa Ramdasji blessed you keeping both his hands upon your head, kindly bless us in the same manner.” Swamiji Maharaj blessed them like that. They said, “Bless us so that we may realize God in this very birth.” They repeated it a number of times. Swamiji Maharaj said, “Yes, you will attain God-realization in this very birth.”

What a longing in such a tender age! Blessed are their parents! Blessed are both the brothers!

Swamiji Maharaj, while talking to them, said, “I had attained God-realization in the previous birth; but I had to come again, as some Karmas were remaining.”

Despite having attained the sublime state of a Jivanmukta in the previous birth itself, Swamiji Maharaj has kept his body facing so many problems in such an old age only for our welfare. ‘*Paropakaaraaya idam sareeram*’.

Once, Swamiji Maharaj had told Doctor Mohanji during some reference that the work to be carried out with the body had been accomplished. Now, there was no purpose of keeping it.

*Bahoonaam janmanaamante Jnanavaanmam
prapadyate
Vasudevah sarvamiti sa mahatma
sudurlabhah (Gita: 7-19)*

At the end of many births the wise man comes to Me, realising that all this is Vasudeva (the innermost Self); such a great soul (Mahatma) is very hard to find.

Innumerable discussions were held during the course of various occasions, but all are

difficult to be remembered for Sevak. Whatever was in memory has been related. The limited vision and understanding that Sevak has, has been put down in such a form. Hope, saints, sages, learned men and the virtuous readers will overlook the faults herein and forgive Sevak.

Hari Om Tatsat! Sadgurudevaarapanamastu!

Radiant Immortal Atman!

Beloved Sadhaks and seekers gathered in the spiritual presence of worshipful and beloved Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji in his sacred Samadhisthan.

All earthly bonds and relationships are body-based and mind-sustained. Your relationship with the supreme spiritual source of existence is body-hindered, and it is mind-deprived—it is not derived from the mind but mind deprived. Our mind deprives us from the awareness of that relationship by meshing our awareness with innumerable other relational situations. It creates in our awareness relationships with persons, places, things, surroundings, situations and memory based connections. And this intricate and unfortunate process makes us totally forget the one fundamental relationship that is eternal, beginningless and endless. One who realises this situation, brought about by the body and our identification with it, brought about by the mind

1 Morning Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir

and its erroneous thinking, that one has already initiated the process of awakening inwardly. We are very much awake, aware and vigorously vociferous upon the physical side. But we are slumbering inwardly.

Not without reason did the spiritually enlightened queen Madalasa of the Upanishadic story include in her lullaby the words 'tyaja moha nidra' (give up this slumber of delusion) while putting her children to sleep in the cradle. This is the paradoxical aspect of this song. Namely that she was in the process of putting the children to sleep, and here she was telling them give up this sleep. The paradox is resolved when we begin to see that it is possible. We are very much asleep inwardly in our consciousness and very much awake and active on the physical and mental-psychological level. This wakefulness and simultaneously this sleepfulness do coexist, which is our tragedy and our problem. The way to tackle the problem is to reverse the situation. By all means be asleep if you wish on the physical level. But certainly, by every means, by every method at your disposal, strive to be awake inwardly! Then you are a fortunate being. You are awake where it is required to be always awake—awake to the great fact of your eternal relationship with the Universal Divine Reality.

May that Supreme Reality graciously enable you to do this now and here and fulfill the highest purpose of the human existence—which also presents a paradox in that human existence constitutes both our bondage as well as our supreme means of liberation. When we see that we alone can strive for and we alone can attain liberation, this paradox need not be resolved. This paradox has to be taken advantage of and utilised to our fullest capability, and the paradox is simply not there. Because paradoxes exist only when there is a possibility of two things existing, and when you take advantage of this paradox and utilise it, you go into a state of consciousness beyond all duality and become once again absorbed into your source and origin, and then there prevails only absolute non-duality.

May revered and Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivananda Maharaj to whom we offer our love and adoration, may He bless us with this supreme fulfillment. God Bless You.

Om Namo Narayanaya—Om Namo
Narayanaya—Om Namo Narayanaya!

Worshipful homage to the one non-dual eternal Reality, the beginningless, endless, all-pervading, ever-present Reality, that is of the nature of existence, consciousness and bliss absolute. May It look upon you with grace and benediction. Loving adorations to our revered and beloved holy master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, in whose presence we are gathered together in this moment.

Of all diseases, the greatest disease is Bhava Roga—coming into a state of physical embodiment, becoming confined into the narrow cage of a physical body. Because of this first disease—Adi Vyadhi, the original disease Bhava Roga—this body becomes subject to various diseases right from the top of the head to the tip of the toenails. Every little part of the body and every internal viscera can become afflicted by some sort of pain or other. That is why physicians and great hospitals flourish; and if people are not satisfied by all the hospitals in India, then they go to America and get treated. But that doesn't prevent

2 Early Morning Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir

them from dying. They die anyway, and the doctors who treat them also die.

This body is subject to a host of diseases, but it is itself the greatest disease—it becomes the basis for other diseases. Here we are in this predicament, and we have Sankaracharya calling to us and saying, “The body is a myth. The body does not exist. You also do not exist. Only Parabrahman exists.”

*Ekameva advitiyam brahma neha nanasti
kinchana*

there is no duality, there is no multifarity, only one non-dual Reality exists—thus exploding the myth of the so-called body and all its list of ills.

So what are you complaining about something which doesn't exist? Get up from your sleep! You are gasping and screaming and clutching your throat, clutching your chest. You are undergoing a nightmare, and you are gasping and choking and stuttering and making all types of horrible noises.

So, the only thing is give you a sharp blow and make you get up from your sleep. When you wake up, the nightmare is no more. When you were sleeping, it is; when you wake up, it was. And now you are free. So, he gives us a blow, and that blow is not merely with a stick—it is with a hammer. He made a special composition for

people like us—the hammer that shatters delusion. “Wake up! Don’t be foolish. There is no such thing called the body. You are blabbering something.”—*Uttishthata jagrata!*

May God give us the insight and intelligence to understand. May Gurudev bless us to make use of this understanding for further evolution towards a state beyond thought into a state of pure thoughtless transcendental divine awareness! God bless you all.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage unto the Supreme Universal Being, the all-pervading, ever-present Reality behind the ever changing, temporary appearances of names and forms! To that Being our worshipful homage! Loving adorations to the spiritual presence of Gurudev, our life's light and guide, into whose presence we draw each morning for an hour of spiritual fellowship, chanting of the Divine Name, silent meditation and reflection. May the grace of the Divine and the choicest blessings of Holy Master Swami Sivanandaji be upon you all, and may divine grace and benedictions grant you success in your sincere efforts to live a lofty divine life and engage in spiritual practices for attaining God-realisation.

Radiant Atman! In the reflection at the end of yesterday's early morning Satsang we considered how all spiritually illumined sages and seers had diligently trodden the inner path of Yoga and attained the goal of life. We saw how the life of all these people was characterised by a very clear vision, by a spiritually sensitive perception of things. What the world missed, these sincere

3 Morning Talk given at the sacred Samadhi Shrine on 31/5/92

seeking souls were able to see, to perceive a message and receive a new light. The majority bypassed the very things which surround us, and the lesson was lost to them. They continued in their ignorance and grossness, whereas these few illumined souls were able to draw valuable lessons.

The great Kabir was able to see a hidden message in the potter's kneading his clay, in fish merrily swimming in the clear waters of a river. He saw a hidden message in these ordinary things. He perceived a message in a woman grinding corn: he saw how everything was crushed except those few grains that were close to the centre, where there was an iron rod upon which the upper stone was kept; he saw that those grains which stayed close to the centre remained whole. Everything else got crushed between the two stones. These day-to-day occurrences happen before everyone's eyes, but for the majority it means nothing except what it appears to be. But exceptional souls see beyond outer appearance and perceive a hidden meaning, a higher message.

So the sincere Sadhaka, the real aspirant, moves through life with an awakened awareness, with a sensitive perception of things around him. The Avadhuta in the Sri Bhagavata Purana perceived hidden truths and received invaluable messages everywhere, in all things animate as

well as inanimate, human as well as subhuman. In all forms of life, he perceived a message. He saw the royal procession of the king's entourage pass by without disturbing the concentration of the arrow-maker on the roadside. And he marveled. Such indeed should be the concentration of a Jijnasu, a Mumukshu, a Sadhaka. He concluded that there must be deep concentration upon one's work, one's chosen task, like the all-absorbing concentration of the arrow-maker, who failed to notice the passing of a royal procession with music and a great deal of tumult.

Even so should be every one of you seated here in the presence of Gurudev, listening to these words offered to reflect upon. In any given situation all human individuals upon this planet earth are surrounded by teachers. An English poet said, "Sermons in stones, books in babbling brooks." He said, "Even in nature, you can perceive." We are surrounded by teachers. Be aware. Try to see.

When we are in the wilderness, devoid of human beings, we think we are alone. But a more sensitive vision will reveal that no matter where a human being is on earth, he is always in the company of certain teachers.

Firstly he is never alone, because he is accompanied by the earth upon which he stands, sits or lies. He is on terra firma. He is on this earth

which teaches us that we also have to support. It says, “Even as I am your support, you also support. You stand upon me. I support you. You sit upon me. I support you. You lie upon me. I support you. I make life possible for you. I make movement possible for you. I make rest possible for you. I give you strength and firmness. I make it possible for you to be stable and steady.

Even so, you have to support others, which will make their lives stable and steady. Our ancestors said, “To support others, to support the weak, is Dharma”. It is Dharma which makes you overcome all chaos and bring order into your life. It is Dharma that imparts steadiness and balance to your life. It is Dharma that supports you. One whose conscience is clear, who is not guilty of Adharma, has repose, has rest; he is at peace, and he sleeps soundly.

The earth supports you no matter where you are, in the deepest jungle, on the most remote mountain top, in absolute seclusion or in the midst of a desert. Even so, wherever you are, support Dharma, then Dharma shall support you. This is constantly brought to us by the very fact that we are always supported.

But earth is not our only companion. We are also supported by an Infinite Tattva, called Akasha —the ether of space. In the Upanishads it is asked, “What is Brahman?” Within the range of

human knowledge the one element that is nearest to the Infinite, the imponderable, all-pervading, ever-present, is the ether of space. Wherever you are, you move about in the ether of space. Wherever you are, the ether of space surrounds you in all the ten directions. Wherever you are, the ether of space fills you.

Ether fills all space within and without, just like Brahman. You are ever in the presence of God. Therefore be humble and simple, and don't do that which is against His will. Make your life worthy of this Divine Presence. Thus the infinite, all-pervading, imperceptible ether of space reminds you that we live, move and have our being in the Cosmic Being and tells us that we are part of it in our real identity, Nija Svarupa. It is our duty to express this inherent divinity in our thoughts, words and deeds. It is an ever-present reminder: "O man you are part of Me, and therefore, be ever as I am, divine in all your life". This is a constant message of the divine Presence in which we move, live and have our being, even as we are constantly reminded by the all-pervading presence of the ether of space in which we exist and move about.

Similarly the vital breath sustains us, enabling us to live. The sustaining life breath of a true seeker or an aspirant is Guru Upadesa, Guru Sandesa, Guru Adesa. Without Jnana, you are

dead; that which makes you alive is Jnana. And the Jnana of the Guru is not mere knowledge, it is that which sustains our spiritual life, makes it possible. It is the third Tattva. Live always with the Jnana that has been given. That is your very life, that is your life's breath—the wisdom teaching of your Holy Master. Thus the Vayu Tattva ever keeps reminding the Sadhaka with sensitive perception, with clear vision of Viveka, Atma Buddhi, Vicharyukta Buddhi, Shuddha Antahkarana.

Last, but not least, wherever we are, we are in time. Day dawns and becomes forenoon; midday and afternoon become evening; then night comes. With every step time passes, with every breath time passes. Time does not stand still.

So the Supreme Being reveals this aspect of Himself. Time is constantly reminding us, “Do not delay, do not postpone, do not waste your life. Come straight to the Goal. Life is short, time is fleeting. Come, come, attain the Goal!” Whether you are in a crowd, in seclusion, in the midst of a thousand people, time accompanies you and gives you a constant silent call: “Come, come! Do not postpone. Be up and doing on the path of Yoga! How can you expect real Shanti, if you waste your time in idle gossiping, in scandal, in back-biting, in fighting?” Even so Gurudev has said this in his Song of Admonitions. “Time sweeps away kings

and barons. Where is Yudishthira, where is Ashoka?" Time is our constant companion from birth to death, from cradle to the grave. How can you miss Time? Yet we are oblivious of this companion of ours who is constantly calling us.

Thus indeed we are never alone. These constant benign teachers ever try to wake us up and make us move towards the Goal, ever giving us new awareness. With perceptive hearts and minds, let us enrich ourselves day by day with the wisdom that is brought to us by those teachers who are our constant companions every moment, every split second. God bless you all!

Om Namo Narayanaya—Om Namo
Narayanaya—Om Namo Narayanaya!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Radiant Immortal Atman! Beloved and blessed children of the Divine, Sadhaks and seekers, devotees of the Lord, lovers of righteousness, Jijnasus and Mumukshus, Satsangis, to all of you having the blessedness to gather here in collective prayer, meditation, collective Nama Kirtan in this early morning hour. Gurudev and God, they are ever calling you in their own diverse ways.

God calls forth the divine quality of compassion in a Sadhak, in a pilgrim upon this earth plane. God calls forth this divine quality by presenting the form of a suffering beggar in front of you. That is God calling, and we must recognise that it is God himself who creates situations where higher qualities of the head, heart and hand are called forth. Therefore one should respond immediately. Saints and sages have told us that when a good Sankalpa, a good desire comes, act immediately. God may come in the form of a suffering person to call forth a noble mind. Immediately act. Ignore any impulse for wrong notions. Manifest it in the form of an

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appropriate corresponding action. Do not hesitate. Do not wait. The impulse may pass, the desire may die out. Do not allow anything to intervene between a noble desire or thought and its implementation in the form of a corresponding action. But they also say, "When a wrong thought, a base thought arises, do not fulfil it. Delay, wait, postpone." This is wisdom.

This is the Sadhak's way of dealing with his interior and his exterior. The organs of action, they are our exterior instruments, the Karma Indriyas. The organs of knowledge are our interior instruments, the Jnana Indriyas. This is the way the Sadhak deals with the inner and outer, the way in which they are to co-ordinate. When the desire is noble, auspicious, Sattvic, spiritual, he immediately links them up and makes the Karma Indriyas carry out the impulses that have arisen within the Antahkarana, within the inner being, the field of consciousness. And when the inner desire or a thought is contrary to one's principles, when they contradict Dharma, then he does not allow the Karma Indriyas and the Antahkarna to co-ordinate and he says, "No, I will not give expression to this thought because it is not in accordance with ethical principles. It is not spiritual. I shall subjugate it. I shall curb and restrain it." The Sadhaka with continuous awareness of the nature and quality of what is

happening within, is ever engaged in bringing about the right relationship and connection or the absence of connection between the outer and the inner.

Ultimately, the coordinator is your awakened higher self. The mind is not going to do anything of this sort. It is not going to curb any impulse that arises within. It is immediately going to project it in the form of outer action. That is the very nature of the mind. It goads the Indriyas to act in the form of impulsion, compulsion, desire, Iccha. But it is you, the awakened higher Self, the Viveka Buddhi (discriminative intellect), the Vicharayukta Jagrata Buddhi (contemplative awakened intellect), who has to take charge and not allow the mind to act.

Very beautifully, very appropriately, this situation is brought out in the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, by comparing the Vivekayukta, Vicharatmaka Buddhi to the charioteer who is seated in the driving seat. Everything is in that driver's hands. Without that driver, there can be no order, no discipline; everything becomes unpredictable. But when the charioteer has the reins firmly in his hands, everything becomes predictable. The other factors, the horses, the reins and even the person sitting inside the chariot, have very little control over the situation,

when the charioteer is alert, always firm and always in control.

In order to become firm, in control, that being has to be in control of himself. If the charioteer is alert, awake and fully self-controlled, then he can control the reins, the horses, the chariot and everything will be well. But if the charioteer is drunk or drowsy, when he has lost control over himself, he can neither control the reins, nor the direction of the chariot, nor the horses; hence, the great importance is to keep the charioteer in charge of himself. The Buddhi must be fully self-controlled. There should be self-mastery in the Buddhi. It should not sell out its important function to other temptations, to Avichara, to Aviveka, the attraction of outer objects or wrong suggestions from other people. If these things enter, then the intellect becomes deluded.

Arjuna had Buddhi, but he had given leave to its self-mastery. It was not in charge of itself. The whole scene turned into a chaos, one great problem. A disaster was about to occur. So Lord Krishna's business was to restore to Arjuna clarity of intellect, brushing aside all clouding elements and bringing in light and removing the Mohakalila (mire of delusion)

*Nashto mohah smritirlabdhvā tvatprasadat
mayachyuta*

(‘Destroyed is my delusion as I have gained memory (knowledge) by thy grace.’)

All the lessons, all the Jnana which had been learned before come back, the memory which had failed due to delusion functions again, and delusion is removed.

The importance of keeping the intellect in a state of self-possession, not giving in to the pull of lower impulses or the attraction of mere appearances of outer objects, is brought about very forcibly in the Kathopanishad. It is again and again reiterated in all the books of Gurudev. When the intellect becomes heedless, indifferent, does not perform the function it is meant to perform, when the coordinator, the controller fails to function, Krishna tells what happens. Anything that makes the intellect deluded, leads to disaster.

*Smriti bhramshad buddhinasho buddhinashat
pranashyati (B.G. 2/63)*

(‘From loss of memory comes the destruction of discrimination, from the destruction of discrimination he perishes.’)

The Sadhak should realise the importance and the vital function that the Buddhi has to perform. Either the remote remembrance of past experiences propels and forces the Buddhi in the wrong direction, or the immediate attraction of outer appearances draws out the Buddhi from its

stable condition. Both these should be countered. Against both these one should be alert. If one has deep devotion to the Lord and great love for the ideal, then alone such a constant state of awakened, aware, self-possessed Buddhi is possible. There should be some great urge within so one is capable of denying the Buddhi any wrong direction, checking and stopping it, when it becomes deluded. When it is about to lose itsself-control, there should be a greater force like love of God, love of an ideal, or the determination to abide by principles which one has voluntarily chosen for oneself.

All these things are possible only if there is a keen awareness that life is short, time is fleeting. "I cannot afford to waste time. Nothing waits. It is my responsibility to see that time is properly utilised, and that I go in the right direction." If there is a great need for vigilance, for going forward determinedly, not delaying, not hesitating, if this inner state of urgency, of intense Mumukshutva, intense Jijnasa is there, then alone it becomes possible for one to be in full awareness and control within, which is of paramount importance. If we are in control within, if the charioteer is neither drunk nor drowsy, then everything becomes right. If the Buddhi is not allowed to fall under delusion or forgetfulness, then everything becomes alright. If

Vismriti and Bhrama come into the Buddhi, then only the Lord should help us, only Gurudev should help us. There is no other way.

Thus in the divine presence of the Supreme Being and the spiritual presence of Gurudev this servant has had the privilege of sharing and placing before you certain vital thoughts about the Antahkarana and Bahyakarana, the inner and the outer self. Sharing these thoughts, putting them before you, I appeal to all sincere Sadhaks, serious Yogis and earnest Bhaktas to give due thought to the necessity of continuous and constant wakefulness and awareness within. That is your greatest friend, your greatest strength; that is your greatest support and your greatest asset.

If we fulfill our part, then God helps us, Gurudev helps us; Sarva Antaryami Bhagavan also helps us. How they can help? They can help because they are ever near us. Instead of calling for help from someone who is absent or far away, we must wisely take the help of someone who is immediately available, near us. God bless you all.

Om Namo Narayanaya—Om Namo
Narayanaya—Om Namo Narayanaya!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage unto the Supreme Divine Being, the all-pervading ever-present Cosmic Spirit, the Eternal Reality behind ever-changing, vanishing names and forms! Worshipful homage unto that Being, the one Reality! May divine grace shower forth from that Reality upon all of you assembled here at this moment! Loving adorations to our spiritual master, the silent benign presence, having his Kripa Kataksha upon his spiritual children, living their varied lives oriented to the goal of God-realisation according to taste and temperament and previous Samskaras.

May his glance of grace be upon all of you Sadhaks, Yogis, devotees of the Lord, Jijnasus and Mumukshus, lovers of righteousness, who are diligently plodding upon the chosen path of Yoga and taking advantage of all the facilities provided by Gurudev for such an integrated life of spiritual evolution, a beautiful synthesis of Karma, Bhakti, Dhyana and Jnana. May you all realise the good fortune that has been given to you and take full advantage. May you all keep your

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gaze focused upon all that is positive, creative and constructive, instead of carping and caviling, criticising and making side remarks upon the defects or shortcomings, because this world is not perfect.

If you have Brahmamuhurta class, Sankirtan of the Divine Name here, you may also have bedbugs or mosquitoes, or you may have someone talking loudly. Sometimes adverse factors become a valuable means for our spiritual progress, for overcoming our weaknesses or testing our mettle, or maybe developing some positive virtue which we are lacking. Therefore, adverse circumstances and factors become a gymnasium for creating within us this inner strength. Thus focusing upon the positive and the helpful, may you ever keep the goal before your vision and move towards it!

All the religions in this world have their varied sacraments from birth to death. So too the Vedic religion has its sacraments; one of the most sacred sacraments is the investiture with the sacred thread. It is called Yajnopavita Samskara, the sacrament by which the young son of a family is invested with the sacred thread or the Yajnopavita. Yajnopavita means sacred thread.

A boy in his eighth year is blessed by investing him with the sacred thread. This is an initiation into spiritual life, into a life of daily prayer, Japa, meditation; it is an initiation into a

life of a daily discipline, of Pranayama, of sitting in an Asana without shaking and focusing the mind on God, asking for forgiveness for errors and omissions and purifying himself by sprinkling himself with holy water; then purifying the whole body by certain significant Vedic processes called Anganyasa, Karanyasa, Hridayadinyasa etc. After that propitiating the supreme source of Cosmic Light by offering water (Arghyadana), uttering a very sacred Mantra, which until that moment the little boy does not know and does not have the right to utter, the sacred Gayatri Mantra. On that day, only after being invested with the sacred thread, the child becomes qualified to receive the Mantra, and the father and the priest bestow that Mantra upon him by whispering it into his ears. Ideally, this is done between eight and ten years of age. It is done strictly according to scriptural injunctions, to Vaidik Vidhi. Sacraments in Sanskrit are referred to as Samskaras—meaning the ‘sacred sacraments’ that an individual goes through from the time of birth till death.

And significantly, within the context of the Vedic religion, there are sacraments even before the birth of a child, though they pertain more to the father and the mother. There are 16 Samskaras and the last one is Antyeshti. Antyeshti is performed when the Prana has

departed; it is also called Preta Samskara in popular language.

Investiture with the sacred thread is one of the most important Samskaras. Nowadays people are not very particular; they do not have faith. They neglect it, ending up by investing the person with the thread a couple of days before his marriage ceremony. By that time the person may be 22, 23 or even older. That means during all his life up to that point he has not had the privilege of either meditating or praying or uttering the Brahma Gayatri Mantra daily, the privilege of doing Gayatri Japa and Gayatri Dhyana daily. And it is only after he is invested with the sacred thread that a Hindu-born young person is entitled to offer worship to the family Deities, that he is entitled to chant the Vedas or study the Vedas and repeat the Gayatri Mantra. Not before that. So this Yajnopavita Samskara opens up the way to daily worship and daily study.

The real significance of it in a wider context brings very sharply into focus that in accordance with the Vedic view the entire life of a human being is a process of spiritual evolution, is a spiritual ascent towards the ultimate state of illumination, divine perfection, God-experience. The whole of life is conceived of as this upward, Godward spiritual progress, an ascent of the Spirit. It is this view of life that is unique to the

Vaidika Dharma, the Vedic way, which is the religion of India. The very start commences with this Samskara.

The Grihastha Ashrama also is a very great concept. Two people come together in order to set up a home and worship God there, perform all Dharmic rituals. She is Sahadharmacharini and has to be present when he performs the various rituals and sacrifices to propitiate God, do Deva Puja; thus it becomes a progression from the first stage of prayer, worship, meditation, spiritual discipline, purification, etc. The first stage commences after today's sacrament ceremony. It further progresses into Grihastha Ashrama, and after they have finished all the duties and obligations, they are not supposed to be stuck and stagnate there.

They are to move on into deeper spiritual life in the third Ashrama that is Vanaprastha Ashrama, when both husband and wife turn away from merely secular pursuits with all the attachments, etc. They give up and enter into a more spiritual life, an inner life of contemplation, pilgrimage, spending time at Ashramas, sitting before saints and listening to Satsanga. They commence their real inner life with Svadhyaya Anusthana, Japa Anusthana, Vrata Palana. This is the intermediate stage.

This is a preparation for the fourth stage of life, a life of total dedication to divine contemplation and meditation with the only objective worth attaining, Self-realisation. That fourth stage is called Sannyasa. And everything seems to be a process of reaching to that state of Sannyasa, where God-realisation is the one and the only occupation of the individual.

The entire Vedic religion is oriented towards spiritual realisation. It is a spiritually oriented religion, having as its highest goal the individual merging in the Cosmic Spirit, merging in the Divine. This is a wonderful concept of the individual's existence upon the earth-plane in order to day by day rise higher and higher and ultimately attain the supreme goal of Self-realisation, Aparoksha Anubhuti, Bhagavat Sakshatkara, Atma Sakshatkara, Brahmanubhava. The Vedic way of life of the Hindus is nothing but a concerted movement towards God-realisation. It is Brahmajnana, Bhagavat Anubhuti. One should live one's life thus.

We are fortunate recipients of the wisdom from the Vedas. Having been given this ideal of life, if we fail to realise its importance and the necessity of pursuing it would indeed be a very great pity, a deplorable blunder. We should not fall into that trap. We have not come here to

commit blunders. We have not come here to reduce ourselves into objects of pity and scorn. We have come here to succeed. We have come here to overcome all obstacles, and we have come here to shine as Jivanmuktas, God-realised souls. This should be the only intention, living in such a godly place as Uttarakhand, Devabhumi, Tapobhumi.

God bless you all to lead such a life and attain life's goal and become forever blessed!

Om Namo Narayanaya—Om Namo Narayanaya—Om Namo Narayanaya!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage to the Supreme Spirit Divine, the timeless eternal and infinite, the absolute all transcending non-dual Supreme Being! We offer our worshipful homage to that Being. Loving adoration to beloved Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivananda Maharaj, who was always in the state of Supreme Consciousness and strove by so many means to make us recognise the highest goal of life, and tried to show the means for attaining to that Supreme Being.

On broad lines, the means of attaining the goal is selfless service, devotion and worship, concentration and meditation and ceaseless rejection of the false I-personality and determined continuous affirmation of your real higher spiritual identity. Karma, Bhakti, Dhyana and Atma Jnana are interwoven into the fabric of what we call ‘Divine Life’. Therefore, the four words that stand for the four methods for attaining became the most important part of the Emblem of Divine Life—Serve, Love, Meditate, Realise—Seva,

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Prema, Dhyana, Jnana. Jnana is through the exercise of our rational intelligence, enquiry, analysis, interrogation and ultimately through ceaseless investigation of the reality behind and beyond the temporary appearances. The Anitya is unreal—the Nitya is real, discriminate between the real and the unreal, the permanent and the temporary. But this rational intelligence becomes your real asset and your friend and helper only if it is free to function. Is it free? Is your intelligence free? What is the inner situation of man, no matter how much one may say, “Yes, you are an independent thinker; you don’t allow to be influenced by other people’s opinions and ideas or viewpoints.” That may be so, and to that extent you may be said to be free. But then frankly, and stating the real inner situation honestly, the intelligence is in an unenviable position; because every day from the moment of waking till you go back to sleep it is constantly assailed by the five senses and the demands for sense satisfaction.

In spite of all the powers of Viveka and reasoning and enquiry for years and years and years of unceasing and persevering efforts the reverse starts happening, and our said intellect is constantly assailed by the senses drawing them out, pushing them towards sense objects and demanding sense satisfaction. The intellect is engaged in planning and scheming how to provide

for the senses what they want, and from within the ego constantly keeps saying ‘Yes’ to the demands of the senses and going along. So on one side Jagat Guru Adi Sankaracharya is pulling the intellect and on the other side Ahamkaracharya is needling it, not allowing it to rest. So the poor intellect is in a predicament, and in addition to this dual situation there is a third factor still more difficult to deal with. It is a periodical strange irrationality of the rational mind that is supposed to be our asset. This irrationality takes various forms. One is to rationalise the patently undesirable things for you and make them appear as O.k. It is in this context that sometimes you are asked not to indulge in seemingly harmless pursuits which do not have any ethical taboo. They are O.k., and thus it is said that they are o.k. But one does not understand and does not want to see that even if they are o.k., they are not o.k. because they divert your attention and consume your time instead of allowing you to wholly devote yourself to Sadhana, Brahma Chintana and Abhyasa, to engage constantly towards God-Realisation. This sidetracks you and wastes away your time and energy. You begin to rationalise saying “so and so is doing it. What they are doing why should I not do it?” It is in this context that we raise a question and also ponder the answer, namely what should be our attitude

towards the great saints and sages, the holy people recognised by the world as spiritual personalities? How should we relate to them?

“Others also are doing it. They are Jnanis. Oh, he is world revered person and he is doing it.” So should your attitude be that whatever they are doing you can also do, even though it is not alright for you? But you take refuge by referring to “as they are doing it, so my doing is O.K.” Is that your attitude? Why make a big fuss about anger? Anger is natural to a human being. Durvasha was angry, Viswamitra was also very angry. So why unnecessarily exaggerate and constantly tell me “you should not be angry”. When great personalities have this quality, what does it matter? When I get God-Realisation, it will go away... that is one way. I am only taking the one quality of anger, other qualities are also similarly justified as they are found in great personalities.

On the other hand the attitude and approach should be that all great qualities should be part of my nature and equipment in the spiritual struggle for perfection. I should try to strengthen the struggle for perfection and many of the qualities I see in these great saints and yogis. I wish to shine with those qualities I find in these saints. This is a positive and creative approach. This is the way one should look at great saints and sages, not the other way. Thought of the negative type in relation

to our view of saints is in plenty, we should make up our mind and ever relate ourselves to these saints in a positive and creative manner and try to embody these qualities. This latter therefore is the great need for the spiritual aspirant, and the irrationality of the intellect which stands in the way of functioning in this creative positive manner that should be got rid of. It is a task of self-study and a frank and impersonal attitude towards one's own self; acting in the lines of our findings is the truly rational line of approach. It is truly the approach towards the great reality.

May God and Gurudev bless us in thus approaching the Supreme Being. Hari Om Tat Sat. God bless you.

Om Namo Narayanaya—Om Namo
Narayanaya—Om Namo Narayanaya!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage to that Supreme Eternal Reality, the all-transcending Absolute, the universal Divine Spirit! Loving adorations to revered and beloved Holy Master Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj! Radiant immortal Atman!

When we study the scriptures—Upanishad, Bhagavadgita, Bhagavata, Ramayana etc.—and when we study the spiritual books of the great souls, their teachings, their parables, their advice and guidance, we must do so with a constructive and creative purpose. As we come to know these lofty teachings and different thoughts, we gradually coordinate them; and out of these coordinated thoughts from different sources we should evolve certain principles for our life, for our thinking, speaking and acting. We should gradually evolve out of these various sublime and elevating thoughts some ideal that we can place before us, as a shining light towards which to proceed.

I Early Morning Meditation Talk

Gathering the inner essence of flowers from various trees and plants, the honeybee ultimately brings health giving and sweet tasting honey. This is the end product, the result of the essence from so many different plants, from all the ten directions. It also becomes the medium for giving various Ayurvedic medicines in powdered form. In Ayurveda, the effect of any medicine has been found to be more effective and productive of positive results in a patient if taken along with some particular ingredient—e.g. some are to be taken with Jeera Pani, some with buttermilk, some with honey, some with the juice of a particular leaf, some with a few drops of almond oil. This ingredient with which a medicine is taken is called Anupana. Certain Ayurvedic books roughly translate them as ‘vehicles’, because the dry powder cannot be taken as such, and must be mixed with liquid. And during this intake, you are asked to avoid certain articles of diet, and take certain other articles of diet. Those articles which may counteract or nullify or lessen the effect of the medicine should be avoided (Kupathya), and those articles that are helpful must be taken (Pathya).

In the same way one coordinates and creates for oneself certain principles for living, certain things to be avoided—do’s and don’ts—and certain ideals. That is the result of creative

Sravana, creative Svadhyaya and creative Manana and Vichara.

This is self-effort, naturally. We have to be our own saviours—*Uddharet atmanatmanam* (let him raise himself by his own self). In the same context Lord Krishna says that the senses are the friend of a person who has succeeded in keeping them under control. The senses include the mind also. The senses are five—sight, hearing, touch, taste, smell—and inasmuch as all these are ultimately coordinated in the mind, it is the mind that has to react in a proper or improper way. Thus, the mind is all the five senses combined. Therefore it is called the highest of all the senses.

If the senses are kept under control, they are said to be your friend. And the same senses, when uncontrolled, become your enemy—Shatrutvat vartante. Therefore, you should do Purushartha, and through that Purushartha you should bring about a state where the senses are fully under your control. That Purushartha is called *Uddharet atmanatmanam*. Only when the senses are under your control can you proceed on the path towards liberation.

This is very clearly placed for the instruction and guidance of Nachiketas in the Kathopanishad. Yama, the great teacher, tells Nachiketas, “Twofold indeed, O Nachiketas, are the paths that open up before man—the Sreya

Marga and the Preya Marga. One is that which is pleasant, and the other, Nachiketas, is the good. And one who takes the path of the merely pleasant, he does not attain; but he who knows the difference between the two takes to the Sreya Marga, O Nachiketas, that being verily attains.”

Thus, he speaks of these two paths that open up before man at every step—the merely pleasant and the good—Preya and Sreya. Therefore, we need clarity of perception to know the difference between what Sreya is for us and what is merely Preya. Just because it is attractive to you, you should not commit the error of moving in that direction. You must know which is the good. If the attractive also happens to be the good—okay—but if the attractive is not the good one, without a second thought, in spite of all its attractions, it should be left, and you should look towards that which takes you to the highest attainment. Thus, we come back again to *Uddharet atmanatmanam*. Uncontrolled senses are your enemy, and the controlled senses are your own friend. “Therefore, O Nachiketas, clearly see, perceive the path that takes you toward the supreme attainment—the Sreya Marga—and turn away from merely Preya Marga.”

We have to coordinate all these great sayings, the sources of great wisdom, and out of them evolve for ourselves a clear cut path. In doing this,

we should not delay too much, because time passes! Therefore, when we have strong will power, this is the time to do it—just as a blacksmith can fashion various implements out of the hard metal iron only when he strikes with a big hammer that is white hot; when it is cold, the iron doesn't yield. Therefore, they said—*uttishthata jagrata*—be awake, be alert, and proceed towards the highest experience which will liberate you. Hold onto the feet of those who have attained that wisdom; they will impart that wisdom to you—*prapya varan nibodhata*. Therefore, we should be alert and awake, active, up and running upon the spiritual path!

Thus have the great ones taught. They have given us an abundance of good thoughts. For our part we have to do the needful and evolve out of these various thoughts our own path that leads us to the highest good.

May the grace of God and the blessings of the Master grant you success in this noble effort. God has given us this wonderful golden chance of a human birth. God bless you all.

Om Namo Narayanaya—Om Namo
Narayanaya—Om Namo Narayanaya!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Beloved Immortal Atman, blessed children of the Divine, devotees of the Lord, Jijnasus eager for spiritual knowledge, Mumukshus striving for liberation and Sadhakas and Yogis engaged in spiritual Sadhana upon the different paths of Yoga. You belong to a global spiritual family. There are like you innumerable seeking souls leading the spiritual life, scattered all over the world. There is a great spiritual revival practically all over the world—in the east and west, both hemispheres northern and southern, because sometimes in my itinerary I am obliged to go to all these areas.

As Sadhakas gathered together for a Sadhana Shibir, you must be keenly aware that your view of things Your view of things should be something very special and distinctive, because the basis of Sadhana is a deeper understanding of what we call Prapancha Samsara—a deeper understanding and a very philosophical perception of the actual nature of Samsara. We don't look at things as a historian, a sociologist, a politician or even as

*2 Talk at Sadhana Shibir Morning Satsang, 23rd March, 1984,
Lonavala, Mumbai*

a humanitarian looks at things. A humanitarian looks at things with concern at human suffering, thinking to do something to relieve suffering; he has kindness, compassion. We may have an element of the last mentioned class—the humanitarian view of things—but I wish to bring it home to you that a true Sadhaka, a devotee of God, a Yogi who is upon the path, has a totally different approach. He has an understanding of things much deeper, and his sight is set upon a higher goal; while he takes into consideration the prevailing situation, at the same time he transcends this level of reacting and thinking and pitches his Antahkarana upon a higher level where the perception and viewpoints are completely different.

The spiritual aspirant's understanding is based upon philosophy, upon Darshana and upon a different evaluation of life. The Sadhaka must be keenly aware that notwithstanding the situation that prevails on the outer plane of this physical world, whether it is dangerous, alarming, threatening, he must be firmly established in this conviction that even in the midst of it and in spite of it, his prime task is to direct heart, mind and intellect towards that Reality. "I have been sent here primarily to make use of this earth life to attain that highest goal of existence"—that is a return to that experience and consciousness which is our Eternal State from which we are

temporarily alienated or separated, and we find ourselves in this present state.

This human status, birth, body, faculties have been given to you to be made use of, so that you transcend your human nature and attain an experience of divine perfection. That is the primary purpose of your being here, and the situation in the world is not your creation, and you are not responsible for it.

So do not at any moment forget the prime purpose for which you are here. We cannot do much about the world situation, we cannot change it; and if we try to do something, maybe we make it worse, because our intellect and our grasp of things is very little. Therefore, we should not commit the mistake of being too much affected by the world situation and thus getting enmeshed in this process and not paying sufficient attention to the goal of Sadhana.

Such calamitous situations have always existed. If you read the Puranas you will find how terrible Asuras started tyrannising the whole world and tormenting people until it became unbearable. Their atrocities were such, and they did so much harm and terrible havoc to people that the Earth could not bear the weight of their sins. She goes to Lord Vishnu and appeals, "Please do something!" Why don't they go to Siva or Brahma? Because Brahma and Siva are only concerned with the beginning and end of the

process; but the onerous duty of looking after and managing this whole process, is Sthitikarta Vishnu's duty. Therefore they always go to him. Unable to bear the torment of the Asuras, all the Devas joined together and led by Indra went to Lord Vishnu and said, "Please do something about it. We are simply harassed. They are tormenting us, and we are helpless. It is a terrible situation. Help us, otherwise we will be completely destroyed." So, this type of terrible situation seems to have been a common feature of this earth life—it seems to be a recurring malady, just like epidemics.

This world is imperfect, this world is Apurna. It is a product of the great cosmic power of illusion which is the Anirvachaniya Shakti of Brahman (the indescribable power of Brahman)—whom we call Prakriti or Maya. In the Supreme Reality there is no imperfection, no duality—*ekameva advitiyam brahma*—but it is through Maya, somehow, in a mysterious way, that these infinite names and forms have been projected and have come into being.

And now we must carefully grasp this subtle point. Maya, by her very nature, is Trigunatmika, characterised by the three Gunas. The Supreme Reality is beyond the three Gunas, Trigunatita and beyond the pair of opposites, Dvandvatita. Maya being Trigunatmika has brought about this world of duality, where there is constant confrontation—light and darkness, happiness

and misery, life and death, disease and health, success and failure, honour and dishonour, fulfilment and disappointment—Daivi and Asuri are always there.

The Gunas prevail in a cyclical manner; at different times one of the three Gunas dominates, subduing the other two. And when Rajas and Sattva are subdued and Tamas becomes the dominator, then these things happen. It is inevitable because this is the play of Prakriti. It is the manifestation of Trigunatmika Maya. This happens in the individual also. The truth is—that which happens in the macrocosm is duplicated in the minutest detail in the microcosm, the individual. In philosophy, they call it the Monad, and they call the macrocosm Logos.

So, the same Trigunatmika cycle rotates in the psyche of a Sadhaka, and the Sadhaka's important business is to study this constant interplay and this cyclical rotation of the three Gunas and to be alert and cautious when Tamas is working. Vigilance is one of the indispensable equipments of the Sadhaka. If you want your Sadhana to proceed unhampered—maybe slowly but always going forward in the right direction—you must be vigilant. Constantly you must be aware of what is going on within you, your emotions, sentiments, thoughts, desires, activities; you must know with what motive you say something—is it a motive based on truth or is it a motive which has some dishonest twist,

because the human mind is so mischievous. When it is just not alright, the Sadhaka will think that everything is alright, because to recognise that something is not alright is very disturbing or he may be deprived of some enjoyment or pleasure; so subconsciously, he does not want the fixed situation inside.

Unless the Sadhaka has become endowed with keen Vairagya, Vichara and Viveka, and he is established in the firm conviction that in the outside world there is no enjoyment, that all the names and forms are the sources of pain—till then he is completely governed by pleasure-seeking. The pleasures may not be gross, because the Sadhaka is always afraid of public opinion. But he will go after subtle types of sense satisfaction, desires that may not be really good for his spiritual life. When this subtle seeking of pleasure begins to catch hold of the Sadhaka, the mind blanks up that area so that even though he may be vigilant and introspective, that area is not exposed.

Why? If it is exposed, you will lose the opportunity of the enjoyment—that you do not want. It is a very intricate mechanism how the mind deceives the possessor of the mind; in spite of vigilance and introspection, what it does not want to reveal it will not reveal. The Sadhaka will find that ‘I am quite alright’, and will get caught, because the mind has refused to reveal what it does not want to reveal, as it does not want to lose

the sense experience which the ego is bent upon having. The Sadhaka's consciousness is still identified with the ego, and the pleasure pursuit of the ego is part of the life of the Jivatma. It has not learnt to say, "No, reject it. I am not this ego. The ego wants this pleasure, but I do not want it. I will not allow this ego to deceive me and drag me down and get me caught."

In spite of all Vedanta, in spite of all analysis, Viveka and Vichara this ego does not at all go—it persists, it prevails. It requires a very superior sort of vigilance and alertness and unceasing analysis, if one has to become free from this situation of being alert and vigilant and yet committing a blunder. The propensity for sense enjoyment is a permanent situation within—it is natural—until a very high stage of Vairagya and Virakti is generated. Then it becomes a powerful fire, it will penetrate into the most hidden nooks and corners of the subconscious mind and burn up the dross of hidden and unfulfilled subtle desires which the Sadhaka carefully cherishes. The active mind does not penetrate it. It does not want to see—so they are cherished and kept hidden inside and very intelligently covered up; the Sadhaka himself or herself does not know of their existence until a certain situation comes. Then suddenly it is too late. The awakening comes after the event. It is like trying to lock the stable after the horse is stolen.

If you want to avoid that, you must every day when you wake up from sleep, you must start your Viveka and Vichara. The alertness and vigilance must commence the moment you enter into the waking state, and it should be kept up continuously. You must form a habit of constant Vichara, Viveka and alertness. It must become your second nature. It is like a person who is in the arena fencing with a sharp rapier with an opponent who wants to defeat him. Every moment this man is agile and looking, finding out what the opponent is trying to do, how to parry it and at the same time get his advantage. Like that, he is keyed up to a state of keenest activity, active vigilance and alertness.

We have to be equally alert and vigilant regarding the way in which the outer world and newspapers, radio, television, gossip affect us—what is our reaction, are they able to overcome us and our Sadhana takes a secondary position? If these things begin to dominate us, then we are in danger. What all we have accumulated with great difficulty—Samskaras and Vasanas that are spiritual, sublime, moving forward—all of them become diffused and get lost. Once again, you'll have to start.

To show this, our Puranas bring out various types of episodes and incidents to warn us. Even after doing years and years of Tapas, Vishwamitra succumbed when Menaka appeared. Why? Because this propensity was inside, and he never

knew it was there, and also because to him Menaka was a reality. He was not able to treat Menaka as a myth, as a non-existing projection. In spite of keen Vichara and Viveka to him she was a reality; and because this propensity was there, he succumbed.

But the same situation, when it came to Nara and Narayana, it was not able to bring even a hair's breadth of change in their settled conviction in That which IS—the one and only Reality. And to disturb them and break their Tapasya, Indra sent his tempting Apsaras—not one or two—Rambha, Tilottama, Menaka and their entire troupe tried to tempt them. They were sitting serenely in Tapascharya, and when they were disturbed, they opened their eyes. They saw it, but they knew this is Mithya (unreal)—Brahman only is Satya (real). They said, “Why this Indra and other deluded people are trying to disturb us?” Then they looked at each other and understood each other: “There is only one way to stop this foolishness.” They created out of their own person a damsel so dazzling and so indescribably beautiful that these other damsels felt like glow-worms before sunrise and their confidence in trying to beguile them went—the balloon was deflated. They hang their heads and returned shamefaced to Indra and told him that nothing can alter Nara and Narayana, because they are capable of producing hundred-fold more beautiful damsels, and if they wanted this enjoyment they could create whatever

they wanted and enjoy. Therefore, the damsel Urvashi came from the Uru (thigh) of Nar Narayana.

They are two great sages—counterparts of Lord Vishnu. They are Nitya Tapasvis and have the firm conviction that Reality is only One, and all this passing universe is like husk, it has no inherent worth—it has only a time-limited reality. The world is real as long as the body is real because the body has certain stern necessities—hunger, thirst, rest, sleep, and this world is able to provide for them. When we are able to go beyond body consciousness, that very instant the world will become a cipher to us. And those who have attained that, have declared, “Don’t be deceived by this appearance. It is the jugglery of Maya. It is like Gandharva Nagari, a city in the sky.” It is unreal like a mirage, even though you can take pictures of a mirage. If this mind can be deceived, then a camera also can be deceived. And they said that this is the actual situation with the entire universe—it is not really there, but it appears to be there. It is only an appearance and not a reality at all.

It appears to be real for the time being, like a very gripping cinema show on a three dimensional screen. You are so overcome by the happenings you are seeing that sometimes you weep; you undergo all the gamut of different moods and emotions for these shadows. When the whole thing is over, the light appears and the white

screen is there again, then you are a little ashamed.

But we don't feel the shame very much, because we are not alone, so we manage to somehow come away satisfied. In this way, it becomes a gripping reality; such is our condition. Those who have realised the Truth, are able to declare it in firm terms, but what about us? Very great sages said, "You also can realise it, you also can perceive it, if only you are a keen student of your own consciousness." Now all your senses are active, and this world is standing before you with all the things in it and all the temptations and problems—but after the day's work is over and sleep overtakes, where is your world, where is your business, where are your problems, your bank balance, your house and your family? The moment the consciousness shifts from one dimension to another dimension, here and now, even without attaining Brahma Jnana and without having transcended time and space—you enter into an experience where the world does not exist. Even time does not exist. You are not aware of your body—whether you are male, female, animal, man—nothing.

You do not experience it on some rare occasion; everyday you undergo this experience. Now try seriously to direct your attention to study this experience. You say the dream state is unreal because it is nullified by the waking state; but the waking state also is nullified by the dream state

and in deep sleep. If you apply the same standard, the waking state is as unreal as the dream state. However, you say that the waking state has continuity, because when we wake up, we find the same world again. What prevents the dream state from also becoming a serial? It is within the realm of possibility. No one has proved conclusively that it is not possible; and some people who have done studies of the dream state, have experienced that the same dream repeats itself or the same dream continues.

One very deeply analytical person made a study of this dream state. By conscious effort he was able to have a series of dream experience where each night he started from where it ended the last time. The dream was a conference of sages and seers, questions were put, answers were given by one important personality, and with “We shall now postpone it for tomorrow” the dream ended. Upon waking he jotted down the dream. The next day the dream people assembled again, and the same sage comes and says, “Yesterday we were having a discussion about this question, and this is what I have told, and now let us go further.”—So he brought out a very rare volume called the ‘Dream Problem’, it was in two parts. I don’t know whether it is available now.

This analytical process of studying the three states of consciousness is available for every one of us, and because of its recurrent nature, it presents itself before us for our keen study and

analysis. Then slowly it will begin to dawn upon you that this Jagat is not true, is not the reality, it is Mithya (unreal) because every day it is contradicted and vanishes from the area of our experience for a sufficient period of time. If I am a long sleeper, this world does not exist for me for 7-8 hours. Out of this we gradually begin to get the conviction, "What I have been thinking until now is quite erroneous. There is no real existence for these things." And if you develop Vairagya, you become firmly established and you can react to all the temptations like the sages Nara and Narayana, and not like Vishvamitra.

With this type of reoriented vision you do not become affected too much by earthly events; you understand that He has sent you with a certain assignment, "I have to move towards my divine destiny. I will react in a suitable and worthy manner as the situation demands within the limits of my ability as God has placed me here." We are Sadhakas, the world is unreal but when a hungry person comes, you should immediately give him something to eat. Don't have double standards. If you recognize the relative reality of that person and his hunger and feed him, you have done the perfect act. If a person in pain comes, try to relieve the pain. If the person is in sorrow, try to console him. If the person is in distress, try to relieve the distress. And if you do it with this philosophical background, it also becomes part of your Sadhana, because it is an

exercise in a two-dimensional consciousness, "I know this is unreal, I know Bhagavan is playing all this; but I also know that to that person it is real. I am able to see both. I must react as it is demanded by the other person."

It is a very peculiar state of dual consciousness. A sage's state of consciousness is that Brahman alone is real and everything else is unreal. At the same time, if a big man comes, the sage accords him the proper reception and if a little child comes, the sage reacts by giving him a sweet or something. Neither he gives a sweet to that big man, nor does he give a VIP reception to the child. He is able to perceive a distinction, even though he knows they are non-different. In this way, without being affected by whatever is happening—the world may be or not be, or whether there is conflict or peace or anything—my duty is to move straight towards the goal of life; and as I move towards it, I have to deal with every situation accordingly because the world demands it.

But what is my main status, what is my main identity, and what is my main function? My status is the status of a Jivatma having alienated itself from Paramatma. Now I have to go back to my original abode and reunite myself with the Paramatma. That is my status. And what is my function? It is Sadhana. Sadhana is the main purpose for which this body has been given. The body has got two aspects—one is, through this

body we have to undergo all the experiences which we have created for ourselves through Karma; and secondly, God has given this body to do Purushartha (effort). He has endowed us with the power to think, feel and reason, and by utilising them we can attain our goal. So this second aspect of life should receive the prime attention and emphasis.

This body is an instrument for Purushartha, and Purushartha takes two forms. The subjective aspect is related to the attainment of our divine destiny, the fulfilment of our life; and the other pertains to our relationship with world, because we are very much part of the vast throng of humanity and all creatures around us. Therefore, our dealings with all creatures should be such that it does not become an obstacle in Sadhana; otherwise it will create duality in our life which will pull us in two opposite directions. Our sages have given a Sutra (formula) regarding our objective relationship with the world—Paropakar (doing good). All activities should be based upon this one Sutra. And if you are not able to do this, at least you should not harm or hurt others. They say that Paropkara is the quintessence of the great Tattva called Dharma. Bharatiya Samskriti and the Sanatana Vaidik system are dominated and pervaded by this great concept of Dharma. This body has been given to tread the path of Dharma, to protect Dharma and to attain God.

Live your life keeping in mind these twin ideas. The classical Sadhana should always regard the world as dream, and because I am part of this dream let me play my part. When one plays a part in a drama, one knows that this all is a drama and weeps, laughs, loves, hates and gets angry. Why? This is the law that prevails upon the dramatic stage.

So, go through life unattached, knowing that in this drama of life we have to play our part—and the part in one Sutra is—Paropakar, Paropakar, Paropakar! Guru Maharaj said, ‘Be Good Do Good’; and our great Samskriti says, ‘Ahimsa paramo dharmah’—from your speech, action, and your very thought let good come to others, let happiness come to others.

Kayi drishtant dete hain—vriksh phalta hai paraye ki bhalayi ke vaste, nadi bahti hai paraye ki bhalayi ke vaste, megh vrishti karta hai—aur insaan ko kya in jada vastuon se koi kami hai? The trees give fruits for others, the river flows for others, and the clouds give rain for others—are human beings less than them?

A South Indian Saint said, ‘The key to highest blessedness is Daya (mercy), and here in North India Tulasidas says, ‘Daya Dharma ko mool hai’—the essence of Dharma is compassion. Gurudev said, ‘Be Good Do Good, Be Kind Be Compassionate.’ Whatever was said in ancient times, he put it into modern simple language.

This is my little Seva to you this morning in the form of trying to give a right perspective of how a Sadhaka should conduct himself or herself in the prevailing world situation. This prevailing world situation is not something new—it has always been like that. The only thing is that in those days they did not have radio and TV, so they were not aware of many things. Now if something happens in New York, the whole world knows about it. It is not a very good thing—it only makes the world appear more real and more important, and for a Sadhaka it is not important. These things are wonderful in their own area. They may be of great utility for those who are sunk in ignorance, firmly caught in the darkness of Maya—but for a Sadhaka, they are great obstacles.

Ultimately, another small point will make you realize that you should not commit this blunder of giving too much importance to this outer world. You should focus all your attention upon Sadhana and Self-realisation, upon ideal living, because your relationship with the world is for a brief period and no one knows the duration of that brief period. You came into being, and after a time you will not be here.—“I am only an unattached wayfarer, and I have nothing to do with things here. I have tried to keep contact with the Great Reality, and I have tried to utilise this body in an ideal manner; and while passing through this market place I have done the best I could to make

things better.” If you have this satisfaction, then what is going with you is what you have done with what God has endowed you with. In very simple language they said that when one departs from here only two things accompany him, ‘liya hua naam diya hua daan’—the name of the Lord uttered and charitable deeds.

Don’t look here and there, don’t be fools overly concerned about Prapancha. With wisdom go through this life unattached, but fulfilling all the obligations in a spirit of worshipfulness and service, dedicating all activities at the feet of the Lord; and inside be intently engaged in Sadhana, intently engaged in worship, devotion, prayer, meditation, unbroken God-thought, keen aspiration and longing for Him. This is the Sadhaka’s life.

Hari Om Paramatmane Namah—
Parabrahmane Namah.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Radiant Immortal Atman!
Beloved children of the Divine!

The Guru should not mean to you some sort of extraordinary, unparalleled earthly personality in the history of India or of the world. No! Then you will be doing injustice to the Guru. You will be falling far short of the requirement of a true awakened spiritual seeker and aspirant. The Guru should be a living ideal before you, to be lived once again through yourself. You must manifest within yourself all that is highest, best, noblest and sublime that the Guru was, that the Guru stood for, that the Guru declared, that the Guru urged everyone to become. The Guru called forth to the whole world: "This is what you are! This is what you must become!"

He came here to proclaim in powerful words your undeniable divinity, your perfection. You are already perfect, perfection is already there in seed form, make it blossom forth. This was his call. The Guru must be to you that call, ever resounding in

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your heart as well as in your ear. All that he stood for should be something that should become part of you and manifest itself through you. Seeing you, people must get an idea what the Guru was, what the Being called Sivananda was. Seeing you, they must draw inspiration: “If a disciple can be like this, O my God, what might have been the Guru?” When a ray of sunshine enters into a dark room through a window, it lights up the entire room, and it gives an idea what tremendous dazzling light the sun itself would be. When one single ray is able to do this miracle of banishing darkness and bringing bright light—what to say of the Sun? No wonder, they call him the world illuminer. All these things are then realised. When you become dazzled with one single ray of the sun’s light, you have to close your eyes or shade them with your hand. Thus seeing you, people should be dazzled, and they must shade themselves and say: “O my God, what should have been that being through whose inspiration this person has become like this? By following whom has this person become like this?”

So the Guru should become a living force in your life now and in future also. That would be indeed the greatest worship offered to the Guru. He should become to you a living, transforming, elevating force, never allowing you to slide back, being a rock supporting you from behind, a lamp

unto your feet, a light upon the path and the propelling force for you to move ever forward towards the goal. Make the Guru that in your life—something effective, something powerful. This is my sharing through the will of God and through the blessings of the benign Guru.

Om Namo Narayanaya—Om Namo
Narayanaya—Om Namo Narayanaya!

Worshipful homage to the supreme, transcendental Universal Spirit Divine, the beginningless, the endless, the eternal and the infinite! May His supreme grace be upon you all!

Loving adorations to revered and beloved Gurudev, Holy Master Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, whose wisdom teachings are to us like a reliable, helpful and strong staff upon our pilgrimage to the shrine of Divine Realisation. They are like a reliable boat to surely take us across from the individual to the Universal, from the human to the Divine, take us across from death and mortality to Immortality and everlasting life.

God is Grace. All saints and selfless holy people are blessings. They live only to bless, they act only to bless, they speak only to bless. Anything that they are doing in their transpersonal relationship with the other people and things in this world, is only to bless. They may do the routine things in their subjective individual

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life: they may go to bed and sleep, they may wake up in the morning and brush their teeth, they may have a cup of tea—all this is due to the unavoidable compulsion of Prakriti: the gross physical nature. Some things in this area may not be entirely didactic or in the nature of blessing, but otherwise everything in their objective and transpersonal life of interacting with the rest of the world seems to be construed in the nature of blessings, for they are nothing but centres of blessings. This is one idea I would like to share.

The second idea is: whatever the Divine has endowed the individual soul with, when It has ordained that it must incarnate as a human being upon this earth plane, is all a manifestation of His Grace. Whatever It endows a Jivatma with is for the good of the individual soul even to minutest details—physical conditions, health, mental state, experiences, plus, minus, neutral. From the first breath until the last breath it is all meant for its good—when I say good, I mean evolution. This is the truth. God does not send anything inimical to our evolution. God has no interest in inflicting suffering upon us—by His very nature this is not possible; it is impossible. All that He sends us, all that He endows us with, is because it is necessary and good for us. This is the second thing I would like to share with you.

‘Om Namo Bhagavate Sivanandaya’—I don’t know how many have taken any interest in contemplating and reflecting upon ‘Om Namo Bhagavate Sivanandaya’? How many have tried to reflect upon what it means, why it is chanted? What does it imply? If it is taken literally and chanted sincerely, it is chanted to remind us of the divinity of the Guru. The Guru is addressed as Bhagavan just as Lord Krishna is addressed as Bhagavan—‘Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya’; ‘Om Namo Bhagavate Narayanaya’, ‘Om Namo Bhagavate Jagannathaya’, ‘Om Namo Bhagavate Venkateshvaraya’. ‘Om Namo Bhagavate Sivanandaya’ is to remind us of the Divinity of the Guru. ‘Namo’, I offer you my reverence through the act of salutation; I bow my head, fold my hands and offer reverence to you, Divine Sivananda. So it implies an expression of our reverence and adoration to the Guru—‘Om Namo Bhagavate Sivanandaya’.

However, it is to a Guru who kept on saying: “Oji! Obedience is better than reverence. Offering me all the reverence, and you don’t obey me, then what is your reverence? What kind of reverence is this?” He wanted to bring to our notice that the test of true reverence lay in obedience, true reverence automatically implies obedience, and true obedience alone is the real reverence, is the real way of expressing reverence; they are

mutually related to each other. Where there is true reverence, you may be sure there will be also be obedience; it may not be perfect, but it will be genuine, it will be very deeply earnest and sincere. Where there is no obedience, it is really a strange type of reverence, for reverence and obedience go together only if the reverence is genuine.

This was the Guru who frequently brought this to our notice, ‘Om Namo’—‘I revere you, I adore you.’ Then you must also follow it up by obedience. And by obedience Swami Sivananda does not stand to gain; he has nothing to gain from the disciple—by obedience we stand to gain. With ‘Om Namo Bhagavate Sivanandaya’ you acknowledge that He is equal to Bhagavan, He is Divine. All the more reason why you should obey if you acknowledge His Divinity, for His admonitions then take on the hue of divine admonitions, divine teachings like the teachings of Lord Rama, Krishna, Vyasa, Vashishta. Acknowledging His Divinity, we express our reverence to His Divinity, thereby making this expression of reverence a token of our willingness to obey. Obedience is a proof positive of the genuineness of our reverence. And as we just saw, that whatever God endows us with is for our good. Similarly, the living God that is the Guru, whatever the Guru admonishes us, whatever the Guru teaches us, is only for our good. True

obedience goes to prove that our reverence is true and real.

We may reflect upon this and be benefited to the maximum extent from our Guru, who happens to be one of these factors God has endowed us with in our life in His all goodness and His spontaneous intention of wishing our highest good. Among the things that He has endowed us with, the Guru forms the key factor. He is the diamond as it were among the gems by which our Maker has endowed us. He did not send us here as paupers or beggars. He sent us here rich and in those riches, in that wealth, the Guru happens to be like a diamond among the nine gems—all the more reason why our obedience should accompany our reverence. For it is the greatest good, it is the highest good.

May the grace of God and the loving benedictions of Gurudev make us perceive things clearly and understand them for what they are!

Om Namo Narayanaya—Om Namo
Narayanaya—Om Namo Narayanaya!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Radiant Atman! Let us all lift up our hearts, minds and vision towards that Reality and pay our most worshipful homage to that supreme, eternal, non-dual, all-transcending, timeless, spaceless Cosmic Spirit Divine! *Ekameva advitiyam Brahma*—non-dual is Brahman. Things do not exist; they are all a myth, an appearance like a line drawn on the surface of water. Duality, multifarity—all these things do not exist.

*Ekameva advitiyam brahma, neha nanasti
kinchana*

(The one all-transcending non-duality alone exists).

You are that supreme consciousness, the eternal non-dual consciousness! Become firmly established in this Truth! Be rooted in this Truth. Let all your actions here upon this earth plane spring from this Truth, and be based upon this Reality!

Due to inexplicable and indescribable delusion, we have now given a reality to this temporary physical body, which did not exist

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before we were born, and which is not going to exist when we pass away. It is a temporary appearance only. It is not reality. The body is an Upadhi (limiting adjunct) to the Nijasvarupa, and it has various other Upadhis. Jara (old age) is an Upadhi, Vyadhi (disease) is an Upadhi—but it is the greatest Vyadhi; and here we have a situation of a Vyadhi having another Vyadhi.

Taking on a body is the greatest of all diseases—Adi Vyadhi—the original disease. Due to taking on a body, we come into this Bhavasagara. Therefore, they say, taking on the body is Bhavaroga. All the concomitant evils, all the sufferings that the Jivatma becomes subjected to, are the outcome of this original disease called Bhavaroga. Therefore, God is addressed as Bhavaroga Vaidya—the physician or doctor for this great disease. He has sent many prescriptions—taking the divine name, serving the saints, selfless service, compassion towards all creatures.

But here we are in a strange position, where this one disease begets various other diseases like headache, toothache, diarrhoea, arthritis, slipped disc—not to say of accidents and fractures—any number of things. So one disease gets innumerable other diseases.

And who is the sufferer? That is the big question. Who is the sufferer—we don't know. We

keep on saying “we are suffering, we are suffering”. We go to the Vaidya and say, “Please see my pulse”. We put out our tongue before a physician, and he peers into it. But Sankaracharya says there is no such thing as the separate ‘I’. Here is someone saying that the patient does not exist at all, and there is the patient saying “I am suffering from so many diseases”. Juxtapose this, and you find a mystery.

Seeking to find the solution to this mystery, to find some code to crack this mystery—that is what all seekers are engaged in. If a solution is found, then our problem is solved. We are no more bound. Once again, we come to our original supreme, ever-free, untrammelled, non-dual consciousness.

May the grace of the Supreme and the benedictions of the Master enable us to seek and find and enter into that splendidous state of non-dual consciousness, which is bliss indescribable and peace that passeth understanding. God bless you all.

Om Namo Narayanaya—Om Namo
Narayanaya—Om Namo Narayanaya

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Radiant immortal Atman!

Beloved children of the Divine, devotees of the Divine Mother, Sadhaks and seekers, disciples of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, all of you are gathered here on the occasion of this auspicious annual worship of nine nights. May the divine grace of Mother be upon you all! May Anugraha (grace) of Bhagavati grant you good health, prosperity, happiness, success and inner peace! May Divine Mother bless you with Shraddha, Bhakti, Sadhana Shakti and Dhyana and crown your life with the supreme blessedness of Bhagavad-sakshatkar! Bhagavati can do anything!

Kartumakartum anyathakartum shakya

She can do this or not do this and can do something else, because She is the Achintya Shakti (inconceivable power) of the Supreme. Bhagavan Himself says, “Mama maya durtyaya—My Maya is invincible.” She keeps the whole world deluded and under the play of the

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three Gunas. She is indescribable, invincible and omnipotent.

She can do everything. She has Pasha (net) and Ankusha (whip) both. With Pasha, She can bind you if you are foolish and do not recognise Her greatness. But if you surrender, if you pray, take shelter, then with Her Ankusha, She can help you to attain victory over the mind, go beyond the mind and attain Atma Jnana, Moksha. She is both—one who binds as well as one who releases from bondage and liberates. As Avidya Maya, the whole world is under Her grip, completely deluded, but as Vidya Maya She bestows supreme wisdom, brings about spiritual awakening and liberates you. Therefore, we worship Bhagavati in order to attain Her grace so that She may cast Her Kripa Kataksha—glance of compassion—upon all Jivatmas and manifest in us as Vidya, as awakening. If She smiles, then darkness turns into light, slumber gives place to awakening, bondage ends in liberation. Therefore, every year we come to Her with humility, in a prayerful mood, and taking shelter at Her feet we pray to Her—“O Mother! Manifest as Vidya and liberate us. Help us to attain the goal of life.”

*Anityamasukham lokamimam prapya
bhajasva mam* (B.G. 9/33)

Having obtained this impermanent and unhappy world, do thou worship Me.

*Mamaiva ye prapadyante mayametam
taranti te* (B.G. 7/14)

Those who take shelter in Me alone cross over this illusion.

You put together both this Adesha (command) and this Sandesha (message) of Bhagavan. Adesha is '*Bhajasva mam*' and Sandesha is '*Mamaiva ye prapadyante mayametam taranti te*.' If you put them together, then you know the way. Take shelter at the feet of the Lord and Maya becomes your friend, benefactor, She smiles. And if you want to obtain the grace of the Divine Mother, you must know in what ways you have to please Her, in what ways She is manifest before you and how to pay homage and reverence to Her in all these various manifestations.

Of course everything is Mother. *Sarvam shaktimayam jagat*—the entire universe is nothing but the play of Para Shakti. Without Para Shakti, nothing would have been manifested at all, because Para Brahman, Param Shiva is static, Achala (immovable), Paripurna (all-full), purely absolute and transcendental, beyond name and form. There is no creation, no dissolution, nothing is there. He is *Ekameva Advitiyam*—one without second. But when Para Shakti manifests as *Adya Spandana*—the first vibration or the primal movement upon the bosom of the motionless

all-full Siva Tattva or Para Brahman Tattva, then arises within a mysterious cosmic principle—there arises the Divine Will: “I am one. Let me become many.” This is what our scriptures say.

It is not something that Swami Sivananda or Swami Chidananda is telling. This is what the scriptures say in order to explain how out of One many came into being, how the Ekam (One) became Anekam (many). The scriptures say, “In that cosmic mind, in that Supreme Being arose one primal Iccha (desire)—“Let me become many”. And this Iccha itself is the manifestation of Bhagavati Mahamaya, the primal movement of Para Shakti. Para Shakti means She is one with the Absolute Being, She is inherent in Him because the word ‘Para’ denotes transcendence, beyond relativity, the plane of the Absolute—the plane of Para Brahman. So She is Para Shakti—one with Para Brahman. And as Para Shakti, She manifests as an Iccha in that great Silence, in that profound deep stillness. They say, that is how the entire cosmic process started.

Therefore, from that point of view, whatever exists here is nothing but the manifestation of Para Shakti Mahamaya—*Mayamayamakhiljagat*. But then, She is also manifest in a special way, on our own level, in our pragmatic day-to-day world. Recognising Her in that way and paying reverence to Her in these manifest forms, we obtain Her

grace. She is pleased, She is propitiated. She casts a glance of compassion upon us and brings about light and awakening in us. What are those special forms? There are many. In the Devi Sukta it is said:

*Ya devi sarvabhuteshu Chetanetyabhidhiyate
Namastasyei namastasyei namastasyei
namo namah*

Salutations again and again to Devi, who is called among all beings as Consciousness.

*Ya devi sarvabhuteshu Medharupena
samsthita
Namastasyei namastasyei namastasyei namo
namah*

Salutations again and again to Devi, who dwells among all beings as Intellect.

If you ponder this, you will understand how Mother is manifest in this Vyavaharic Jagat. And in Chandi Path also it is said, “Thou art manifest as all women.” All women are the manifestation of Para Shakti, Bhagavati Mahamaya. Therefore, all women should be regarded with worshipful attitude, reverential attitude, then alone you will prosper in spiritual life, your Sadhana will become successful. If you don’t have this attitude, you will not obtain the grace of Divine Mother.

Yatra naryastu pujyante ramante tatra devatah

Where women are regarded with worshipful attitude, there the gods are pleased—Indra, Varuna, Yama, Agni, Ashvini Devatas, all are pleased.

And if women are not treated with reverence, the gods become displeased which is not good for anyone.

Tulsidas gives a challenge: “If a person looks upon another woman, other than his lawfully wedded wife, as his mother, regards the wealth of another person as dust, that is, he does not cast his greedy glance upon that which does not belong to him, and regards all other beings as his own self, feeling compassion at the suffering of others, rejoicing in the happiness and prosperity of others, identifying with others; if such a person does not attain God, then Tulsi says—“I am responsible, I will see that he attains God’s Darshan. Such a person will attain God’s Darshan, Bhagavad-Sakshatkar.” The same Bhava is expressed in this Sanskrit Sloka:

*Martrivat paradareshu paradravyeshu
loshthavat
Atmavatsarvabhuteshu ya pashyati sa
panditah*

He is indeed wise and virtuous who regards other women as mother, others’ wealth as dust and considers other beings as his own self.

So to regard all women as veritable mothers has been given an important place in the ideal of Indian culture; a Nari (woman) occupies a great place in the vision of Bharatiya Sanskriti.

To show this great ideal, Maryada Purushottam Sri Ramchandra Bhagavan in his householder life abided by the vow of Ekapatnivrata (vow of having only one wife). We all think of the Pativrata Dharma of Anasuya or Savitri, but we never speak of the reciprocal Dharma which a husband owes his wife. That is because most of the Shastrakaras (writers of the scriptures) must have been men, so they did not speak about their duties, only about their rights, and they only spoke about the duties of women. A woman should serve her husband as God etc. But to be impartial and correct, we must equally say that if a woman has to be a Pativrata Nari (virtuous woman), a man also is expected to be Ekapatnivrata Purusha – regarding his wife as the only woman in the universe, and all others as Matrivat (like mother) or Sakshat Bhagavati. Therefore, when Shurpanakha said, “O Rama, I want to marry you.” He said, “I am sorry, madam, I cannot oblige you. I have already taken the vow of Ekapatnivrata.” This was the basis for refusing Shurpanakha—he was Ekapatnivrata Purusha. Maryada Purushottam Sri Rama showed the attitude a householder should have.

If you look upon all women with reverence, if you have this sublime Bhava in your heart towards women, then Maya cannot touch you or bind you; you cannot get entangled by Maya. Then Mother will manifest as Vidya to you, and your spiritual path will become free of all obstacles. That is the important reason why you have to adopt this vision. Your life will be free from so many complications and problems which mess up a man's life if he does not have this vision.

And the second important thing is something which Ramakrishna Paramhansa Dev as well as Gurudev have made quite clear: woman is Chaitanya (sentient) Maya, and money is Jada (insentient) Maya. Equally, the Divine Mother holds the whole universe in Her grip, completely under Her control through Her form of money. So with great reverence one should approach money. Money should not be trifled with; money should be recognised as the great power of Mahamaya Herself in this world. It can make or mar your life. It can take you to sublime heights or hurl you down into the abyss of perdition, depending upon how you relate yourself with this other manifestation of Bhagavati—Jada Maya. If you treat money with reverence and have the Bhava of divinity in money, then money cannot entangle you. With this Bhava use it with wisdom, use it carefully, and save a little; do not squander and do

not be a spendthrift. Do not misuse it in smoking or drinking or gambling or any other vicious way of squandering money. But use it wisely to fulfill your duty and obligations towards your dependents, towards your family, towards society, towards poor people, suffering people. Your money is meant to be used for all these things. Paropakara (doing good to others) is as much as a Kartavya (duty) as your obligations towards those who are your dependents. That is higher Kartavya. If thus money is spent, and it is also saved a little, then money will not become an obstacle, it will not bind you. When you recognise the divinity of money and have a reverential attitude, you will never lack the necessities of life through the grace of Bhagavati. She will always keep you above want. But if you look upon it as something worldly, then you will always be in trouble.

Thirdly, Mother is manifest as Vani—the great power of speech. The tongue is a peculiar Indriya which has a dual function; it is Karmendriya (organ of action) as well as Jnanendriya (organ of perception). It has got Jnana of Rasa (knowledge of taste) and it has got Karma of Vak (action of speaking). As Vani Mother is in your tongue and therefore, through this you must always fulfil the Supreme Dharma of Satya (truth) and Prema (love).

'Satyannasti paro dharma' and *'Ahimsa paramo dharma'*

there is no greater Dharma than truthfulness and non-injury is the greatest Dharma.

These two great injunctions are the two great guiding lights for us. We have two duties towards Vani as Mother's power in us. Our speech should be reverentially utilised by observing truthfulness and should never be used in a negative way by hurting or harming others, injuring others or causing unhappiness to others. It should be speech that brings peace, that brings solace, speech that encourages and uplifts, speech that gives hope and that consoles.

Speech should be used as an instrument for human welfare, for kindness and compassion, as an instrument of Paropakara and Seva. If this is done, then Mother is propitiated, you obtain Her grace, and you never come to any harm. God will be on your side if you adhere to truthfulness; and the whole world will befriend you if you adhere to Ahimsa, kindness, compassion, sweet speech. Gurudev always used to say: "Speak little, speak truthfully, speak softly, speak sweetly." That is our duty towards Mother's manifestation in us as Vak Shakti—Vani.

I shall conclude by merely mentioning the fourth manifestation of Mother as books, because

She is Jnana, and Jnana is to be found in books. We worship books during the Saraswati Puja. But in modern times we have called upon ourselves the displeasure of Mother by making use of the printing medium in spreading all sorts of impure, corrupting ideas, by publishing books that are not pure, that are not elevating and inspiring; on the contrary they are demeaning, and therefore we are paying a terrible price. There is chaos and demoralisation in human society; people are in great confusion. The fruit of demoralisation is suffering—because Dharma alone upholds.

There is great misuse of media worldwide. The written word was meant to awaken, to elevate, to inspire, to instruct, to give guidance, to enlighten, to illumine—whereas we spread darkness through the wrong type of literature, and human society of the 20th Century is paying a very bitter price. Therefore, we should carefully ameliorate this great negative aspect of the printed and written word, and we should completely focus our mind and consciousness upon elevating and sublime scriptures. Gurudev said:

*“Do not study Govinda,
Herbert Spencer Govinda.
Do not read atheist literature,
Negative type of literature.”*

They are very harmful. Study only Gita, Bhagavata, Upanishad, Bible, Koran, Zend Avesta, Dhamma Pada—elevating, life transforming, sanctifying spiritual literature. This is must; then you will obtain the grace of Bhagavati, because then you reverentially approach Her.

That is why Patanjali insists upon Swadhyaya in his Niyamas; that is why the Vedas insist upon Swadhyaya; that is why even Sankaracharya in his Sadhana Panchakam says: “Never neglect Swadhyaya, always study elevating spiritual literature.” That is the way to bring light and banish darkness. Where there is Ajnana, you must bring light in the form of study. So this is the fourth manifestation of Mother.

May we have the attitude of reverence and worshipfulness towards these four special manifestations of Mahamaya as Vidya in our day-to-day life, and through this may we obtain the grace of Mahamaya Bhagavati. She will help us to cross this ocean of Samsara and attain supreme liberation.

With these words, I offer my worship to Divine Mother upon this third day of the annual worship of Navaratri Durga Puja. May She be pleased by accepting this worship in the form of this sharing. May Her blessings and divine grace shower upon you all. May She grant you illumination!

Om Sri Parashakti Maharani ki jai!

Worshipful homage to that Supreme Eternal Reality, the non-dual transcendental Cosmic Spirit Divine, beginningless, endless, infinite, immeasurable, all-full and perfect – Nitya Paripurna Tattva! To that Supreme Reality, the source, sustenance and the goal ultimate of countless universes, encompassing all that exists and immanent in every atom of matter of this created universe, we pay worshipful homage! At the same time It shines in the very centre of each one of you as the indwelling presence divine, making your interior a dazzling radiance of divinity where darkness dare not exist.

*Jyotisham api tajjyotiḥ tamasah
paramuchyate
Jnanam jneyam jnanagamyam hṛidi sarvasya
vishthitam*

Loving adorations to revered and beloved Holy Master, Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in whose spiritual presence we are gathered together in this early morning hour of chanting, silent meditation and prayer. May His

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Gurukripa be upon each and every one of you! May His glance of grace be upon all of you who are present at this moment in this hall!

Radiant Divinities! There is a Cosmic Power that brings into being all these millions of universes, this universe of ours and all the innumerable beings that exist therein, supports and sustains them, protects them, provides for them, looks after them and ultimately helps them to return to their original source and merge in the Unmanifest. That Great Power is vibrantly present in every atom, every electron, every proton, every neutron. And within you, from head to foot, there is a constant activity going on, never ceasing, even when you are seemingly inactive and in deep sleep. There is a constant process of cells breaking down in the cellular structure of your body and creating new cells—the anabolic and metabolic activity. In every cell of your being, from your toenails to the top of your head, silent dynamism is going on. This silent dynamism makes you live, breathe, move about, speak, think, reason and express yourself in various moods and emotions.

The whole universe is kept up by this mysterious, unseen force or Shakti. The physical Shakti is going on in your biological structure, and the unseen, psychological Shakti is working in your mind and thoughts. What works upon the third plane, the spiritual plane that also is Shakti.

All the Shakti you need for concentrating upon God, for meditating upon Him, for prayer and remembrance of God, for study of the sacred texts, understanding them and absorbing their inner meaning comes through the great Cosmic Force. All the power you need to pray, to do Japa, to meditate, worship or think of Him, to dwell and reflect upon Him, to do Shravana, Manana, Nidhidhyasana, or to express your devotion in the nine forms: Shravanam, Kirtanam, Smaranam, Archanam, Pada-Sevanam, Vandanam, Dasyam, Sakhyam, Atmanivedanam—in all these things that Shakti alone is the main factor.

All that you do according to Patanjali Maharshi: Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, Samadhi—the spiritual dynamism for all these activities of Patanjali Yoga is that same Shakti. All the Shakti you need for serving humanity, serving your Guru, serving the sick, serving those who are in need of your service in the sublime noble field of Nishkama Karma Yoga, that also is made possible through the power of this mysterious Cosmic Force pervading all and pervading all the cells of your body. Without It not a blade of grass moves, wind cannot blow, fire cannot burn, water cannot flow, the sun cannot shine, the moon and the stars cannot shine. It is the primal Cosmic Force, the transcendental Para Shakti. It is the Adya

Shakti. It is the great Power of powers. It is the power that works through all the Mantras: Om Namah Sivaya, Om Namo Narayanaya, Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya, Om Sri Ram, Gayatri, Mrityunjaya Mantra, Rudri, Rudradhyayi, Srisukta, Purushasukta, all these Mantras derive that spiritual power through this great Cosmic Force—Shakti.

Therefore it would not be in exaggeration to say that the Shakti is all in all. But you could ask the question: “Swamiji, we have heard that God is omnipotent. He is all powerful. Now Swamiji is speaking of some Cosmic Force. There seems to be a paradox. How can two such forces exist? Two cannot be omnipotent.”

This question is quite valid and the answer to it is: There are not two forces. This great Cosmic Power or this great primal transcendental force is God’s power. It is He who manifests in the form of this great Cosmic Power. He Himself becomes the Cosmic Power and Cosmic Power is no other than Him. There is a non-difference and non-duality between the two. There is an Abheda and Advaita between Shakti and the one from whom It originates and in whose vastness and all-pervasiveness this Shakti manifests. The countless millions of universes exist in God, and all the power that manifests within these universes exists in God. They are coexisting, a

strange duality in non-duality, like the obverse and reverse of one coin. There is only one coin, but there is an obverse and a reverse, two sides, not contradicting the unity. There is a seeming duality.

This mysterious force, co-existing with God, is worshipped in India once a year for nine nights. It is a way of our recognising the supreme importance of this Force of the very existence of innumerable forms, because He manifests in countless ways in this cosmic world of ours.

But three salient manifestations have been adopted for the special worship during these nine days: they are in the form of Power, in the form of all that is auspicious, beautiful, indispensable in this life process, and ultimately in the form of supreme spiritual wisdom, Jnana. They are in the form of Power, of Auspiciousness, Beauty and Blessedness and of Illumination or Enlightenment. Durga represents the Power; Lakshmi represents the radiant auspiciousness of the Divine Mother, and Saraswati, pure and white as the untouched snows of the Himalayas, is the bestower of knowledge and the wisdom that liberates—Knowledge that is necessary to progress in the secular life and illumination to ultimately put an end to the whirling wheel of birth and death and rebirth and death, *Punarapi jananam punarapi maranam punarapi janani*

jathare shayanam to put an end to this coming back into this world of pain and death and attain that state of liberation which ultimately bestows upon you freedom and eternal satisfaction. That state of liberated consciousness is characterised as Sarvaduhkhanivritti, Paramanandaprapti Nityatripti. It is the cessation of all sorrows, the attainment of supreme bliss divine and the establishment of the state of eternal satisfaction. All these come to the children of the Divine Mother when She manifests in their hearts as Jnanadayini Saraswati Mata.

What a beautiful understanding of these salient aspects of the Cosmic Power, what a great insight! What an in-depth knowledge our ancestors obtained by their personal transcendental realisation and illumination. When all these things came to them, the in-depth knowledge, the insight into the reality of things, they shared it with us. The unbroken line of teachers that come generation after generation in this great spiritual land of India and the unbroken succession of Master and disciple have enabled us to receive it.

In our own times the great representative of this unbroken succession of perfected Masters, was our beloved Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. Due to Him we have attained this light, we have attained this

knowledge and understanding, due to His lucid and illuminating teachings we can grasp the subtleties of spiritual realities that prevail in this world, even today, even as we are in the last month of the last year of the twentieth century, of the second millennium. Even at this time that ancient wisdom, that wealth and that treasure is still within our grasp; if we but ask for it, if we but seek for it, go after it, it is at hand.

Therefore, ‘Arise, awake and attain that wisdom!’ Otherwise days, months, years will pass away. Life will go away if you are heedless, if you are forgetful, if you allow yourself to be beguiled by other pursuits, then before you know it, you will be at the moment of departure. Then regret will be of no avail. Therefore, right now, from this very moment, arise, awake and attain blessedness! Do not postpone it for an uncertain tomorrow. Do it now! May God bless you and Gurudev also!

Om Namo Narayanaya—Om Namo
Narayanaya—Om Namo Narayanaya!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage to the supreme, eternal, all pervading Cosmic Spirit Divine. Worshipful homage to that Being who transcends all manifest modes, the infinite variety of names and forms that go to make up the universe, who is beginningless and endless, immeasurable and boundless. May the divine grace of the Supreme Being be upon you all!

Loving adorations to revered and beloved Holy Master, Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in whose holy, sacred spiritual presence we have the good fortune to gather together, especially in the auspicious half of this month. Paksha means half a month, one lunar fortnight—it may be the bright fortnight leading to the full moon or it may be the dark fortnight leading to the new moon. We have gathered here upon this very auspicious fortnight, during the annual nine nights of special worship of the Cosmic Power. The divine indescribable, incomprehensible, inexpressible power of the Supreme Being is no other than the Supreme Being, is one with the Supreme Being, but at the same time manifests as

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duality within this non-duality, as we mentioned yesterday.

We said it is like the obverse and reverse of the same coin. It is like the back of your hand and the inside portion of your hand with which you grasp things—they are two different things. The inside portion does not have the nails, the outside portion has nails. The inside portion does not have any hair growing upon it; the outside portion has got hair growing upon it. Seemingly they are of two different natures, but you cannot separate the backside of your hand and the inside of your hand. They are inseparably one, and yet they manifest as a distinct, perceivable duality. When such a paradoxical state can exist even in the gross physical anatomy of a person, what to say of that supreme, invisible, unmanifest spiritual essence! A hundred thousand times more it is a great and a grand mystery.

She is everything, and She is beyond all things. If you constantly feel Her all-pervading presence, that becomes a sort of an unbroken dwelling in the Divine. It is like the Sahaja state of the self-realised sage. In the beginning that state comes and goes; there is experience of duality and non-duality at the same time. In Samadhi he is in a state of non-duality and when he comes down from the Samadhi state, he opens his eyes and beholds the many also, he deals with the many, he

speaks to them, moves with them according to the situation. He is respectful towards elders, and he is kind and compassionate towards younger people, and he manifests friendliness towards those of his own status. So apparently he does see difference, and his behaviour is oriented according to these different phases. But when he goes into the Samadhi state, he is in a state of non-duality. And they say when this Samadhi state becomes his normal natural state, he apparently perceives duality, indwells duality and deals with duality, nevertheless he is firmly established in non-dual consciousness. When this becomes natural, they refer to it as Sahaja Samadhi, a spontaneous state of being, a state of total union in the Spirit.

To constantly remain in Her all-pervading presence, perceiving Her in all things and feeling that you are living and moving in Her Being just like the fish in the ocean, a constant practice of this state must be acquired by deliberately cultivating this vision: whatever we behold is Divine Mother in ever so many forms. The portion that is recited every evening after the main reading of the scripture ‘Devi Mahatmya’ or ‘Durga Saptashati’ in Sanskrit language, the Devi Sukta, there, adoration is offered thrice in every verse: “*Namastasyei, Namastasyei, Namastasyei*

Namo Namah—Adoration offered to the Divine Mother as manifest in ever so many variegated forms.”

It is subjective, it is within yourself: “I bow down again and again to that Being who dwells within me as intellect, intelligence. I bow down again and again to Her who dwells within me as memory. I bow down to Her again and again who dwells within me as sleep. I bow down to that Devi again and again who dwells within me as Consciousness: *Buddhirupena samstitha, Smrtirupena samstitha, Nidrarupena samstitha, Chetanetyabhidyate*. I bow down again and again to Her who dwells within me as Peace, *Shantirupena samstitha*. I bow down to Her who dwells within me as hunger, *Kshudharupena samstitha, Namastasyei, namastasyei, namastasyei namo namah*. I bow down to Her who is manifest within me as the ceaseless rising of thoughts, ‘*Ya Devi sarvabhuteshu vrittirupena samstitha, Namastasyei namastasyei namastasyei namo namah*’.

Thus, She is within us as Knowledge, as Intelligence, but also as Delusion, *Ya Devi sarvabhuteshu bhrantirupena samstitha Namastasyei namastasyei namastasyei namo namah*. In all ways She dwells within us. There is nothing which She is not, and later on, we begin to

behold Her as Mother, *Ya Devi sarvabhuteshu
matrirupena samstitha, Namastasyei namastasyei
namastasyei namo namah.*

We are therefore surrounded by Her, encompassed completely, enwrapped and filled with Her. From head to toe you are completely filled with Divine Shakti, filled with Mother's omnipresent, extraordinary, inexpressible Power. And similarly you begin to feel Her presence in all beings, in all names and forms – birds, beasts and trees, leaves and grass, sky, clouds, wind that blows, breath that you take—you feel Her presence in everything around you—all in all.

Thus within you and in all beings, as all beings, invoke Her Presence. Then your consciousness will gradually become a Divinity-filled-consciousness and petty small things will have no place. They dare not enter into this consciousness that has been created within you, a Divinity-filled-consciousness. This is a potent way of transforming yourself, transmuting your consciousness from the human to the Divine—a divine alchemy as it were.

May the grace of the Supreme and the benedictions and blessings of Holy Master enable you to bring about this inner transmutation and thus bless you that even though you are in this world, nevertheless, within yourself you are in a

spiritual world, a divine world. May this good fortune be bestowed upon you! God bless you all. Divine Mother's special grace be upon you!

Om Namo Narayanaya—Om Namo
Narayanaya—Om Namo Narayanaya!

Worshipful adorations and prostrations to the Supreme Divine Mother of the universe, the indescribable divine power of the Almighty—Achintya Shakti of Parabrahman—whose special worship of nine nights we have the good fortune to observe in this sacred Ashram of our beloved and worshipful holy Master Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. Again and again, worshipful adorations at the feet of Mahamaya who is manifest as Mahasaraswati, Mahalakshmi and Mahaparvati Durga. May Her divine grace be upon each one of you. May She graciously grant you good health, long life, happiness, prosperity, success, inner peace of mind and spiritual joy! I earnestly pray to Divine Mother to bestow upon you all the spiritual treasures of faith, devotion, Sadhana-Shakti—the power of spiritual practices and meditation. May She crown your life with supreme blessedness, divine perfection and liberation! This is my sincere prayer at Her feet upon this first night of the nine days' worship of Bhagavati.

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May you all observe these nine days and nine nights as a period of special spiritual practice, introspection, spiritual renewal and as a period of once again re-affirming your dedication to the great ideal of spiritual realisation and to the path of righteous living. Our beloved Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj is the power of the Divine Mother in manifestation, the visible expression of Vidya Maya, of Jnana that banishes the darkness of Ajnana and confers upon us liberation and blessedness. May his choicest benedictions grant you your heart's aspirations and success in spiritual life. This is my humble prayer at the feet of Gurudev who is no other than the embodiment and personification of the Divine Mother's benign power.

Each individual soul comes into this life endowed with certain divinely bestowed powers in varying proportions, but no one comes without endowments. The physical body has got its own dynamism—Kriya Shakti. We have got the power of mind to think, we have got the power of feeling, sentiment—Bhavana Shakti. We have the power of reasoning, of logic, intelligence – Buddhi Shakti. For what purpose have all these powers been given to the individual soul by the Supreme Being? Does anyone ponder this question while starting life? Do the students, young people, Brahmacharins ever think: “I have come into this

life; God has given me these various powers –what am I expected to do with them? Why have they been given? What is the right use of these powers?” Does anyone ponder? Does anyone first of all try to decide this question? Very few do it. Therefore, in spite of being richly endowed with these powers, we make a miserable failure of our life. We go in wrong directions, we create complications; we create our own difficulties and these powers become sometimes negatively channelised in useless pursuits, in wrong ways or they are frittered away in various directions.

It is important to recognise that these powers constitute manifestations of Mother’s great Shakti. Parashakti is the source of all powers. Whatever powers are in the universe, whether they are elemental, individual or cosmic – they all are from Her. Therefore, they are divine, they are sacred. It may be the power of wind; it may be the power of ocean waves, the terrible power of a volcano or the power of fire. It may be the power of your mind, your limbs, the power of your speech, thought, feeling, reasoning—they all are sacred because they originate from Mother who is the universal source of all cosmic powers. Therefore, they have to be recognised as sacred and reverentially used. If we do not do it, then we invite sorrow, misery, suffering, pain.

These powers, in the ultimate analysis, have been given to help us to liberate ourselves from all sorrow, pain and suffering and to attain supreme blessedness. Through upholding Dharma, the first Purushartha, by channelising and utilising these powers in a Dharmic way, we pave the way to utilise them in a spiritual way to attain Param Purushartha – Moksha. Utilising these powers for earning money, for having a career, having a job and getting prosperity and building a house and having a motor car and a bank balance – these all are the lesser uses of these powers, not the primary great use.

Nevertheless, the Artha and Kama are the secondary Purushartha; if these powers are applied towards the gaining of Artha and Kama – alright, you may utilise them for some advantage, but it is not for the supreme advantage, the supreme good. May be in some degree these powers are being used for our Abhyudaya (progress), but then it is not the ultimate use of these powers, because we are not using them for attaining the highest welfare. This has to be deeply pondered and well understood right at the very beginning. These God-given faculties are not merely for making a success of life in the secular sense, having mere material prosperity in terms of wealth and things, in fulfilment of your desires and success in all your plans and projects. This is

the secondary applications of these Shaktis. The highest application is for attaining our supreme good in the form of God-realisation and Moksha.

This is possible only if we make use of these powers in fulfilling the great ideal of Dharma, fulfilling the ethical norms against all odds, all difficulties and all obstacles, adhering firmly to morality, being truthful, compassionate, unselfish, kind, pure in conduct and character, controlling anger and passion, hatred and jealousy and manifesting only Daivi Sampada. If we make use of our powers—the power of will, of mind, of discrimination to thus exercise self-control and to adhere to righteousness, then we will succeed in applying these powers for attaining Moksha. Applying these powers for Sadhana, Yogabhyasa, Bhakti, Bhajan, Dhyana upon the rock foundation of Dharma, we will be able to build the edifice of Adhyatmic Jivan (spiritual life) and attain Moksha. Then we worship Bhagavati through our life and conduct through utilising Her Shakti in the right way.

This is only an indication as to how we must recognise Her presence in us, in our life, in our body, mind, intellect and heart and in what way She should be honoured by right and sublime application of Her Shakti. Thus we carry out a living adoration of Mother's divine power through

the manner of living our life, through the manner of putting to use Her powers manifest in us.

This is only like a signpost on the way; you are all intelligent people endowed with Buddhi, therefore you have to pursue this line of thought and reflect over what has been offered at this sacred moment of our first night's adoration of the Divine Mother. Reflect over it; because for an intelligent person even a single hint is enough to make a world of meaning by reflecting again and again—not once, not ten times but a hundred times—what this truth should signify to you. Thus we adore our most worshipful and beloved Divine Mother through our very life and the way we live it. I offer these thoughts and ideas with my reverence and my highest regard and love to each one of you – the souls upon the path to perfection, the souls upon the ascending path to God-realisation and liberation. Glory be to the Divine Mother! May Her blessings ever be with you all!

Om Sri Parashakti Maharani ki jai!

Worshipful homage to the supreme, eternal Reality! The great transcendental Cosmic Spirit is beginningless and endless, infinite and limitless, supreme, non-dual; it is the source, the substratum, the support and the goal ultimate of all existence. We offer our worshipful homage to that great Reality. May Its grace be upon you all! Loving adorations to revered and beloved Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in whose spiritual presence we are all gathered here. May His glance of grace and His blessings and benedictions be upon you all!

Radiant Immortal Atman!
Beloved Sadhaks and seekers!

The purpose of life has been said to be God-realisation. The method of attaining this ultimate goal and fulfilling life's supreme purpose is known as the science of Yoga. The word 'Yoga' can be used in two senses. First of all, Yoga means the ultimate supreme state of being forever established in unity with the Divine, to immerse in the Divine. Yoga means to be established in a state

of God-realisation. Also, the word ‘Yoga’ means all the various practices you engage in, all the efforts you put forth in order to attain this supreme state which liberates you forever from all the imperfections and limitations imposed upon you by your coming in contact with this temporary little life circumscribed by birth and death and qualified by various afflictions. To be liberated from this and to become established in a supernal state is the purpose for which you have come here, and all that you do in order to fulfil this purpose is Yoga. Therefore the significant word ‘Yoga Abhyasa’, practice of Yoga. ‘Yoga Sadhana’, the effort put forth to attain the object of Yoga is Sadhana; that object of attainment is called the ‘Sadhya Vastu’. ‘Sadhya’ means possible; ‘Asadhya’ means impossible. It is ‘Sadhya’, ‘Sadhya Vastu’. And this assertion and affirmation is made upon the personal experience of our ancient sages and seers. They had attained it, and they issued forth a clarion call: “What we have attained, this great blissful state of Godhead, you also can attain. It is the birthright of all individual souls. You are a part of God, you are children of God. What belongs to the father belongs to the child by right of being the father’s child.” You are heir apparent to the glories of God.

Thus they called in this blessed land, and thus proclaimed Gurudev in our own lifetime. So Yoga also implies everything that you do, every effort you put forth, all the practices you engage in. Life itself is the supreme Yoga, because it was given to us in order to be utilised for attaining that supreme state of blessedness. Therefore, the gift of life is God's throwing open the doors to this eternal, all-perfect Self and opening wide his arms and saying, "Come, come to Me. I welcome you with my all-embracing Divine Love!" The gift of life thus understood becomes to us the greatest endowment. Life must be made the supreme Yoga. Every part of life: eating, drinking, speaking, sitting, standing, running, waking, sleeping, thinking, every movement of your hands and feet, of your thoughts and feelings and sentiments, all should be God-oriented. Everything that you do should mean to you only one thing: God—God-realisation, God-experience, God-consciousness. You are the chosen, favoured ones.

You have a vertical vertebral column, whereas all other species have a horizontal vertebral column. They are always upon the same level as the earth. But you have got a vertical vertebral column. And this is not your only

uniqueness. Inwardly, psychologically also, you are endowed with something that is unique. You are made in the image of God, and naturally the faculties of thinking, feeling, reasoning, analysing, investigating—the glorious impress of the Supreme—should be utilised for the purpose for which it is given. Therefore, that faculty, that inner instrument of mind and intellect should be endowed with spiritual tendencies and auspicious divine qualities.

But if by your heedlessness you allow your mind to become a field for the play of unspiritual, undivine objects, just consider what a great fault it would constitute. Then, despite the uniqueness of your physical being, despite your uniqueness of the psychological higher environment, your life will not be God-oriented, it will move on the same horizontal line, it will be an animalistic life of sense indulgence, a field for the play of anger, passion and grossness. The only thing you can do is to invoke the grace of God: “Please put an end to this dire calamity and rescue me!”

This truth is brought out again and again when the celestials approach Divine Mother and pray to Her: “Please rescue us from the torment of the demonical forces, represented by the demons of various names: Mahishasura, Chanda, Munda,

and so many other names. The name of Mahishasura is significant. He has a powerful human body, but his head is of one of the grossest, most lethargic, Tamasic animals. It represents the human state where everything is fair and wonderful as long as divinity and spirituality prevail; where Tamas, grossness and bestiality prevail—that is Mahishasura. And it will become a torment! Therefore, the Devas prayed to Bhagavati to compassionately come to their rescue, and She did this by engaging Mahishasura in war and decapitating him, removing that which stood in the way of attaining supreme liberation, divinity.

There is a certain interpretation of the Scripture Devi Mahatmya with a very significant meaning. The Maharishis, celestials and Rishis ask Mother, “Mother! You are the Divine Goddess of infinite prowess! By merely the frowning of Your brow, the entire demonical force will become destroyed. By merely uttering a single sound of displeasure and anger, looking at them and saying, ‘Hum!’ they would all be destroyed forever, beyond all resurrection. Why did You struggle in warfare and in order to engage these Devatas get endowed with the weapons of the various Gods—Shankha, Chakra, Gada from Vishnu and Trishul

from Lord Siva and Vajrayudha from Indra and so many others—You became specially invested with all these powers. So, engaging these great demons in warfare, You hurled these weapons at them and battled and pierced them. We are not able to understand this peculiar Leela of Yours, the mystery of doing things which are not necessary?” The Devi answers them, “Apparently it was not necessary. But I am the compassionate Mother of all creatures including the Asuras, not only of good people, but also for the other side, for people of the other variety.

There is a beautiful hymn composed by the great Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya. In that hymn each verse ends with the fourth line:

Kuputro jayate kwachidapi kumata na bhavati

‘In this creation of God bad sons there may be many, but God has never created a bad Mother.’

A Mother is always the very embodiment of love, compassion, protection, goodness to her offspring. It is possible that in this creation of God there may be bad sons, but nowhere have we ever heard of there being a bad mother.

Therefore, “O Maharishis, because of My love for these erring children of Mine I engage them in battle and hurl these weapons. So by the very

contact with these divine weapons they become purified and liberated from their demonical nature. That way of killing them is actually My way of liberating them. I want them also to be liberated, therefore I hurl these divine weapons. I achieve this purpose of Mine in two ways: One is, the very contact with the divine weapons of Indra and Lord Siva and Lord Vishnu is enough to liberate them. And the second fact, that they are slain by Me, that also becomes the immediate cause of their liberation. Therefore, even to be slain by God is a good fortune. The moment base metal comes into contact with the philosopher's stone, immediately it is transmuted into pure gold. You may bring base metal in loving contact or you may hit it with the philosopher's stone, the moment it is contacted, the base metal becomes transmuted into pure gold. So this is the reason why I engage them in battle, hurl divine weapons upon them and then destroy them; all these are the manifestations of My motherly love and compassion towards them, so that they become liberated once and for all." Thus is the interpretation.

'Uttama Anga' means the superior part of the human body, the head. Here abides your human nature, your uniqueness, your ability to aspire for

God; therefore it is called ‘Uttama Anga’. So the ‘Uttama Anga’ should always be kept in a superior state. It should not by forgetfulness or inadvertence be transformed into an abode of anything that is not uplifting and elevating, noble and sublime. Then it will become your problem, and you will be creating your own bondage and suffering. So, the special significance of Mahishasura having an animal head should be understood in this way. It means that we should not make this superior portion that of an animal, but it should become a divine portion, having divine thoughts, great spiritual aspirations. Being divinely endowed with this human status, you must realise that it is a divine gift and utilise the whole of it every moment for attaining God-realisation. Then your entire life will become Yoga-oriented—because everything is Yoga!

In giving the Bhagavad-Gita teachings Lord Krishna did not merely mention the four traditional Yogas: Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga, Karma Yoga. He mentioned 18 different Yogas—each chapter is a Yoga. Even the first chapter is Yoga: ‘Arjuna Vishada Yoga’—The Yoga of the Dispondency of Arjuna. This conversation between Krishna and Arjuna is a Yoga Shastra, Brahmavidya, and Lord Krishna gave eighteen

Yogas. This is an indication that there are not merely four or eighteen Yogas, they are countless, they are countless. Everything that you do, all the innumerable things that you engage yourself in, everything should be Yoga for you. Everything should be the process of becoming established in that supreme state of God experience.

May the Supreme Cosmic Spirit and Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj shower divine grace and spiritual benedictions upon you, to enable you to realise this implication and live life as a great Yoga and attain the goal in this very incarnation. God bless you all!

Om Namo Narayanaya—Om Namo
Narayanaya—Om Namo Narayanaya!

in the Ashram. The Ashram is the manifestation of his penance and his prayers, of his deep meditation and of his lofty realisation. May his benedictions follow you all the days of your life.

Ages ago in the Vedic age beyond known human history, the illumined seers of the Upanishads lit a lamp in Bharat Varsha, the lamp of Brahma-Jnana, and that has forever banished the darkness in this land of Himalayas and Ganga. They have forever banished the darkness of night in the spiritual sense, and that light of the transcendental wisdom experience has burned through millennia, through countless centuries, ever enhanced by successive sages and seers, yogis and spiritual masters in each century; it has been augmented and ever brightened, so that even now the light burns brightly in India. They thus created a Nitya-Deepavali, an eternal festival of light, banishing the darkness of Avidya and Ajnana in this land. Those who turn towards this light become filled with it. Those who turn their back towards the light, their lives are benighted, they move about in darkness. Thus, it is for us to turn and walk towards the Light and become filled with the Light or to choose the other direction and live in darkness, deprived of the Light which is ever-present. The light shines brightly during the daytime, but for dungeons and burrows, for life beneath the earth, for them it is deep darkness.

Rodents and rats have their life below the surface of the earth. The sun that shines upon the surface of the earth does not mean anything to them. So, in the midst of light they live in darkness.

Even so, the plane we decide to live in decides whether we shall live in the Light that is ever-present or whether we shall live in darkness in spite of ever-present Light. Long ago the sages realised:

*Na tatra suryo bhati na chandratarakam
Nema vidyuto bhati kutoyam agnih
Tameva bhantam anubhati sarvam
Tasya bhasa sarvamidam vibhati*

(That Light of lights beyond all darkness shines where the sun does not shine, neither the moon, nor the stars, nor lightening, nor fire. It is that supreme, eternal effulgence that enables these shining bodies to shine.)

They shine with a light borrowed from that eternal Light of lights beyond all darkness; and our ancient sages of the Upanisadic era ascended, reached and established themselves in that great Light; they became illumined beings, and thus they gave that perpetual light of their experience to posterity. That is the wealth of India, and that luminous spiritual India is the real India, Adhyatma Bharata, Yathartha Bharata.

Outer India may die and pass away. Political India may keep changing every now and then. Economic India may go up and down. Social India may be in a chaos. But spiritual India persists and prevails at the very basis of all things as a silent, unbroken river flowing ever towards Satchidananda. She is a river of light. Eternally India celebrates this festival of Light. It is a permanent spiritual Deepavali for the real India. And those who are willing and dare to step into that innermost hidden depth of the spiritual life of India, they enter into a life filled with light, and they are able to declare, "I live in the light. The light lives in me. I am the Light." That indeed is the divine significance of Deepavali, celebrated not by a brief illumination of fireworks, after which darkness will continue to prevail.

May that light be your real dimension of living, so that you will be yourself a light in the darkness. That was the last message of the great sage Sakhya Muni, the enlightened Buddha, "O ye Bhikkus, be a light unto yourselves and be a lamp unto the feet of others that walk the highway of life." As long as this message keeps ringing down the corridors of centuries, how can there be darkness in Buddha's India? How can there be darkness in Veda Vyasa's India? When the Vedas are there, there is no darkness, there is only Light.

Vedas are the effulgence of wisdom. They are a mass of radiant effulgent wisdom.

Light alone therefore prevails; there is perpetual Deepavali for him who has eyes to see. We live in that never failing eternal light lit by the illumined experience of the ancient sages. There is no darkness in the land where you adore the Guru and where you live in the light of the Gurus, where you adore all these great illumined sages and seers from Narayana downward to the Acharyas and the modern teachers. The very principle or the very concept of a Guru is the one who removes the darkness of Avidya or Ajnana:

*Gukarascha andhakaro hi
Rukaara tannirodhakah
Andhakaar nirodhaya
gururityabhidhiyate;*

(the syllable ‘gu’ stands for darkness, and the syllable ‘ru’ stands for the annihilation of darkness.)

If the Guru abides in your heart, if the Guru abides in your life as the dynamic, practical application of his wisdom teaching in thoughts, words and actions, then you live in perpetual light, you cannot live in darkness. So if the Guru lives in you as his divine message, as the following of his teachings in every thought that you think, every word that you speak and every action that

you perform, then you are yourself a Deepavali to illumine the lives of everyone. A sincere disciple is a shining lamp, a radiant light in whom the light of Gurudev's wisdom teachings and his idealism shine forth brightly. He is a messenger of Light.

Long ago the sages lit lamps that are burning forever. Gurudev added his own light, the light of truthfulness, the light of purity in conduct and character, the light of compassion towards all creatures, the light of destroying selfishness within, the light of the lofty spirit of service, the light of devotion and adoration of God. He lit the lamp, he kindled the light of discipline, control of the senses, conquest of the mind, concentration and meditation. He lit the lamp of the light of right enquiry, of spiritual and philosophical discrimination, ethical and moral discrimination and ceaseless analysis and investigation into the Reality that shines within us as our own Self. He lit the lamp of Jnana, of Bhakti, of Dhyana and the noble selfless spirit of service. He lit all these lamps.

If you shine with these lights, then the divine life abides in you. If truth, purity and compassion abides in you, you are a source of eternal light, you are a radiant being. Wherever you go, you banish darkness and you bring light. Such indeed is the great privilege, the supreme good fortune of each and every one whom providence has brought

into contact with this blazing lamp, the light of divine life whom we call Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji.

May you become conscious that you are living in this state of perpetual light of true spiritual India to give to a world that loves to hug darkness, the darkness of material things, of atheism, hedonism, the pursuit of pleasure, the darkness of an unspiritual way of life, of egoism, of arrogance and haughtiness, of clash and conflict, of love and hate. This is what we see when we cast our light around us. But in the midst of this ocean of darkness you be an island of light! Cardinal Newman wrote a poem, 'Lead kindly light'. In the encircling gloom you are an answer to his poem. You are an implementation of Buddha's advice to his Bhikkus. "Oh ye Bhikkus, be a light unto yourself and be a lamp unto the feet of others who tread the highway of life." You have that potential, and Gurudev has made this possible for you, and upon this Deepavali recognise that you are the living lamps of spiritual radiance, of lofty moral and ethical idealism, the living lamps of divine life.

May you realise your true identity, and live your life in this lofty way. Then you will recognise what Deepavali really is and must be. God bless you all to see the truth and live the truth.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Radiant Immortal Atman!
Beloved children of the Divine!

Worshipful homage to that Great Spirit, the eternal Reality! It is the eternal amidst the non-eternal, the imperishable amidst the perishable, the never changing amidst the ever-changing, the beginningless and endless, the source, constant support and the ultimate destination and fulfillment. The ancient Vedic seers realised that eternal Being in their highest flight of spiritual illumination and declared, “That alone is real!” They attained It by dint of great renunciation, great aspiration and constant inner meditation and declared: “I have seen That Supreme Being by knowing Whom the mortal becomes immortal!” To That Being worshipful homage and adorations. May the grace of That Being be upon all of you!

Loving adorations to revered and beloved Holy Master Sivananda Maharaj, whose whole life was dedicated to bring about an awareness of the central fact that there is the immortal amidst the

2 Morning Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir

mortal, the unchanging amidst changing things, the eternal amidst the non-eternal, that there is the imperishable dwelling within the perishable. '*Vinashyatsu avinashyantam'*..... Behold that, O man!

There is a vision that beholds the eternal shining within this non-eternal name and form façade, the seemingly human, which covers and hides the divine indwelling. That quest is here and now, because the seemingly human surrounds you everywhere. Every day, the moment you wake up until you go to sleep again, you have to live and move in this human environment, in this human world. And in such a situation you are to perceive and dwell upon and ultimately experience the eternal One, the divine hidden in the human, the eternal within the non-eternal. Therefore, this great consummation of human existence, this great divine mission is not to be worked out at any other place or any other time, but you have to realise that it has to be worked out in the living present. It is to be worked out where you are and each day of your existence. Therefore, bondage and liberation co-exist and dwell together.

We have to recognise that what we think we do not have is right here. In this passing phenomenal appearance there shines with the splendour of a million suns the eternal, never changing, permanent reality. This was the great

truth Yajnavalkya tried to make his aspiring partner in life, Maitreyi, to understand. "Listen, O Maitreyi! All this is verily that Atman. Everything here constitutes what you think to be the realm beyond which you have to attain." The realm beyond is nowhere else than right here. We dwell in that great Brahman. If we grasp this subtle truth about ourselves, we will understand that it is the central fact of our life. That we have again and again to recollect, constantly to dwell and reflect upon, and by constantly dwelling, reflecting and deeply meditating upon it, we must transform the seemingly passing phenomenal appearance into what it is.

The ore contains the gold. It is the question of knowing this and setting to work upon the crude ore and sifting the gold out of the crude ore, because it is always there. One who discards the ore will lose the gold. That is not wisdom. But to focus upon the gold even while gazing at the ore, that is wisdom. Ignoring the unreality, seeing the reality, dwelling upon it constantly, one begins to know that one dwells in reality. Reality is the only fact. That is the only tremendous fact. God alone is. This is living in the truth; this is living in the light. And this living in the truth here and now and this living in the light always is your birthright. Should you not claim your birthright? That is why you are here, this is the opportunity!

In fact, this is the occasion given to us for claiming and getting what is ours. Thus life becomes glorified as it ought to be. Here is the time, here is the place, here indeed is the proffered opportunity by the Divine to the human. May we realise this and be free.

That was the one great aspiration, the longing, the wish of Holy Master Sivananda for all those who approached him. "Realise this and be free!" Do it, and become forever blessed. God and Guru have already blessed you.

Om Namo Narayana—Om Namo Narayana—
Om Namo Narayana!

Worshipful homage unto the Supreme Eternal Reality, the source and the origin, the support and the substratum, the goal ultimate and fulfillment of all existence; especially human existence, particularly our existence and specifically your existence. Each one of you is rooted in the Divine. You originate from that great cosmic source of infinite existence, luminous wisdom-consciousness and bliss. Whether you know it or not, you are based and supported in and by that Being. He is your Adhishthana (support). If you have been supremely endowed with many positive Karmas from the past, if you have obtained the grace of the Divine and if you have been fortunate to come within the orbit of the enlightening teachings of a liberated Master, then not only are you supported and sustained by That, but you make your life a conscious, purposeful process of the ascent of your spirit from its present state of limited human consciousness into a glorious state of infinite cosmic consciousness.

3 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 7/1/92

If you are in a state of awakening, of inner determination and purposefulness—you move towards that great goal of God-realisation. You initiate and engage in this process, you carry it forward to its culminating point of attainment and enter into an experience of that eternal consciousness. In this vast sea of earth-existence many flounder and sink; they never make it across. But there are a few fortunate ones who are called, who are chosen, and they make a choice themselves through this vocation.

Your life is geared to this steady upward ascent unto Divinity. And now, in the presence of Holy Master, you are among the chosen few - one among thousands.

*Manushyanam sahasreshu
kashchidhyatati siddhaye. (Gita 7:3)*

(Among thousands of men one perchance strives for perfection.)

Thus Lord Krishna has remarked about you. Among countless individual souls, blessed with a human birth, only a few strive for the attainment of perfection. You can count yourself among the fortunate few who are striving towards this great achievable goal, Sadhya Lakshya. Therefore, this life, being the glorious process of an upward ascent unto Divinity should be lived as such. Each

day should be a movement of your entire being towards that shining goal.

Life is what you make it. Things do not happen just by themselves. They are prepared by divine will, which manifests in the human individual as willpower or Atma Bala, as Sankalpa Shakti and Vichara Shakti. Therefore, the power to determine and resolutely move towards the goal is the working of the divine power inherent in man. That part of one's Sattvic being is more than human—it is God within us. The mind within man is looked upon as the Cosmic Power, the Divine Mother, Shakti. In the Devi Sukta one salutes the great Divine Mother as follows:

*Ya Devi sarva bhuteshu
buddhirupena samsthita
Namastasyai namastasyai
Namastasyai namo namah*

(Thou who art within us as our mind,
We bow unto Thee, we bow unto Thee, we salute
Thee.)

*Mana eva manushyanam karanam
bandhamokshayoh*

(Mind itself is the main cause of bondage and liberation.)

It is based upon this knowledge, this truth. Mind is the instrument given to us for attaining liberation, propelling us towards this great goal.

Thus fortunately endowed, you should rejoice and move towards this goal, determined not to be diverted by anything. You determine, “Under no circumstance shall I lose my direction, I shall not miss my goal. I shall not fritter away my energies in any other pursuit. But gathering all power, all my strength, all my energies, I shall move forward in this one direction in a continuous movement.”

In what direction? For what? You should be a compass to human society, like our ancient illumined teachers were a compass to us and showed us the direction. To keep us always in the right direction, they gave us this ancient prayer. Your life should move from passing unrealities towards the eternal Supreme Reality, the Sat Tattva. It should be a determined, resolute, unswerving movement from passing names and forms towards that great Eternal Reality. It should be an ascent from darkness or ignorance, non-discrimination, lack of right enquiry, into the light of divine wisdom. It should be an ascent from darkness unto the light of awareness. It should ever be a purposeful and resolute pushing forward to attain that realm, attaining which one does not return into this wheel of ever-recurring birth and death and rebirth. One attains immortality, going beyond death and rebirth. It should ever be a purposeful pushing forward towards that great goal where one becomes a partaker of everlasting

life, the realm of eternal sunshine beyond all darkness.

That is what the ancestors gave to us as the sure direction that life should take, ever towards the great Reality, ever towards the light of wisdom-consciousness, towards the transcendence of death and limitation - emerging into a state of eternal existence. Let us keep this prayer ever in our heart. Let us live by this prayer. Let this prayer be the sure, unfailing, compass needle within our heart.

*Asato ma sadgamaya
Tamaso ma jyotirgamaya
Mrityor ma amritam gamaya*

May this be your life. May this be your striving. May this be your direction.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Radiant Atman! May we all pay worshipful homage to the Divine Presence that is immanent in all existence. His presence has prompted us to lift up our thoughts from gross, temporary objects and direct it towards the Divine, at this very moment when we commence a new day. May we pay worshipful homage to that Being, who draws our consciousness towards Itself, day after day. The Lord calls us, the Almighty invites us, the supreme Cosmic Being draws us near to It each dawn out of spontaneous, motiveless grace!

To turn away from the Divine and lose oneself in the intricate maze of the phenomenal world and its processes is very easy. There are a dozen different reasons for it, a dozen different ways. The eyes draw us outside towards sights, shapes, colors, things. The ears draw us outside towards various sounds. All these signify and provide something to the senses—all draw us out to the inherent attraction of the illusory objects in the world. Their power to attract is inexplicable. It is

4 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 8/1/92

the outgoing tendency of the mind to think of things other than the Thing. All these draw our mind, our attention and our sentiments towards this great Mayajal, this widespread net of delusion and death. Everything in this universe draws us outside towards the many appearances, towards the temporary, the evanescent: sights, sounds, taste, smell, touch, memory, imagination, fancies, desires, cravings. All of them turn us away from the One and take us towards the many.

Therefore the individual soul is restless, tossed about here and there, pulled outside. Object after object is demanding attention, so the mind becomes restless or Chanchala, moving from object to object, jumping from one thing to another. It is in this context that at each dawn comes this great grace, drawing us towards Itself, calling us, lifting our mind up towards Itself. What more could one desire? What is grace if not this? The Universal Soul is drawing the individual soul - Paramatma is drawing the Jivatma towards Itself, out of great compassion, great kindness, Ahetuki Kripa (unconditional grace), *Akarana Karuna* (compassion without cause).

Let us recognize this for what it is—this spiritual fellowship, this coming together at dawn, this presence in the hour of prayer and meditation. It is not an event that happens in an Ashram, it is a cosmic process between you and

the source of your being. Know this dimension, the inner mystical cosmic dimension of your presence here each morning. Respond to it in essence and dwell in the Divine. Give thanks in the heart, and centre yourself in the Supreme Self. That day is a glorious day. That day is well begun. Commence your day by centering yourself in the Self, establishing yourself in the Divine, thus giving the right direction.

Equally great is Guru Kripa, the compassionate grace of the Master that has made this possible. Consider the world as it is today. What do you find everywhere? Throughout the world in all countries, east, west, north and south, there is restlessness, conflict, clash, upheavals, struggle, deception, scandals, concerning top government authorities and administrators, world within a world, the criminal world, mafia, trying to enslave people through addictions, bad habits, drugs, narcotics, prostitution, through all manner of destructive, diabolical processes. Everywhere there is chaos, restlessness, confusion, there is conflict, clash and denial of higher values. We see a picture that is distressing, troublesome, and in the midst of this scene that prevails in all countries and seems to be on the increase, even well established governments are helpless to stem this tide of negativity, of non-divinity, which is

enveloping global human society in a pervasive manner.

And yet in the midst of this we find these great centers of light, various groups and various organisations aiming in the right direction, sublime in their idealism. Though small, they are like oases in the desert, like light in the darkness, divinity in the midst of demoniacal perversion. The presence of these centers of grace constitute the hope for humanity.

Let us move towards the twenty first century: these centers of grace are manifestations of the supreme compassion of the Divine, of divine grace and benediction. They constitute positive hope, giving assurance in the turmoil that is present. Out of this turmoil will emerge something auspicious, something blessed and grand. Knowingly or unknowingly you are contributing towards this movement, towards awakening, towards enlightenment, towards a new beginning, towards an era of spirituality and the re-establishment of higher values. In your own way, in your individual life, in holy Sivananda Ashram on the banks of Ganga, you are contributing towards this subtle wave that is gathering force throughout the world. There are groups diligently striving, like Noah and his ark in the deluge, to keep alive and preserve sublime higher values, so that when the time comes, they

will be the basis of a new civilisation; they will be the foundation for the new era. Thus, girdling and enveloping the globe, these spiritual movements and groups are silently working to prepare for the advent of a new century.

The Divine Life movement, Sivananda Ashram and the spiritual fraternity were created by Gurudev 56 years ago in this place. On the 13th of January, the auspicious day of Makara Sankranti, this Ashram of yours and your society will complete 56 years of its existence in this modern world. Your coming together here morning after morning is an act that goes to strengthen these centers of divine force, divine grace and divine light. You may be moving about in Sivananda Ashram, but you are serving humanity, you are serving global mankind. You may think, "I am living an Ashram life within the narrow confines of Muni-ki-Reti, Sivananda Nagar and Sivananda Ashram", but what it constitutes in reality, in its global dimensions, in its impact and implication, its significance is more than you can fathom and know. Time alone can reveal what your life here, based upon divine principles, is to mankind. If you take a vaster view of what this life in this Ashram constitutes, then you will know.

Because of this we have seekers, spiritual aspirants, Jijnasus, Mumukshus, sincere souls

coming to this center of Yoga and Vedanta, of divine living, from all over the world. Like a great magnet it attracts such sincere seeking and aspiring souls. What is here? What is that hidden something? Ponder this. Try to know what you are surrounded by, what you are living in the midst of. Those from a distance are able to feel it; therefore they come. When we are in it, we sometimes are not able to come into full awareness of what this is, for which people come from all over the world to stay and absorb it, benefit, purify, sanctify and elevate themselves; but you are living in it 365 days a year from early dawn till late night.

It is in divine grace that we are living, and in grace our life is unfolding. We are breathing in grace. We are living, moving and having our being in grace. That cannot be evaluated. There is no price—it is invaluable, supreme, indescribable divine grace.

Let us recognize this fact and give praise to God and live in gratitude, accepting and utilising this grace to its very maximum and blessing ourselves by the manner in which we receive this grace and live it. We can raise ourselves by recognising what we are receiving, what we have received and what we are continuously receiving. Great is our good fortune indeed! Let us give thanks to God and recognise the value of what He is bestowing upon us and make our life the fullest

wise utilisation of this great grace. Our grace-filled lives are the result of Holy Master's supreme love, compassion and desire to serve all sincere seeking souls to cross this great ocean of existence and reach the far shore of eternal sunshine.

*Na tatra suryo bhati na chandratarakam
Nema vidyuto bhati kutah ayam agnih
Tameva bhantam anubhati sarvam
Tasya bhasa sarvamidam vibhati*

(The sun does not shine there, neither the moon, nor the stars. There this lightening does not shine, nor this fire. When He shines, everything shines after Him. By His light all this is shining.)

*Yadgatva na nivartante taddham paramam
mama*

(Having gone where they return not; that is My supreme Abode.)

*Tatah padam tat parimargitavyam yasmin gata
na nivartanti bhooyah*

(Then that goal should be sought for, from where none returns.)

That path has to be adhered to. Your whole life should constitute a sincere, nevertheless resolute and determined progress along this shining path of spirituality, of ideal morality, the radiant path of God-seeking. Casting away all

other thoughts, setting aside all lesser considerations, let us be intent upon utilising this grace that is so abundantly being given to us. No other proof is necessary except our present situation. Our immediate moment is proof beyond a shadow of a doubt about the richness of our sublime endowment.

Therefore, let us answer the call of the Upanishads, '*uttishthata jagrata prapya varan nibodhata*', Arise, awake and attain illumination! Attain enlightenment! Crown yourself with supreme blessedness. Become liberated. Become a partaker of that indescribable freedom and fearlessness, that state of Kaivalya Samrajya (transcendental state of absolute independence). May God bless you on this glorious path to perfection!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage unto Thee, O Eternal Universal Being! Thou who art the beginning, the middle and the end of all existence. We offer unto Thee our gratitude at this moment when You draw us together into Your all-pervading eternal presence in this sacred Samadhi Hall in the spiritual presence of our beloved and worshipful Holy Master. We bow to Thee and thank Thee for this spiritual fellowship bestowed upon us as Your spontaneous gift of grace this morning. We offer our gratitude and pray to enable us to live in such a manner that this grace would be partaken continuously as long as we exist. We pray for thy grace of drawing near to Thy presence each morning, thus sanctifying the day at its very start and entering into it with Thy benedictions.

Adorable salutations to your spiritual presence, Gurudev, who are the light and guide of our life! We ask you to grant us the inner strength to resolutely choose the way of the Shreya (good), not the mere Preya (pleasant). Each moment

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during this earth journey grant us the strength, wisdom and determination to choose Shreya. Your teachings have been to us the rousing call to a higher life. Your personal example has been to us the inspiration to adhere to a noble ideal. Your Ashram and your spiritual presence in it is enabling us to live in the light of your teachings and to emulate the lofty ideal of your own being.

Radiant and fortunate seeking souls! Spiritual aspirants, Sadhaks, Yogis engaged in Yoga-abhyasa according to your chosen path of Yoga, devotees of the Lord, lovers of righteousness and Satsangis assembled in the morning after Maha Sivaratri! We live here in this holy Ashram of Gurudev under the gracious benedictions of Lord Viswanath, the choicest blessings of Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya and the perennial inspiration of the spiritual presence of Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji.

The view of the Supreme is revealed through the scriptures and through His divine messengers, prophets and messiahs like Buddha, Mahavir, Zoroaster, Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, Guru Nanak, Sri Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Ramatirtha, Aurobindo Ghosh, Ramana Maharshi, Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji, Papa Ramdas, Anandamayee Ma, Nityananda Avadhut, Jnanananda. And all these great ones whom He keeps sending from time to time come to us with a

message that reveals the will of God for man. What is the divine will for the pilgrim soul upon earth? Their teachings put before us in simple and unmistakable terms God's plan for each one of us and also demonstrate in a practical way how we should live so that God's will becomes fulfilled. They keep before us a sublime noble ideal for fulfilling God's plan. They tell us what kind of life truly makes us a devotee, a follower of God and His saints. By walking in their footsteps, we fulfill our divine destiny. By living in accordance with their teachings and the teachings of the great scriptures, we become true to our calling. We become true children of the Divine. We become true Amsa's of Paramatma.

What is it that these messengers, divinely sent by God, have to tell us? What do the various scriptures of the world have to teach us? What is the message of the Vedas, Zend-Avesta, Old Testament, the Gospels, Koran, Guru Granth Sahib? If you go to the essence and the heart of the teachings of all the world religions, whether Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Zoroastrian, Judaic, Christian, Islamic or any creed or religion, they reveal the will of God. They present before us only two great ideals. Life means that and nothing else.

By including these ideals life becomes worth living. By excluding these ideals, life becomes worthless, a dreary waste, a meaningless nothing.

Life becomes a parody, a big joke. Life becomes a cipher, a zero, a nothing. It becomes but a pitiable demonstration of idiocy and foolishness. If these two ideals are taken away from it, life is not worth living. It becomes the mere filling of your bellies, sleeping and snoring, loving and hating, fighting and quarreling, strutting about with petty egos. Life becomes a poor show.

What are the two ideals which all religions exist to proclaim, all scriptures exist to keep alive, and all the great ones have shown us? The first great ideal is that as long as we live, we become benefactors to God's creation. And the second great ideal is that with every step and with every breath we take, we must strive our utmost to move towards God, to experience that great Reality. Being content to get enmeshed and deluded by false appearances and getting caught in the net of the temporary and perishable would be the greatest tragedy. It would be a tragedy to live in such darkness, bondage and ignorance, in such an abject state of slavery and delusion. There is no greater tragedy than wasting away God's precious gift by running after shadows and leaving the substance.

Therefore the clarion call of the Upanishads: Arise, Awake, open your eyes. See the truth and realise the Reality! Pursuit of that supreme experience is the only thing that endows life with

meaning and significance. Otherwise it is like an animal life or mere biological processes. Life can be degenerate. Criminals carefully think, using their shrewd intelligence for nefarious activities, ever keeping the police engaged, filling prisons, outraging normal citizens, keeping law courts busy. They make use of modern technology like electronics. But like worms that crawl in the gutter, they operate in a darkened plane of existence. They are drug-traffickers, smugglers, flesh-traders, poachers who destroy wild life in order to fill their pockets with wealth. They are those who kill elephants for their ivory tusks and batter to death innocent animals in the arctic regions in order to get fur for deluded fashionable people. They may be clever, but they are like despicable worms. The life of man is no guarantee of culture, goodness, lofty idealism and a high moral status. There is no such guarantee.

But fired with idealism, answering the call of the scriptures, following the footsteps of these great mystics and saints, you move towards this great ideal. You become a blessing to God's creation. You become a blessing by leading a divine life, full of compassion, kindness, wishing to serve, to do good; wishing to benefit and be useful to God's creation. As long as you live, Paropakara is the highest ideal placed before mankind by all the scriptures and all the

messengers of God. It is the great ideal, Paropakara.

If anything that belongs to you is mistreated or harmed, it arouses your displeasure. If someone damages your house, your car, or your property, you are displeased. If someone harms your family, your children, you are angry. But if someone benefits and does good to you and yours, you are very pleased. You must apply this to cosmic standards. This entire universe, all creatures, all things are God's creation, they belong to Him. He brought them into being. God is the supreme owner of the three worlds. If a soul that has been sent here is good to the handiwork of God, God's grace spontaneously flows towards that being. If you harm His handiwork and become destructive and negative towards His creation, you cut yourself off from divine grace, depriving yourself of divine blessings.

Therefore, the great ideal placed before us is to do all the good we can, living to benefit God's creation in all its aspects. This is the central teaching of all the scriptures. This is the Adesha, the order. Be a friend, the same way as you wish God to be a friend to you, to be gracious to you.

The second great ideal is to move ceaselessly towards God, worship Him, think of Him. Never forget Him. Link your life up to God; give your life to Him. Let your life be a progressive relationship

with God, ending in supreme God-experience. That is the only life worth living.

All other things are mere commentaries. If you know these two ideals, even if you know nothing else, you know all that is worth knowing. If you do not know these two things, even if you know all the scriptures by heart, your knowledge is husk, you know nothing. You are still in deep delusion.

Therefore, radiant Atman, beloved seekers and Sadhakas, keep these two vital ideals enshrined in your heart always. Live as ordained by God. Live to benefit His creation. Without these ideals life becomes a burden and a trap, and we are the losers. God has thrown wide open the gate to supreme idealism, supreme blessedness. If we turn away and imprison ourselves, we cannot blame God or providence, but the blame is squarely at our feet.

Life is short! Time is fleeting! The priceless gift of God is for you to take with both hands and utilise. May God grant you the insight, the understanding and the determination to live this one and only authentic life. May the gracious benedictions of saints like Gurudev enable you to successfully live towards these two sublime ideals and thus crown yourself with blessedness. I pray for God's divine grace to be upon you all. I pray for the choicest blessings of worshipful Gurudev to be

upon you all. May we live for some ideal purpose. Before departing live a life of shining light, and after departing may there be only good spoken about you. Live in the present so that in departing you remain as a light in the hearts of countless beings and one hears only that which is auspicious and good about the life you have lived and left behind. Thus may we live! God bless you all.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful adorations to the eternal all pervading Divine Presence, the indweller of all, the ever-present Divinity that is an ocean of compassion, grace and love! To that eternal omnipresent Being our worshipful homage! Loving adorations to the spiritual presence of Guru Bhagawan whose light, love and power instils and moves all things in this Ashram, this Ashram of his, which he brought into existence with the power of his penance and prayer, his illumination and Self-realisation.

The spiritual field is that area of one's living, being and doing which you call the life spiritual. We have given it a designation so that we may be in a position to understand its distinction within the common set-up of what is known as life in general, which is a life made up of the three principles, or the three factors.

The first one is the individual soul in a state of deep self-forgetfulness, and it is sense-led and desire-dominated. The second one is God, which,

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to that individual soul in this state, means someone from whom we can obtain all our mundane wants and needs, our earthly and secular supplies. For that we pray to Him, we observe penance, worship, we fast and keep vigil. We do charity, we bathe in sacred waters, we do Japa, we do worship with flowers and sandal paste—all this with the expectation that this Deity would help us live our secular life in a satisfactory, problem-free manner. The third one is this world, containing all that we require, all that we desire, all that we feel if we acquire and keep and enjoy—then life will become meaningful.

So this is an aspect of the life of the Jiva in this material world of things and one's relationship with all these things and one's daily encounter with God in order that the world may yield what one desires and make one's life full. This is the dimension made up of the world, God and you, where the world is the only reality that you know.

As distinct from this we spoke of the individual soul aspiring for God, for the Supreme Reality, and this world being considered as a field in which one may strive to approach nearer to God. It is called the spiritual life as distinct from secular life. But is it different? Is it completely unrelated and unconnected? Fortunately or unfortunately, we have to admit that, even though

these two may be distinct from each other, but they are not different from each other because it is the selfsame individual who has to function in both these dimensions—the inner subjective dimension and the outer objective dimension of one's life.

You cannot escape the fact that day by day, morning till evening, we live, move and have our being in both these dimensions. They are part of life. Day by day, we have to function upon the irrefutable fact of this world of things, of our requirements here, of its very much being here. You cannot just conjure away the world, its people, its things, its occurrences, its situations which is your 'field of life', physically speaking. Prapancha is the only reality we know. Paramatma is something we have heard of and we believe. Prapancha we cannot dismiss with the wave of a magic wand. One cannot climb to the roof without the help of a ladder.

All our spiritual faculties have to be exercised and developed in the secular setup of this material universe. Because that is the only field we have. It is due to this ever present fact that the Purna Avatara Lord Krishna incarnated. He made the high point of His Avatara-lila the imparting of the Gita Jnana Upadesha to the whole world for all times through His immediate disciple who was in a desperate condition, trembling, with palpitating

heart, head whirling, in a state of deep distress. One cannot conceive of a mental and physical state more pitiable, more anxiety causing, nevertheless more real than that of Arjuna at the end of the first chapter of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita. If only you take the trouble to study with keen attention the abject condition of Arjuna, you will understand how very serious the situation was. Making use of this occasion, the ever-present friend of mankind, Lord Krishna, imparted His unparalleled Gita Jnana Upadesha to humanity and to posterity. He taught the gospel of the here and now situation of man to Arjuna in his immediacy and showed him step by step with great sympathy and understanding the way to liberation. He taught him gradually how to make this involvement in the secular life a success. It became a method of communicating with the Divine in the midst of strife and struggle, action and occupation.

*Yogasthah kuru karmani sangam tyaktva
Dhananjaya (B.G. 2/48)*

(Perform action, O Arjuna, being steadfast in Yoga, renouncing attachment.)

*Yat karoshi yad ashnasi yajjuhoshi
dadasi yat,
Yat tapasyasi Kaunteya tat kurushva
madarpanam (B.G. 9/27)*

(Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer in sacrifice, whatever you give, whatever austerity you practise, Kaunteya, do it as an offering to me.)

Here he gave a formula of securing our spiritual evolution right in the midst of multifarious preoccupations and activity. He was pragmatic. He says, “There are these two distinct dimensions, and your material situation is something that is inevitable; you cannot simply ignore it. Be brave. Recognize it, and, O Arjuna, you are on the field of battle. You cannot hesitate. You cannot afford to vacillate. You must have all your perceptions clear, alert, geared to action. And you yourself have to engage in this. But I give you a philosopher’s stone which will transform all that you do into an additional process of helping you to attain; it is in addition to your Bhakti, your Bhajan, your meditation, your Yoga.”

Therefore, Krishna taught us to synthesise these two apparently different aspects of our life; seemingly distinct for the simple fact that you yourself have to function in both, the secular and the spiritual, the outer and the inner, Vyavahara and Paramatma. Knowing this, he said, “You have to know the key of fusing them into one”. He gave us a formula for this fusion of our actions, bringing them together into one concerted movement towards the Divine. He spoke of all the

Yogas—all the 18 chapters are designated as Yogashastra.

Tasmat yogi bhava Arjuna (Therefore Arjuna, be thou a yogi.) That is the Adesha. Keeping close to Me, if you fulfill all your duties and obligations in this world, I shall see to it that nothing will happen to you. *Kaunteya pratijanihi na me bhaktah pranashyati* (O Kaunteya, know for certain that my devotee never perishes.)

In this fusion or recognition of the oneness lies the unique vision of the Gita, the unique doctrine of being in the world but not of the world; knowing that the differences are apparent, and an inner deeper identity is the truth. So we have to know the secret of being where we are and attaining what we wish to attain. To this end Lord Krishna brought to our attention an unknown dimension of Yoga. *Yogah karmasu kaushalam* (Yoga is skill in action.) He did not separate Yoga from Karma. He did not separate meditation from activity. He showed us how both these constitute Yoga, must constitute Yoga; they should be synthesized, without losing Yoga or neglecting Karma. *Tasmad yuddhasva vigatajvarah* (Therefore fight, free from mental fever.) Due to your misunderstanding you have thrown yourself into a ferment, an agitation. You are weeping. Let go of all these temporary, self-created conditions and engage in action.

While functioning in the field of activity, be centred within. Be non-distinct from within. Samatvam. Such balance within is Yoga. *Samatvam yoga uchyate* (Evenness of mind is called Yoga.)

These great immortal and eternal truths should be our basis, our very centre, our firm ground in which we are rooted while moving towards God. *Samatvam yoga uchyate—Yogah karmasu kausalam.*

This lost or neglected concept has caused a great deal of confusion in the Indian Hindu society over centuries. Sri Swami Vivekananda and Gurudev Sri Swami Sivananda Maharaj have once again given back to us this intuition and insight, this knowledge of the essential non-differentiation of the two dimensions of our life; they pointed out the possibility of their synthesis and gave to us the path of integrated Yoga. Serve, love, give, purify, meditate, realise—this is integrated Yoga. It is the integration of the outer and the inner, the dynamic and the static; it is the relationship with the world and the relationship with God, making your life co-exist with the concept of Yoga. May His grace enable us to understand what Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya could not say in so many words, because he lived 1200 years ago. Many of the modern situations of life did not exist in his period. They came into being later on. And it is in

this new field that Gurudev made his advent, entered and had to function. Therefore, he gave his realisation, his vision and wisdom to us, to apply to us and the practical Sadhana in life. Thus he has enriched us, blessed us!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage unto the Eternal Supreme Reality, the timeless eternal Cosmic Spirit Divine! The Universal Soul is beyond the perception of the senses, beyond the thoughts of the mind, beyond the reasoning faculties of the intellect; transcending senses, mind and intellect, it is the supra-mundane, transcendental Absolute Reality. It pervades everywhere and it is present in all things as their very essence. It is the essence of your very existence and being. To that all-pervading, ever-present Reality worshipful homage! May Its divine grace be upon you all!

Radiant Immortal Atman! Sadhaks and seekers, Jijnasus and Mumukshus. An important fact of spiritual life, an important fact of the unfoldment of your personality and the evolution of your consciousness is that the beginning and the end are inseparable; they are inter-connected and inter-dependent. When you start some project, the end is not there. But you cannot say

2 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 5/8/94

that when you reach the conclusion of the project, the beginning is not there. While the first statement is a fact, the second statement is not a fact. The beginning is in the end also. When a child is born, in its state of infancy the adult child with its greater height, greater weight, greater strength and many other features is not there. In a small child the fully grown teeth of the adult boy or girl are not there. But at six, seven, 14, 15 years, 25 years, 35 years, something of the child is always there. Right up till the last breath leaves the body, this infant is there in the adult, the middle aged, the old and the dying person. The dying person still calls his mother, mother. He feels like a child towards mother. He may be 70 years old and the mother may be 95 years old—the infant in him recognises the mother in her. This is the truth.

A seed is sown in the soil, the water is poured over it and the seed breaks; the sprout comes out of it and simultaneously a root comes out and goes in the opposite direction of the sprout. The sprout leaves the soil and surfaces. The root goes down deeper and deeper and the seed becomes a sapling, then a plant and a tree. It may be towering 50 feet, 60 feet, 80 feet. The root is still there. The root that has sprouted may be on the second day or third day after seed was sown, and that root is still there. And not only is this

beginning—Adi—still there in the final stages, but it has grown stronger, and it supports the big tree. The Adi becomes the being.

All education, all instruction starts with the alphabet. No one is foolish enough to say I do not want or need the alphabet anymore; the alphabet is the basis of his learning in kindergarten, primary school, high school, in college, graduate classes, research classes, and even the thesis is based on this alphabet. Even to express his highest knowledge, which was not present when he started to learn ABC, the scientist also takes the support of the alphabet.

So there are certain fundamentals that are not only fundamental, but they are foundational. When you build an edifice, it is the structure on the surface of the ground that you want. You build it for that which is on the ground level, which you can enter, dwell in and then put structure after structure over it—first, second, third, fourth floor. But it does not affect the truth, the terrible truth that the foundation with which you started the structure is important all through, even when you are building its 20th or 50th or 75th storey. The foundation is something that cannot be dispensed with. It is connected as much with the 20th floor as with the ground floor; the foundation is connected as much with the 75th floor as it is with the ground floor. Because if there is an earth quake and the foundation is destroyed, the whole

building will collapse, the entire structure will come to the ground and will be a heap of rubble.

Therefore, the beginning may not be apparent, and the end may not be apparent in the beginning. It may be dormant, but the beginning is present right throughout the entire process; even when the Gopuram of a temple tower is completed and built over the main shrine, it is the foundation that holds it. This important truth is also vital to spiritual life.

A ladder rests upon the ground, not upon its rungs. It rests upon the two side posts of the ladder. The rungs are necessary to climb higher and higher; but not only for that purpose, the rungs also hold these two side posts together. And the integrity of the ladder as one unified thing is made possible if all the rungs are intact. If you climb from the first rung to the second rung, you cannot afford to knock away the first rung. As you climb up and you knock away the rungs below, soon the ladder will collapse. It is the rungs that hold it together. And if the side-posts collapse, they come apart, then there is no ladder, and you will also be down.

Thus other practices may be helpful in the raising of the structure, the various rituals and ceremonials and the outer forms of religions; outer forms of religion may be temporarily required like scaffolding. They also go from the ground right up to the top floor. As the building

rises, the scaffolding also rises. But when the building is complete, they are all taken apart. However, the foundation is not taken apart because it supports the building.

This truth is about all evolution, all growth, it is something that is to be deeply reflected upon and understood in its essence. Every step of your progress, your evolution and your growth, your upward ascent requires the support of the preliminary basis, the commencement. It may go in the opposite direction; nevertheless, it is important. To shoot an arrow, the hunter first draws the bow string backward. The arrow is to go forward, but he draws the bow string backward in the opposite direction. Every time an arrow has to be shot, he does this. Likewise seemingly the foundation goes downward, but the intention is to erect a structure that progresses in the upward direction. This primary process, the laying of the foundation makes it possible to do the vertical progress of the structure. The foundation is the strength of the completed edifice.

This is to be deeply pondered. You have to reflect upon it again and again and try to grasp the meaning and the significance of this truth in terms of your spiritual life, your ethical life, your health and strength, your personality development and unfoldment; your total evolution as a human individual depends upon your understanding of this fundamental fact. Wherever

there is a growth, it requires a support to make it permanent. Spectacular is the upward soaring movement of fireworks in the darkness of the night's sky, it is a beautiful sight, the source bursting into a sparkle. But afterwards there is nothing. Why? It does not have a foundation.

As I said fundamentals are also foundational. This truth has to be reflected and properly grasped in terms of your total evolution, whether it is physical, whether it is your personality or whether it is spiritual in the highest sense. Throughout the entire range of your unfoldment and development as a human being, as a seeker, as a Sadhaka, as a Yogi, as a spirit wanting to liberate itself from bondage, this truth has to be considered. This truth is the very secret of success in that particular field, in that particular aspect of your evolution, of your progress and of your perfection.

Therefore consider it, deeply reflect upon it. Try to grasp its implication, deep significance, and be benefited thereby through your deeper understanding of this central truth that the beginning is present in the end, that the fundamentals are also foundational and that they have to be carefully guarded and kept right through our journey to the highest perfection, liberation and supreme blessedness. This is the truth.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage unto the supreme Universal Reality, the eternal, all powerful Brahma-tattva, that is your support, source and goal ultimate. Loving adorations to beloved Gurudev into whose spiritual presence you have come at this hour for this early morning spiritual fellowship. May his benedictions be upon you all!

There cannot be a real journey without a specific destination. For unless there is a real destination, there cannot be a direction. Unless there is a specific direction all journeying will be an aimless wandering. There will be a lot of activity, a lot of movement. But it will not be directed in a self-chosen, meaningful direction. It leads nowhere. If a destination has not been well conceived of, chosen and fixed, you cannot move in its direction. All movement, all activity becomes aimless.

It is so even in the ordinary sense for this journey which we call our life on earth. We are not talking about philosophy, religion, metaphysics,

3 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 26/5/94

Vedanta, or evolution unto perfection in the higher sense. We are talking about the normal level of human life and the living of it. Even at this humble simple level, unless and until a person conceives for himself or herself a specific achievement which is very clear and meaningful in terms of benefitting oneself and others, life becomes an aimless wandering. It has to be gainful if it has to be meaningful to others also.

By eating green grass and freshly cut leaves, cattle flourish. They are benefited, they grow. Therefore, when a housewife of a hill family goes out to gather grass and pluck leaves and comes home, brings fodder and puts it before the cow, all activity becomes very meaningful to the cow eagerly awaiting her return. She has not laboured in vain that day. Because the hungry cow is able to appease its hunger, it is meaningful and gainful to it. It gets nourishment; it gets fulfillment. Therefore, the activity of this good lady becomes gainful, meaningful, valuable, because the children get the milk of the cow, and there may be surplus milk and the hill farmer is able to get some money also. The entire family is benefited—the man, the children and the cow. This hardworking, good, simple lady gets a certain satisfaction in going with a cutting implement, gathering grass, climbing up a tree, cutting down twigs and feeding the cow. There is an all-round value in this simple, unsophisticated action, and

when she gets up in the morning, she has something to do. She is eager to wake up early, so that she may gather more grass and more leaves. She is looking forward to the day, for she has a definite aim and a purpose. It may be humble and simple, but it is beautiful. It gives value to her life, gives meaning to her day and gives a purpose to her activity and leaves no room for a sense of emptiness. She knows what she has to do. She is propelled with a sense of confidence and sureness, for she has a destination in terms of certain duty for that day.

A destination therefore, need not be high-flown and highly idealistic. It has its value even in its immediate gain and significance to your own here and now piece of life on that day. Therefore that day is found to be full and satisfying; it adds to one's sense of usefulness and to one's self-respect. That indeed is the essence of recognizing your Divinity, recognizing your worth. If you have self-respect, you salute yourself. You say, "I salute myself, for I am created by the all perfect Being. I salute myself, for I am a child of God. Within me is something that is worthy. I am not in vain."

In this context, ever since the year 1932-33, two poems of Rabindranath Tagore have played a prominent part in my vision:

PURITY

*Life of my life, I shall ever try to keep my body
pure,
knowing that thy living touch is upon all my
limbs.*

*I shall ever try to keep all untruths out from my
thoughts,
knowing that thou art that truth which has
kindled the light of reason in my mind.*

*I shall ever try to drive all evils away from
my heart
and keep my love in flower, knowing that
thou hast thy seat in the inmost shrine of my
heart.*

*And it shall be my endeavour to reveal thee in my
actions,
knowing it is thy power gives me strength to act.*

GIVE ME STRENGTH

*This is my prayer to thee, my lord—strike,
strike at the root of penury in my heart.*

*Give me the strength lightly to bear my joys and
sorrows.*

*Give me the strength to make my love fruitful in
service.*

*Give me the strength never to disown the poor
or bend my knees before insolent might.*

*Give me the strength to raise my mind high above
daily trifles.*

*And give me the strength to surrender
my strength to thy will with love.*

These two thought patterns and images have got a touching relevance, a beautiful, vital relevance to our own lives in terms of a destiny and for the formation of our own personality, our Svabhava.

Your life is no longer aimless, if you have something to live for, something to work for which is definite and specific. You know in what direction to move. You look eagerly forward to each day because you know there is a task to perform, a certain thing to attempt. You are at peace with yourself. "Something attempted, something done has earned a night's repose", thus the poet says. It is not only a night's repose in the biological sense, it is also a heart's repose in a psychological sense; the heart is at rest for it has moved in a specific direction, engaged in a meaningful and gainful activity. It is not a tangible thing but it is felt and experienced in everyone's life. It may be an unseen benefit, it may not be tangible in terms of bank notes in a wallet or a purse. But it is a value in that you can feel your self-respect being enhanced, and it has a value that others experience as they gain a healthy respect for you. Through that value which you produce and make others experience, they find you valuable. There is no negative thought anymore.

How can you expect a sense of satisfaction, a sense of elation, a sense of self-respect unless there is a specific destination and a sense of moving towards it? Even if it is not achieved, moving towards it, getting nearer is itself an achievement in its own way. For each step nearer to that destination brings you closer, and as we said the destination need not be something over the head, above the sky. It need not be transcendental. A rural wife from a hill family finds fulfilment because of a definite purpose which is gainful, which is meaningful, not only to herself, but to others, to all of us, to man, child, animal. Wherever you are, life should be meaningful. And in terms of the higher reality, the whole of life assumes a meaning and a value if there is a destination.

Therefore, we have to make use of what has been inherited from our past; we have to make use of what has been given to us by the great souls from our very recent past. Mahatma Gandhi, Tagore, Swami Sivananda, Swami Vivekananda, saints, thinkers, poets, sages—they have been providing for us a meaning in life, providing for us values and goals to live for, to work for, to find a sense of elation and satisfaction in great abundance. They have laboured in order to make our life enriched, to make it deeply meaningful, highly significant, most valuable. This is the truth. May God bless you!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage to that supreme eternal all-pervading and indwelling Reality, the great universal Spirit Divine—within which everything exists and which exists in everything and within whose infinitude all of us live, move and have our being. This is the great Truth, and one who strives to live in the awareness of this truth becomes inseparably bound up with the Divine Spirit.

*Yo mam pashyati sarvatra sarvam cha mayi
pashyati*

*Tasyaham na pranashyami sa cha me na
pranashyat (B.G. 6/30)*

(He who sees Me everywhere and sees
everything in Me,
He never becomes separated from Me and I
never am separated from him.)

With these words the Divine World Teacher Lord Krishna lets us into the secret of the mystery where the sincere seeking soul is ever bound up in intimate spiritual oneness with Himself. “
.....

into this secret. See Me in all things and behold all things existing within Me, for I am everywhere and in all things. Then there is a divine link between you and Me. We are inseparable. You will never be apart from Me. I shall never be apart from you. This I tell you so that you may know and be blessed, for I have given you direct access into a divine secret—how to ever be in a state of Yoga with Me". Being in this state of Yoga, you will be untouched by Maya.

In success and failure make your mind one. Such oneness verily is declared to be Yoga. *Siddhyasiddhyoh samo bhootvaa samatvam yoga uchyate* (The same in success and failure— evenness of mind is called Yoga.)

This is the secret of being established in inner Yoga by the awareness that all things exist in the Divine and the Divine exists in all things. It is a great grace that the Gita Jnana Upadesha has to give to each and every one who is ready to receive. Wherever you are, in whatever condition God has placed you, amidst whatever work, in all conditions, circumstances and situations you can keep up this inner union with God if you awaken to the awareness of this great Fact—God in you, and you in God. This is the eternal unchangeable Fact. The whole universe dwells in Him, and He dwells in the universe; countless billions of universes dwell in Him, He dwells in all the

countless billions of universes, in all things that exist. This is the central spiritual truth of the living experience of your ancestors born in the land of the Vedas, Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita, born in this land of Vyasa, Vashistha, Yajnavalkya and Janaka.

Living thus, people are able to dwell in God, while living in this world. There is no need for separation between you and Me. And where God is, there is peace, prosperity, victory over all things and success. This is the concluding assurance, the culminating declaration at the very end of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita. All these teachings, all these admonitions and all these instructions become useful to you only if you connect yourselves with the Lord. If we have to benefit from them, we must obey them, we must incorporate them in our life. We must place them on our head and in our heart with reverence, for this is a divine directive coming from God. They are sacred, they are to be venerated. In this way we get a deep feelingful Bhava towards every word that is uttered in the Srimad Bhagavad Gita wisdom teachings. Then alone the Gita will be to us mother, father, protector, guide, friend, philosopher, light on the path, armour, a fortress, a weapon and everything. Gita will become to us everything that a person needs to go through life and come out with success, attainment and with

blessedness. Gita has it all. Gita is the fullest of divine teachings for humanity, for all times. Gita gives complete assurance.

But if you read the Gita, master the Gita and spurn the advice, the Sandesha, Upadesha, Adesha, if you treat them lightly, neglect to keep them in the heart and follow them, then you will be in no better position, even if a 100 Gitas existed. During the time of Jesus He was rejected and crucified, during the time of Mohammed He was ill-treated, and in the same way we shall be rejecting and refusing to accept the existence of Lord Krishna as the Jagadguru.

*Ahamatma gudakesha sarvabhutashaya-
sthitah
Ahamadishcha madhyam cha bhutanamanta
eva cha
(B.G. 10/20)*

(I am the Self seated in the hearts of all
beings, O Arjuna;
I am the beginning, the middle and also the
end of all beings.)

That indwelling Reality is our greatest benefactor, greatest Hitakankshi (well-wisher). And even as Arjuna rejected the advice of Krishna in the beginning, we also will be in the same state as Arjuna, because we will have rejected Lord Krishna and His teachings, being ruled by

something that is not a principle of *tadviddhi pranipatena pariprashnena sevaya* (know That by long prostration, question and by service.)

The great World Teacher is an eternal World Teacher. In the wisdom teaching of the Gita He is an ever-present, ever valid, ever-relevant and ever-available light on the path for us. But if our attitude towards this ever-valid, ever-relevant, ever-existing and ever-available teaching is one of taking it for granted and feeling satisfied that we know it, this dangerous attitude will leave us poorer and deprive us from all the enrichment which the Gita is capable of giving us.

It exists in order to bring all this enrichment. If we cut ourselves off from it, we will be deprived, not because of anything lacking in the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, but because we have not cultivated within us the right appraisal of it, the right attitude towards it.

This therefore is the all important question: “How are you related to the Gita Jnana Upadesha, the great path of wisdom, the illuminating teaching, capable of guiding you till the ultimate goal is attained? How are you related towards these teachings? Are you related towards it like Arjuna of the first chapter or like Arjuna of the last chapter?” This is the decisive question about the

value of the Gita for you today, at this moment and at this point in your life.

Ponder this well, and decide what you will make of the Gita for yourself today. God bless you, and may the benedictions of Holy Master be upon you all and show you the right path and take you along the path that leads to your highest welfare. We should not live in poverty with riches available to us right at hand.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage unto the Eternal Reality,
Anadi Ananta Brahma Tattva, Bhagawan—
Jehova of the followers of Judaism, Ahura Mazda
of the followers of the Zoroastrian religion,
Nirvana of the followers of the Buddhist
philosophy, the state of perfection or
Siddhavastha of the followers of Jainism, the
Almighty Father in Heaven of the Christians,
Allah of the followers of Islam, the Supreme Tao of
the ancient Chinese philosophy—the Anadi
Ananta Parabrahman Tattva, the beginningless
and endless, the eternal Brahman of the
Upanishads! To that Eternal Reality we offer
worshipful homage at this solemn morning hour
at the conclusion of your blessed spiritual
fellowship. May the light of that Supreme Being
manifest within you as a new awareness of your
essential, imperishable divine nature. May the
light of that Supreme Being illumine your
intellect. May the light of that Supreme Being

4 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 1/6/94

shine upon you. May the light of that Supreme Being manifest from within you as numerous, sublime spiritual divine qualities expressing themselves through your thoughts, feelings, words and deeds.

Loving adorations to beloved and worshipful Holy Master Gurudev Shri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in whose spiritual presence we have gathered here. His lofty teachings show us the way and give us the practical method of how to awaken the light within, how to obtain the light of grace of Parabrahma, of that supreme Eternal Reality.

It is said in the Kathopanishad:*Yamevaisha vrinute tena labhya*.—.(That Being is attainable and accessible only for those whom It chooses.) It is not a plaything in the hands of someone to give. You reveal Yourself to those who You feel are ready to receive.

The Srimad Bhagavad Gita wisdom teachings contain 18 chapters. The Lord did not choose to impart the vision to Arjuna until he had finished ten chapters. It was only in the 11th chapter that He thought, “Now is the right moment to give Arjuna the vision so that he may behold the truth.” Only after the midpoint He chose to give, because Arjuna agreed to accept. One agrees to accept when one begins to know that “I do not

know, therefore I require to be taught and shown the way.” Arjuna did say ‘*sishyaste aham shadhi mam tvam prapannam*’ (I am your disciple, please instruct me), however, in the earlier chapters Arjuna was listening, but he was not prepared to receive. He was arguing, and he was trying to bring his logic to bear to prove Krishna wrong. ‘*Aho bata mahat papam*’—“Alas, what a sinful action, O Krishna! Why are you goading me towards this?” In this way, he was arguing, disagreeing, questioning Lord Krishna’s attempt to bring him out of his delusion. It went on in the second chapter, third chapter, fourth chapter, fifth chapter, and in the sixth chapter he directly contradicts Krishna. He says, “What is the use of You describing me all these techniques of concentration, meditation, stilling the mind—it is as impossible to control the mind as it is impossible to control the wind.” He was ready with his opposing views to whatever Krishna taught even in the 7th, 8th and 9th chapter.

I am trying to tell you what the Upanishads have declared: ‘*Yamevaisha vrinute tena labhya*’. And the true devotee says, “My habit is to go on working for that attainment and waiting.” Work for it, pray for it and wait. You have to work for it, you have to pray for it and wait. What is this working and what is this praying?

We have to follow two great ideals, Paropakara (service of others) and Sakshatkara (direct realisation), Bhagavad Sakshatkara (Brahmajnana). What is the Swarupa (essence) of Paropakara? What is the Swarupa of Sakshatkara? The Swarupa of Sakshatkara is obtained by rejecting all things within us that are untrue, that constitute ignorance and again and yet again affirm, assert the Truth, the Reality. This is the Sadhana, our ancients have said, which leads to Sakshatkara. And the essence of Paropakara is Tyaga. Tyaga—renunciation—is for everything that holds us bound to our present state of Vipareet Jnana (false knowledge), of Dehatmabuddhi (body consciousness) which constitutes the essence of Avidya and Ajnana. All that binds us to this present state of a false human consciousness has to be rejected, if you want to be a Paropakari. Our Tyaga should result in the good of others, in the happiness of others. Tyaga is for the manifestations of Avidya and Vipareet Jnana of Dehatmabuddhi. First of all is Ahamkara (ego; arising out of Ahamkara is Swartha (selfishness); arising out of Ahamkara and Swartha is Asakti (attachment)—the chain has been described in the Srimad Bhagavad Gita. Through Asakti you dwell upon things of this passing world, this Anitya, Asukha, this Ashashwata (not eternal). You dwell upon them

only. You take them to be Nitya, Shashwata, Satya. Dwelling upon them you have desires for them. Desire leads to anger. Anger leads to confusion. Confusion leads to loss of wisdom. Loss of wisdom leads to losing whatever you are trying to gain. And all these spring out of Dehatmabuddhi. Paropakara means giving up the manifestation of this primal ignorance, the Dehatmabuddhi. Tyaga can be only manifested through Nisvartha (selfless) Paropakara, Nisvartha Karma-Yoga, Nisvartha Seva. Tyaga of Avidya, Ahamkara and Swartha results in widespread benefit and happiness to God's creation.

Swami Sivanandaji made such a Tyaga more than 60 years ago, out of which the whole world benefited. First of all his immediate patients benefited, the sick and the suffering in Malaysia. Later on the Sadhus of Swarga Ashram, the villagers and the pilgrims benefited. Later on all of us have been benefited. And then the whole world is benefited. Out of his Tyaga came *Maha Maha Paropakara, Loka Kalyana Janahita* (great benefit to the whole world).

Sakshatkara is the constant affirmation and assertion of your true nature and rejecting all that is contrary to it. Out of this the highest benefit comes to you. These two are linked together. Tyaga and Paropakara are linked to Abhyasa and

Bhagavad-Sakshatkara, Atma-Sakshatkara; they cannot be treated apart. Out of Gurudev's Tyaga came his Tapasya, Sadhana, Vedanta and Sakshatkara. And he shone as a great illumined and enlightened sage of India and a Yogi of the Himalayas and became established in the hearts of millions due to a combination of Tyaga and Abhyasa.

Vairagya and Sadhana are the two great ideals. Shaving the head or changing the name or the colour of your cloth is useless, meaningless, if you do not work for the real inner transformation. Gurudev worked for it, and his Tyaga became meaningful and fruitful and his Bhagavad-sakshatkara became a fact. How much he worked and for whom you can read in his 'Autobiography' where he speaks of what Sadhana he did; you can read 'The Light Fountain' and the chapter dealing with his Swarga Ashram Sadhana days. Then you will get a glimpse of the makings of Guru Bhagawan Swami Sivananda Maharaj. May His glance of grace and hand of blessings and benedictions be upon one and all.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage unto you, the supreme eternal non-dual Divine Being! Worshipful homage unto you, O you transcendental absolute Reality, the One without a second, the all-pervading reality! You are greater than the greatest and tinier than even an atom—‘*Anoraniyan mahatomahaniyan*’! Worshipful homage to you! We have all gathered in the spiritual presence of Holy Master in the sacred Samadhi hall on the banks of divine mother Ganga, in the lap of the Himalayan mountains. You encompass all things, but at the same time you indwell even the smallest. Your divine mystery cannot be known, you only know yourself! May you make yourself felt in the hearts of all seeking souls. Loving adorations and reverential prostrations to worshipful and beloved holy master Gurudev Sri Sivananda Maharaj. We bow to you again and again, and we invoke the grace of your spiritual Presence in this early morning hour of the 6th day of November 2003 upon all those assembled here.

I Morning Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir in 2003

Radiant divinities in the form of inmates and visitors of Sivananda Ashram. The service that I offer to you this morning is that you may think about the implication of certain terms. Have you ever reflected upon the difference between being awake and being asleep? What is the difference? The person who is awake is aware of the passage of time, whereas the person who is asleep does not know anything.

You have all heard the saying “Time is precious”. Not to be aware of the passage of time and allow it to pass away means that you are losing something precious. And losing something very precious is not very wise. Do you want to be wise or do you want to be told that you are not a wise person? Therefore, a person who suddenly realises from this point of view that he is sleeping needs to wake up; because when time passes away which is precious, it actually implies that life is passing away. Life is nothing but seconds and minutes and hours, days and months and years. When you declare your age and write your age 57 years, 9 months and 15 days, what do you mean? Since your birth so much time has passed. During that period what have you achieved, having come upon earth as a human individual with a mind and an intellect that can think and reason, what have you done that will find favour in the eyes of God, in the eyes of the wise men? Where do you stand? I don't merely mean about things in the secular life, but also achievements in the inner

field of your nature, of your psyche. Have you been able to rid yourself of things that are negative? How much time have you spent in the all important process of overcoming yourself, of ridding yourself of factors which are obstacles on the path towards the great goal of life, which are barriers between us and God?

'Uthishtata jagrata', both mean the same thing – Awake! Put an end to sleep, put an end to the non-awareness of the passage of time, put an end to the non-awareness of what you are losing. Awake, do not slumber any longer! Arise, because only a person who is awakened can arise. Therefore, both imply shaking off slumber and being in the state of wakefulness and awareness. *'Prapya varan nibodhata'*—‘Having reached the wise, become illumined!’ The usual English translation of the 3rd admonition is not very accurate. It really means ‘attaining the feet of those worthy one’s, the great ones, become fully and truly awakened!’ To be physically awakened is not bad, but it is not enough; you must also be mentally awake and alert, so that you can be active in enquiry, discrimination, investigation.

I know a person who calls himself ‘Khoji’; he writes little books and puts his name as Khoji. ‘Khoji’ can have two meanings: (1) one who is seeking or searching; a seeker is a Khoji. “Seek—Find—Rest”, so says Gurudev in oneplace—“Seek God, find God and rest in God, be in

God.”—(2) The second meaning of ‘Khoji’ is one who has lost himself; he is so much absorbed in God that he is filled only with God. He has lost the awareness of himself, because he is completely filled with the awareness of God.

Beyond Swami Premanandaji’s Ashram in Uttarkashi is an Ashram with a homeopathic dispensary. One person would do the selfless service of finding out who requires some treatment; he visits all the Ashrams, traces the names of the Sannyasins and their troubles and symptoms. He would bring those details to the dispensary, take the medicines and go back to deliver those medicines to the patients. When I used to go for a walk in Uttarakashi we sometimes met each other. Actually he resides in Swargashram, and I have some of his booklets in English and some in Hindi. In Hindi he writes very knowledgeably and gives a big list of virtues, positive qualities that mean goodness, that are helpful to others, and he ends by saying that you should benefit yourself by cultivating all those positive qualities and you must get rid of all those opposed to these; he does not detail there, he does not give a list of negative qualities that we must avoid. He says anything and everything that means the opposite of these positive virtues has to be got rid of.

One of the things to be got rid of is slumbering away the precious time and depriving yourself of

the golden opportunity that time means in terms of striving to attain the great sublime goal of human existence—God, God and again God! Wishing the welfare of mankind, a saint therefore says: “Life is a journey, and we have come here to reach the destination.” We do admit, when a journey is done on foot, we cannot keep our movement towards the destination all the twenty four hours. We have to make halt somewhere and rest and sleep a little, but not overdo that. It is through sleep we restore ourselves, but we must be up before the crack of dawn to resume the onward journey. We should not allow the sun to rise upon the sleeping traveler, the sleeping you or the sleeping I. By dawn one should be already up. Therefore comes an admonition “O Traveller, awake and arise, it is already dawn!”

*Utha jaga musafir, bhor bhayi,
Aba raina kahan jo sovat hai,
Jo sovat hai wah khovat hai,
Jo jagat hai wah pavat hai.*

One who slumbers after dawn becomes a looser, one who is awake at the crack of the dawn becomes a gainer.

One sometimes wakes up early and goes back to sleep again—that is the tiny second sleep, but it can be very harmful, very damaging to your aspirations. The poet says that God never sleeps; He is always awake and is by your side while you are sleeping. Is this respectful of God? Is this

reverence to God?

Ma Anandamayee used to sing “Hey Bhagavan!”
You have to keep on calling God always!

*Tuka nindase ankhya khol jara
Hey gafil rab se dhayn laga
Yeh preet karne ki reet nahi
Rab jagat hai tu sovat hai*

This is not the way of showing your devotion towards God who is standing by your side, and you are sleeping. You have to work out your destiny; you are your own saviour! You have to overcome your previous Karma. You have to pay back for everything that you have committed before. It will be necessary to manfully strain to overcome the obstacles caused by previous Karma and in spite of them progress towards the goal in a determined way.

As Madhavananda Swamiji used to say,
*Avashyameva bhoktavyam kritam karma
shubhashubham*

‘Where is peace and restfulness in sin?
Having committed wrong action in your past life,
we have to pay pie for pie in this very life.’

You cannot escape this. Therefore you have to be very alert, watchful and awake moment by moment about mental, physical and verbal actions you are performing day by day. If you are not wakeful and commit actions that are not correct, they all accumulate and become a load

hampering your onward journey. They become like a washerman's bundle of dirty clothes taken to the Dhobi Ghat. A big load of sins is tied on your head hampering your progress. What is the use of weeping? You should have made the bundle impossible by walking on the right path, committing no sin, keeping your mind and thoughts clean. Therefore don't play with life. What can be done tomorrow, do it today; and what can be done later, do it now! By moments your life span is diminishing. When the fields are full of corn, the farmer with his family has to be vigilant day and night, otherwise the birds will peck all the corns. Until he reaps the corn and takes it home, the farmer does not rest. Therefore, whatever is to be done, do it now! And you can only do it now, if you are awake! If you are slumbering, you are careless and lose the passage of time.

Therefore, by the grace of the Supreme and by the blessings and benedictions of Holy Master, today's service offered unto all is Wakefulness, Alertness, Vigilance! One who is alert, awake and vigilant gains the supreme treasure of treasures. He attains God! A slumberer is a loser; but the one who is awake gains!

*Dattatreya Dattatreya Dattatreya Pahimam
Dattaguru Dattaguru Dattaguru Rakshamam*

Hari Om Tat Sat!

*(Message of H.H. Param Pujya Sri Swami
Chidanandaji Maharaj upon the auspicious day of
the Golden Jubilee of the Yoga Vedanta Forest
Academy at the sacred Samadhi Shrine on
3rd July, 1998)*

Great wisdom, spiritual wisdom, great teachings we have inherited from our ancients as our cultural heritage. It is most precious, this wealth of spiritual wisdom, this wealth of ethical and moral teachings. It has been enhanced by the unbroken succession of teachers who have appeared in each generation. It behoves us to likewise add to it and enhance it in and through our lives, before we hand it down to those who are to come after us, the unborn generations. It is our privilege and duty to augment and enhance this wealth.

In this wisdom heritage ‘Yoga Vedanta’ is included, it is part and parcel of the cultural heritage of Bharatavarsha or India. Vedanta means the highest transcendental experiences that have been expounded and described in the

concluding portions of the Vedic Scriptures. These records of ancient transcendental experiences are to be found within the brief laconic contents of the Upanishads. Together, the Upanishads constitute Vedanta, and they try to describe the oneness of the seemingly separate individual consciousness with the supreme universal consciousness. There is really no separation. There are not two; there is one only. They are expounded in various places through the ‘Neti Neti’ method: eliminating all within us that is ‘non-Self’, that is ‘non-eternal’, that is unspiritual,—‘unspiritual’ in the sense that it is inert, Jada, part of the phenomenal nature (Maha Maya), whereas ‘spiritual’ is pure consciousness, luminous, vibrant consciousness. They expounded this in the typical Vedantic way, first describing the various bodies: gross, subtle, causal; then the various sheaths: the food sheath, Pranic sheath, mental sheath, intellectual sheath and the sheath of bliss; then the three states through which these various components pass: waking state, dream state, deep sleep state, and how the real consciousness is a witness of all these states; it is witnessing but unaffected, totally detached, distinct and transcending all. Thus they try to lead us to that state which is our ‘real state’. Beyond waking, dreaming, sleeping there is the fourth state—that is the subject matter of the Upanishads. The fourth state is

timeless, spaceless, transcendental bliss, pure consciousness, where there is nothing but the Light of lights beyond all darkness, the Supreme Light of Divine Consciousness—this is Vedanta.

And how to attain the fourth state of consciousness, devoid of any sorrow, pain, suffering, regret and remorse, but full of peace, serenity and bliss; how to attain it?—They also formulated a science—that inner science of the Spirit known as ‘The Science of Yoga’ or ‘Yoga Shastra’. One of the six schools of philosophy is called *Yoga Darshana*, *Yoga Shastra*. The great Sage Patanjali systematically expounded it through a number of aphorisms. Sometimes the word ‘Yoga’ is also meant to describe the supreme state of transcendental wisdom-consciousness. One who is in a state of oneness with Brahman is said to be in a state of Maha Yoga, the great Yoga, like Ramana Maharshi. But the common use is to indicate the science of practical spiritual attainment. We find the term ‘Yoga Shastra’ also in the Bhagavad-Gita; it is transcendental wisdom or Brahma Vidya and it is also *Yoga Shastra*. It contains both the exposition of the Supreme Reality as also the method to attain that state; both are within the 18 chapters of the Bhagavad Gita. These are the two main subjects discussed and taught in this ‘Yoga Vedanta Forest University’—a University located in a forest which

teaches science of Yoga and which expounds the transcendental wisdom of Vedanta.

Therefore, if you want to enrich its heritage and hand it down to prosperity, more enhanced and augmented, then you must yourself be a practitioner of Yoga, and you must yourself be a being who is striving to become established in this Vedantic consciousness; you will put fresh life into it, add to it by your own living Yogic experience and living Vedantic experience. It is our duty towards this great cultural heritage; the present time is the appropriate time to enrich the past and to hand it over to the future. Let us do it.

May the Supreme Almighty by His grace help us to do it, and likewise may beloved and worshipful holy Master Swami Sivanandaji support our efforts and bless them with success. This is the sharing of this morning upon the auspicious day of the Golden Jubilee of the Yoga Vedanta Forest University. Hari Om Paramatmane Namaha! God bless you all!

Om Namo Narayanaya—Om Namo Narayanaya—Om Namo Narayanaya!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage unto the Supreme Divine Reality, which is the source, the support and the ultimate subsidence of all that exists! Worshipful homage to that all-transcending Absolute, the non-dual divine principle that is the beginning, the middle and the end of all existence! It is beyond time and space, eternal and infinite, all-pervading and indwelling all things—*Isavasyamidam sarvam yat kincha jagatyam jagat*. It is tinier than an atom, so tiny that it is invisible to the human eyes; and it is greater, mightier than all the millions and billions and trillions of universes put together—imponderably great. Indwelling all things, pervading all things, one non-dual Absolute—without name, without form—to that great transcendental Reality, worshipful homage!

Reverential salutations and loving adorations to Holy Master, beloved Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, who tried to instil in us a great aspiration to make that Supreme Reality the

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goal of our life, to live for it, to strive to experience it, to take to the life spiritual and take to the path of Sadhana and to ever progress onward, forward—and not stop until the goal is reached. Thus he was an inspirer.

When this servant of Gurudev steps into the hall, he bows in reverence, with worshipful Bhava, at three things: one is that little Mandap in which is kept a big book; secondly there is the beautiful marble Murti of Sriman Narayana with four hands – Shankha, Chakra, Gada and Padma; then he bows to Gurudev in the Samadhi.

Why does one bow here? Of course, it is natural. The book meets the gaze straight on the opposite side of the door—it is Veda Bhagavan. It is the ancient collection of knowledge about all things in this world, about human life, about various rituals and ceremonies that one has to do when one is born in India. A little composition by the great Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya called Sadhana Panchakam (Five verses on spiritual Sadhana) says in the first verse, *Vedo nityam adhiyatam taduditam karma svanushthiyatam* ('Read and study the Vedas daily, and whatever actions it asks you to do, you must do.')

Why? Because it is the book of life. It tells you about all the religious rituals and ceremonies that you have to do. Then it tells you about the

Sadhana you must do, the inner meditation that you must do, towards what you must direct your mind; and ultimately it tries to describe the nature of that Great Reality—so that it may become something tangible and you can conceive of it in the mind, and gather all the rays of the mind and meditate upon it, aspire to realise it. This last portion is the instructions, the knowledge and the revelations of the Upanishads. So, we have one portion telling about all the rituals and ceremonies—Karma Kanda; there is a second portion telling you about your Sadhana—Upasana Kanda; and there is a third portion which gives you knowledge about the Supreme Reality.

That third portion, Jnana Kanda, is the clear exposition of that Supreme Reality which transcends mind, thought and words—a description by those who have actually attained That Great Being—sages and seers of transcendental experience. Jnana Kanda is the revelation of these great ones.

All this is contained in this storehouse of knowledge, and out of it the quintessence is given by all the great sages in their own works. And one sage who has done the most to take the essence and give it to us is Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya. He wrote a commentary upon all the Upanishads;

he wrote a commentary upon the Brahmasutras, which contains the quintessence of the Upanishads; he wrote a commentary on Srimad Bhagavadgita. The Gita makes many intricate things clear because it is a dialogue; many questions are asked, and God Himself in the form of Purnavatara Bhagavan Sri Krishna gives the answers to these questions. He clears all the doubts. Many difficulties are put before him. He tells you how to go beyond those difficulties, how to face them, how to resolve them. Solutions are given to problems, doubts are cleared, answers are given to questions. So it becomes man's popular Upanishad, man's popular Brahmasutra. Therefore, in as much as the Gita contains the quintessence of the Vedas, we bow to Veda Bhagavan.

Now, upon this day we may consider certain quintessential instructions that we have received from our ancients. One is that time is the very stuff of life, therefore do not waste time. Time lost is so much of your life lost. Utilise your time in a very noble manner, in a worthy manner. What is the way of utilising your time, your life and talents that God has endowed you with in a noble and worthy manner? If you want to sum it up, that is the way of spending your time and utilising all the potential you have, out of which the highest good

comes to you and simultaneously, the greatest benefit comes to God's creation.

This planet earth with all its living creatures—from the most evolved creatures—your fellow human beings to the least of creatures, even to a vermin crawling on the ground – let maximum benefit come forth through your thoughts, words and deeds to all of God's creation; simultaneously strive for your own good. If you want to do it, you have to do it here and now. You have to use every moment of time in a creative and constructive way, in a profitable way. That is realising the value of time, and that is wisdom.

If you want to live such an ideal life, then you must live in awareness. You must have the awareness, "I am a renunciate, I have come here to live the spiritual life, to be a Sadhaka and make Sadhana the most important thing – everything else is secondary. The most important thing is spiritual Sadhana, and in this very life before I drop the body, I must attain the Supreme Experience." This awareness must be there so that your whole life is put into an ideal spiritual mould. Then unerringly, it moves in a single direction, in the direction of God-Experience.

For example, if you are the son of a noble family, if your father, grandfather, great-grandfather have been very well-known as people

who lived an ideal life, men of great compassion, great kindness, who tried to help those in distress, with a magnanimous heart and never hesitated to sacrifice their own comfort in order to comfort others and go to the aid of those who were alone, helpless and in trouble. Belonging to this lineage these people never treated anyone as other—they treated everyone as their own family members. They were great givers and great benefactors. And now you are the present generation. If you always live in the awareness—“I am succeeding my father, grandfather and great-grandfather; in this city everyone knows them and has got high regard for them. Therefore, I must keep up the reputation of my family. I should live in the awareness that I belong to this family, and this family has earned the respect and reverence of all people”. If you live in that awareness, you will live as a worthy successor to such great people. That is the importance of living in awareness.

In the same way, a Sadhaka lives in the awareness, “I have left everything—my home, my relatives, my friends, my money – whatever belonged to me. I have forgotten even my identity, I have come here as a devotee of God, as a Sadhaka on the spiritual life”. If it is within you always, then this awareness will make your renunciation and your sacrifice worthwhile, this

awareness will make the life which you have now entered worthwhile. That is the instruction given in the Sadhana Panchakam by Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya. In the very beginning of the five verses, he mentions the word Vedas and the wisdom and the message contained in it and the practical instructions that it holds for us.

You must utilise all your 24 hours in a worthy manner, but there are certain junctures which are very important—and during these periods you must be in meditation. Early dawn—when night and day come into a junction point; midday—when am and pm come into a junction point; and evening—when day is withdrawing and night is gradually coming. There is something in these junction points; nature becomes fully Sattvamayam, and the mind automatically goes inward due to Sattva prevailing and pervading—it is called Sandhi Kala, Trikala – a Sadhaka will not waste these junctures when the Sattva in the atmosphere makes the mind go inward towards the Reality that is indwelling your body.

*Deho devalayah prokto jivo devah sanatanah
tyajet ajnana nirmalyam soham bhavena pujayet*

This body is declared to be a temple, the dwelling place of the divine. And your real nature is no other than Brahman, the Supreme Reality—you are a part of that Supreme Reality,

you are a wave upon that ocean of Divinity. Before the Pujari in the Viswanath Mandir commences his early morning Puja, whatever flowers are upon Lord Viswanath from the previous day are first of all removed; with old, stale things, one cannot offer a new worship. These left-over flowers and decorations are called Nirmalyam in Sanskrit. In the same way, in this body temple where your Reality is one with the Supreme Being, Ajnana—forgetfulness of God or of your Real Nature—is the stale thing which has to be removed, which deserves to be removed.

And what is the worship? It is invoking from within you the awareness, “I am worshipping this divinity, that divinity I too am—because I am a part of that.” The individual soul is a part of the universal soul. Jivatma is part of Paramatma. In power, size, quantity and other things we may be little, and It may be great, but in quality we are ideally the same. I am no different from this being whom I worship. As it is divine, I am also divine. If you live in the awareness of this divinity, and daily invoke this inner Bhav, then your life will become divine.

Every Sadhaka, during these junction points must be found contemplating the Divine. At these points, you should not be wandering here and there. You should be in your Kutir. This is

self-discipline. The Ashram may not have drawn a rule, but at that time everyone should be inside one's Kutir and not be wandering here and there. Sadhakas who dwell in this Ashram must make it a point to voluntarily impose this pattern of living. Early morning I must be in my room meditating, at midday I must think of God, and after sunset I should not wander here and there. I should be in my room doing Sadhana until the supper bell is rung. I must take my supper and then go to Satsang.

For this morning gathering and the night Satsang, we must all be here together. The whole purpose is that we all feel that we are one family. We are living together, we are eating the same salt, and we are following the same way of life put before us by Satgurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. Therefore our life has a similar pattern. And you must not forget that you are a Sadhaka, you have come here to lead a spiritual life and do your Japa and meditation or study the scriptures and imbibe knowledge. This knowledge becomes the material for your contemplation and your reflections when you are alone. This is the way Gurudev would expect us to live our life so that the highest benefit will accrue to us.

As we keep up the reputation of the family in which we are born, we should keep up the

reputation of the Ashram in which we are living, we should keep up the reputation of beloved and worshipful Gurudev who is known as a world-awakener—not an ordinary guru, a real Jagadguru—because he has got disciples all over the world. Having put these truths before you, I conclude my service to the Almighty, my service to Holy Master Swami Sivanandaji, my service to all of you who are centres of divinity because your body is a temple to that Divine Being. Thank you.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage unto the Light of lights beyond all darkness, from whom the Sun derives its light. The Sun which is the brightest of all objects within human experience, compared to which the moon and stars fade into insignificance – to You who are the source of the Sun itself, to You who is resplendent with a divine radiance equal to the light of a million Suns—*Koti surya sama prabha, jyotisham api tajjyotih*—worshipful homage unto You, who are also our indweller!

Can we imagine what light is shining in our own spiritual inwardness—can you imagine? Have you ever thought about this? Day by day, if you keep this awareness, “I am a radiant being, I am filled with the radiance of a million suns; wherever I go and whatever I am engaged in, I still carry this radiance within me”—you will be a radiant being! If you forget it and engage your mind in thinking about other things, despite this radiance, you can still carry darkness within you. It depends upon your mind. As the mind is, so is the man. During a solar eclipse, the sun loses all its radiance as if it has been covered by heavy

3 Early Morning Meditation Talk on 9th November, 2003

clouds. In the same way, our mind covers our awareness of being radiant divinity with the cloud of forgetfulness and we grope in darkness.

Therefore, to be aware is life. To be self-forgetful spiritually is death. I am very fond of handing out spiritual literature to visitors, because that was one thing Gurudev taught us to do. Gurudev always kept free spiritual literature, and when visitors came, he not only entertained them with tea or coffee and biscuits—and for children he gave toffees, chocolates, Badam and Kaju (he liked to give cashew nuts). He gave it with a grandfatherly attitude—let them eat, enjoy. They used to take it reverentially as Prasad.

You can say, “Oh, that is only small Prasad. Is that okay?” This is not real Prasad. This will be digested and finished off. “Oh ji, bring that free literature, that latest literature. This is my real Prasad. This will serve you for your whole life. This is spiritual food.” He used to give that. And I also do the same thing. There is always a collection of spiritual literature here in Guru Nivas and in Dehradun, in Shanti Nivas. And I always tell them, “Whatever else you give—give them fruits, some sweets; and if children come, give a separate range of things—toffee, little biscuits. But have you given them free literature? First of all you give the free literature, and then you give the Prasad which they can eat and digest, but first give free

literature to take with them!” Prasad is temporary, that is permanent.

I am very fond of giving the small book of the American mystic James Allen—‘as a Man Thinketh’. The full idea is ‘As a man thinks, so he becomes’—and in the west in the time of James Allen, there has been a movement called the ‘New Thought Movement’. The New Thought Movement dictum is: ‘Mind is what makes the human individual’. Whatever type of thoughts you hold in the mind, your nature, your personality will become according to that. Your behaviour will reflect the contents of your mind. Think you are a human being, you will act like a human being. Think you are a devil, you will act like a devil. Think you are a God, you will act like a God, live like a God, and your nature will become like that of a God, divine. Alice Bailey was another important personality in this upsurge of new thought. The New Thought Movement was spearheaded by Ella Wheeler Wilcox, James Allen and a number of others.

They had a saying, an affirmation—and one was the universal affirmation. It contains three verses from the point of light – ‘Let light descend and enter into me and fill me’ –these are the three verses called the ‘Great Affirmation’. But a short affirmation is: ‘I am in the light, the light is within me, I am the light.’—‘I live in God, I am in God,

God is within me, I am God’—*Aham brahmasmi*. You think lofty thoughts, you will become lofty. You think crude negative thoughts, you will become a crude negative person. You think godly thoughts; you will become a godly person. I live in the divine, the divine lives within me, I am the divine.

There was once a person who thought crudely and lived a cruel life as a dacoit in a dense forest, and he used to waylay unwary travellers and show them a cudgel—“Give everything and go!” If they did not do as he said or showed signs of strength of resistance, he cudgelled them, broke their head with a stick and forcibly deprived them of all their possessions and kicked them out of sight. Due to the grace of God and due to the advice of some saints and sages who were passing that way—whom he also assailed and wanted to rob—this same dacoit became convinced that this is very, very bad for him—what he is doing is verybad for him, because there is a law of Karma—as you sow, so shall you reap. As you act, the reaction of it will come upon you. One day it will come smack in your face. You will have to pay for it pie by pie. So don’t think you are very clever. You are foolish. You are heaping coals of fire upon your head. Just think how it will be when there will be coals of fire upon your head. They instilled fear into his heart, and when he thought of the

result in the future, then his heart began to tremble. He fell down to his knees and weeps and cries, “Show me the way to get out of my own clutches. I am in the clutches of my crude self and I have become de-humanised, I have become cruel, harmful and hurtful to my fellow human beings. Now I realise. Please, show me the way!” They showed him the way. Saints are compassionate—they forgave him 100% instantly.

Gone was even the memory of what he was going to do to them just a little while back, and they blessed him, showed him the way of reforming himself, the way of leading a new life and becoming a transformed person. And so, this very same person became a compassionate saint, with a heart filled with kindness and with a deep feeling for the welfare of others, for the happiness of others. It was a miraculous transformation—like the transformation effected by the philosopher’s stone upon iron. Iron is a base metal and gold is the most valuable metal of all. The philosopher’s stone transforms iron into gold—crude metal into the superior-most of all metals. Such a transformation was wrought in him, and he became a great sage.

One day he started from his forest hermitage—where he was contemplating God and praying for the welfare of all humankind –towards

the river to take bath, followed by a disciple. As he approached the river, he saw a hunter going about hunting with bow and arrow. This all-compassionate sage is shocked, outraged and scandalised to see that the hunter is taking careful aim at a pair of cranes that are just pairing together to produce a family. They are on a tree top pairing, and the hunter is aiming an arrow at these love-filled birds to cruelly shoot them. Spontaneously—the words—unconsciously, spontaneously—the words rush out of the sage's mouth, "*Ma Nishadha!*"—"Don't Hunter!" A hunter is called Nishadha. "*Ma Nishadha!*" he cried in protest. And then follows a torrent of words in chaste Sanskrit language, and strangely enough, the words don't issue out in the form of prose—the words issue out in the form of poetry. So he becomes the first poet in ancient Indian history. His name is Maharishi Valmiki, and he becomes known as Adi Kavi, the first poet. And he was not a sage previously—he was a dacoit in the forest, breaking people's heads and depriving them of their possessions.

If he can become like this, what is not possible? If a dacoit can become a sage, if iron can be transformed into gold, what is not possible? Everything is possible, provided your mind helps you bring about this transformation. After all, the only endowment of man which differs man and

animal is the mind. An animal plus a thinking, reasoning, intelligent mind is man. Otherwise man and animals have the same features—the only thing is we think, and they cannot think. We have a mind, they have no mind. All animals think in the same way. It is instinctive thought put into all animals by God for the sake of their survival – because the basic instinct of all animals, all living beings on earth is the instinct of survival. Any harm, any danger comes, they will run away. Who taught them to run away from danger? It is the instinct of survival. It is programmed into them. But we have the ability for voluntary thinking. We can think in this way, in that way, and we have got selectivity of thought. We can think in any way we like and we can reject some thoughts. So we must make use of that selectivity. Let us make use of that rational intelligence God has given to us and make ourselves divine.

If the transformation of a dacoit into a compassionate sage is possible, what is not possible?—This comes in the Krauncha Vadha chapter of the original Sanskrit Valmiki Ramayana, of which the Tulasi Manas Ramayana is a much later version in order to make the lofty sublime narrative of the Ramayana available to the non-Sanskrit knowing general public.

So, today's sharing is—your mind is the greatest gift God has given you. You are the

crowning glory of His creation because of this gift. Utilise this gift well, in a positive, creative and constructive way, in a sublime, divine, elevating way and bless yourself. You are the master of your destiny. Mind can make you what you want to be! It is your great endowment. Utilise it well.

Om Namo Narayanaya—Om Namo
Narayanaya—Om Namo Narayanaya!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage unto the supreme, all-pervading, immanent and indwelling Divine Reality. May the Divine Grace be upon us all. Loving adorations to revered holy master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, whose benedictions and whose blessings have made us what we are at this moment. Gurudev has blessed all of you who are seated here in this hall with the unparalleled gifts of a human birth, aspiration for liberation, living in contact with great sages and the knowledge of the way to attain supreme blessedness through his loving instructions and spiritual teachings. A combination of all these precious benedictions in one single person is very rare—you are the recipients of all of them. Therefore, do everything that you can to avail of them fully, for having attained liberation, one does not come back into rebirth and bondage. Freedom becomes one's permanent possession.

We spoke about this entire phenomenal creation revolving upon the two spokes of

attraction and repulsion, love and hate, attachment and aversion (Raga-Dvesha). We saw how it is inherent in God's nature. Therefore, as long as we are within the domination of these two forces, we cannot rise to the spiritual experience. Therefore, the injunction of Lord Krishna: "O Arjuna! Become non-dual. Rise above both and attain the Supreme Being." We also saw how Raga and Dvesha are inseparable because they are like the obverse and reverse sides of the same coin. Being made of the same stuff, they are inseparable. If one is there, the other must also be there. If Raga is there, Dvesha must be there; and if you have succeeded in casting off one, then you have already cast off both.

To be similarly transcended is the set of three qualities (Gunas). The quality of darkness that goes down—grossness, lethargy, obstinacy, obduracy, unwillingness to change—is called Tamas. Then there is the quality of deluded activity, ceaseless activity and ceaseless outgoing tendencies. This arises out of the wrong notion that the world is a solid reality—everything here is very important—and therefore, if we don't pay attention to that, then either we will be lost or the world will be lost. So there is the notion that the world depends upon our presence and activity, and our life depends upon the world and all that it has to offer; and we do not know that it has to offer

only fights and quarrels, conflicts, sorrow, old age, disease, separation, success and failure, honour and dishonour, fulfilment and disappointment. This is what the world has to offer, and yet the power of Maya is such that we know it intellectually, but fail to see it because our eyes are veiled by Maya.

We think, “No, no, it may be like that to others, but it won’t be like that to me” and “Even this will pass away, good times will come”. Like that we go on living and hoping that something will turn up, but that which turns up is Yamaraja—death himself. By that time further hope becomes impossible. Then we realise how very foolish we were. Instead of making the best of whatever time was available, we went on hoping for something better to crop up. This is deluded Rajas.

The third quality is of the nature of pure light, it is an upward going tendency, nearest to God, it is of God’s nature—Sattva. That has to be increased and cultivated. So, you must know how to do this—how to cultivate Sattva, increase it, develop it and make it part of your nature, grow in that nature; how to curb and put a stop to the vagaries of deluded Rajas and keep it completely under your control; and how to completely eliminate and get rid of Tamoguna—it is no good, it is the animal in you; it is anti-spiritual—not

anti-God, but anti-spiritual, undivine by its very nature. There is only one way you can deal with it—you have to get rid of it. To the extent that it is possible, totally get rid of it.

So, getting rid of Tamoguna, totally controlling the Rajoguna and encouraging the increase of Sattvaguna is part and parcel of Yogabhyasa (practice of Yoga), a very important part of Yogabhyasa. Yogabhyasa does not merely consist of techniques like Asana, Pranayama, Mudra, Bandha, Kriya, Suryanamaskara, meditation etc. It is also the transformation of your nature. It is the total transmutation of the very quality of your Svabhava, the quality of your life in the world. Total transformation is an integral part of Yoga. For the more you increase the divine nature, the God nature, the greater is the possibility of your being and the God-being becoming one, because That is already in you. You are part of Him. But this is completely overshadowed, seemingly lost and forgotten in this chaotic state created by the three Gunas. Unless you put them in their proper place, you will not be able to re-establish this eternal union between yourself and God.

This is the task. The Lord devotes a whole chapter of the Srimad Bhagavadgita for this task, by making clear to us what are the symptoms of the presence of the preponderance of Tamoguna,

what are the symptoms of the presence of the preponderance of Rajoguna, and what are the symptoms of the presence of Sattvaguna—then we can clearly recognise where we stand. That itself is an art and science, it is a part of Vedanta because it is the study of human nature, and it is also part of Yoga because it is a technique of transformation.

May the grace of God and Guru enable us to attend to this important aspect of the life divine and Yoga Sadhana. God bless you all.

Om Namo Narayanaya—Om Namo
Narayanaya—Om Namo Narayanaya!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Radiant Immortal Atman! Beloved and blessed children of the Divine! Pilgrims upon the path, this highway of life that commences with an entry into this earth plane and concludes with an exit from here. We have to undertake this journey endowed with the ability to think, reason and investigate what we observe around us in this universe. In this situation and with this endowment, the least that is expected of man is that he makes use of this endowment which makes him unique and to enquire why one is here.

The great Cosmic Intelligence has thought it fit to send you here for a temporary period, in which the only certainty is that one day you have to leave this place. Everything else is fraught with uncertainty; you cannot predict anything. It can be this way or any other way—it is in the hands of some unknown Power. In the midst of these uncertainties there is one thing which is absolutely certain, and that is that one day we have to leave. It is equally certain for a highly learned and erudite person, a triple Ph.D., or an

illiterate person who has to use his thumb impression as signature. A dacoit, a sinner, a wretch, a curse to human society and a saint, an embodiment of virtue, kindness, compassion—all have to leave. A saint or a sinner; rich or poor; famous or unknown; erudite or fool, a capitalist or a communist, an occidental man or an oriental man—anyone and everyone—we have this ultimate conclusion of our life—we have to leave.

But when that moment of departure will come, how it will come, in what manner and where—that is uncertain. A very good astrologer or a palmist may say, “You will have your death with water. Therefore, don’t go near water.” He may give a vague indication, “You have got a safe life until 76-77 years; afterwards there is the possibility of a serious illness and departure. If you tide over it, you have another lease of 3 or 4 years.”

Jatasya hi dhruvo mrityuh

‘Certain is death for the being who is born.’

This is the declaration of the One who has brought us into being, so He must be knowing! But uncertain is the way in which we will depart. This being the observed fact and the universal truth, a thinking man should enquire, “Have I

come into this world only to die and go one day? Or is there something more to life? What is my goal? Why have I come? To attain what,to achieve what,to fulfil what objective have I come?”

Why it is necessary to ponder these questions—not at the last moment, but right at the very beginning—will be evident from an analogy based upon the idea that life is a pilgrimage. Supposing you want to go on a pilgrimage to Rameshwar. You enquire right at the beginning about the conditions that prevail and also about the place and the distance, so you can proceed in the proper direction. By preparing yourself for the journey, you minimise the discomforts, the hazards and the likely hardships. This is wisdom; it is common sense. You make enquiries and provide yourself with all the things that are necessary, so that you may not suffer, but make your little trip enjoyable.

When we do this even in this outer world, how much more logical and rational would it be to start our life's journey by trying to enquire which direction we must go? What is the objective with which I have come here? And in order to attain that objective, what is the direction I should take? In what way should I equip myself for this life's

journey? It has its own hazards—Janma, Mrityu, Jara, Vyadhi, Duhkha—you all know, you have already gone through the mill. How much likes and dislikes are there, fights and quarrels, how much struggle, jealousy and envy and goodwill or lack of good will—you have to go through all these. If you are not wise and ask yourself a few questions about life's journey, its destination and the direction you have to take, you will be belying your human status as thinking and reasoning beings. The least that you owe yourself is to first of all ask, “Where should this journey of life ultimately take me? And if I want to reach there, in what way, in what direction should I purposefully proceed forward?”

If this enquiry is done right at the beginning, then you are in a vantage position. If you fail to do it, you are handicapped, and your life will be aimless, full of confusion and conflict. But if there is a clear-cut goal before you, a well-conceived and a firm knowledge that in order to do the journey successfully, you have to adopt certain principles: “I will never postpone anything. I shall be punctual, and I shall always be hard working, I shall not be lazy, because time flies away; a past moment cannot be recalled, it will not come back. Therefore, now is the time, I should always be up

and doing.” In this way activity, dynamism and the firm determination to oppose laziness and lethargy and the will to overcome obstacles without being daunted by them—these are all things with which you equip yourself in order to attain the goal within the limited time which is given to you. Now, you may say, “How am I expected to do all this spadework? Who will teach me the skills of a right commencement of this life’s journey?”

In our present day educational system it is not provided. But there was a time in our beloved Motherland when education started with these various branches of knowledge, so that the person going through the educational period was a person who was fully equipped with all the knowledge. How to lead one’s life in a meaningful and purposeful way—that was the Gurukula system of education. It was the wise dividing of life into four clear-cut stages, each characterised by the name Ashrama: Brahmacharya Ashrama; Grihastha Ashrama; Vanaprastha Ashrama, and the fourth: Sannyasa Ashrama.

The very first stage of life is important in two ways. Firstly, just as the foundation is the most important part of a building though it is

unseen—but without a proper and strong foundation, no building is possible; if the foundation is not well done, the building is always in danger and will not be enduring. Therefore, the foundational part of life needs all the factors necessary to make the later structure ideal, enduring and unassailable in every way. And secondly, this foundational stage also is the most impressionable stage of the human individual; the human individual has just come into life and is like a sheet of paper on which nothing has been written. We can write anything and in any colour—it is in our hands, a blank page for us to fill with whatever we wish.

We know that no human individual, no Jivatma, comes with a blank Chitta—we all come endowed with subtle Samskaras and Vasanas carried over from several life experiences in previous bodies. Whatever we have enjoyed in a particular direction and in the normal perceptual experiences is in the form of subtle impressions. They are called Samskaras, and the specific tendencies or inclinations of wanting to experience certain things and enjoy life—they are in the form of Vasanas. Every Jivatma comes with this already rooted in the subtle body, in the Anandamaya Kosha or the Karana Sharira. But it

is in a state of latency because in infancy the brain, the central nervous system and the mind stuff are not yet prepared to manifest it. In this stage the present life can become an enriching factor. It can take on Sattvic and creative Samskaras, if the individual is put into the charge of a wise and understanding teacher and in an environment conducive to the harmonious growth of his emotions, thoughts, reasoning powers and the building up of strong physical health. Pure air, pure water, pure good food, exercise, good habits, early rising and early to bed—a well regulated life where everything has its fixed time – this was the pattern to which the child was exposed in the ideal past of Bharatavarsha. In the most impressive stage of his life the child was put into the Gurukul living a healthy life and getting all the necessary knowledge, all the questions answered, many doubts cleared, many directions pointed out according to ethical and hygienic principles. Equipped in this way, he became an ideal young person.

When he entered into the second stage of life, he was an enlightened person who knew what his goal was and how he had to live to attain that goal. In the Brahmacharya Ashram he received the Brahma Gayatri in his 8th year through thread

ceremony and from that time onward started his daily Yogabhyasa, concentration and meditation thrice a day—before sunrise, at midday and at sunset—sitting quiet, making the body steady, doing some Pranayama and then Gayatri Upasana (worship), praying to God to forgive his mistakes and errors and then Gayatri Dhyana. Thus Japa, Dhyana, Prarthana, Pranayama, Asana, all became part of his daily routine right from the age of 8 or 10. He led a life of Yoga Sadhana and Prarthana, Bhakti, Bhajan, concentration, meditation and Upasana, he served his Guru, put service before self and shared whatever he had with his fellow students. He learned reverence of elders, of all life and the dignity of labour. He took upon himself all tasks, no matter from what family he has come—getting Durva grass for the Upasana of the teacher, collecting firewood and fuel for his Havan and Homa and getting water from the river or from a waterfall and thus doing all types of work. This training was ideal for becoming selfless, Seva-oriented and aware of the dignity of labour. In this ideal atmosphere the individual's life foundation was laid, and when he entered into Grihastha Ashrama, he knew whatever had to be known.

What is our condition today in our Bharatavarsha? This pattern has been replaced and not for the better. But then, even though this is lacking, the spade work is done for getting to know why we are here, what we have to achieve, what is this universe, what is the meaning of our life and what is our ultimate destiny. Even though there is no provision to impart this in our present life, which has become topsy-turvy and vitiated due to the onslaught of so much outer influence over the past 200 or 300 years, nevertheless, we need not be very much perturbed.

We are richly endowed, because all this spade work has already been done by our ancients. Through their farsight they realised that a time will come when the children of Bharatavarsha will be deprived of this wonderful system that has been given to them and there must be a provision for it. Therefore God in His infinite love for humanity has been sending, generation after generation, His messengers, saints, mystics and Yogis, who gave us all the answers in the form of their mystical compositions, their songs and Bhajans. We have come as inheritors of a complete comprehensive system of essential knowledge of life, and I will start by giving you a few examples.

These examples are not very ancient, I come very close to our own times. One of those great souls who blessed Bharatavarsha with his presence and sanctified its life stream by his life was Puja Bapuji Mahatma Gandhi of sacred memory. For the British government he was a freedom fighter, a nuisance, a great agitator and a politician and a shrewd time-server. But from our side, he was a representative of the masses, the uplifter of the downtrodden, the greatest well-wisher and a lover of entire India from Himalaya to Kanyakumari, one who gave forever the loftiest example of Deshpren (love for country). But there is a third aspect of Mahatma Gandhi which perhaps was known better to him only than to anyone else: "People call me a politician, people call me this and that, but I am a seeker after Truth. I am a devotee of God. I am a man of prayer". Even though much of this was well known, it failed to have its impact. Each morning and evening the world did not exist for Mahatma Gandhiji; he was in communion with the supreme Spirit. He was completely indrawn, communing with God, Parampita Paramatma. The whole world knew that throughout his life Mahatmaji never missed his prayer. Without the morning prayer the day will not start: "First of all,

I have to commune with the Maker who has sent me and in whose universe I am living. Then my whole day will be a perpetual prayer in the form of my actions, my Seva, and when the day is done, back am I at His feet; the world is left behind.” According to Him the day starts with sunrise and closes with sunset. He gave us this ideal of commencing each new day with silent, inner communion with God and concluding each day with silent, inner communion with God.

But people knew him only as a politician and a person who is struggling to get India’s independence; what was primary to him became secondary to the people. He said, “I am nothing if I am not a seeker after God and even through my service to free my country and its people from the shackles of political slavery, I seek to adore the Truth which I know is enshrined in everyone. I seek the Truth that is immanent in life, and I see the Truth enshrined in each and every one of my downtrodden, oppressed fellow human beings, and this is my Sadhana.” He regarded Truth on par with God. He was a votary of Ram Nam and an ardent devotee of the Bhagavad-Gita. The Gita was to him a mother and his guide. With Kabir he told us: “*Utha jaga musafir bhor bhayi, aba raina kahan jo sovata hai*—Awake! The day has dawned.

What is this? You're still sleeping? You have not come here to sleep. There is a task to be done." And what is that task? To seek the Divine! Do it now! When it is too late, what is the use of lamenting? Connect yourself with the Divine, because all other connections in your life are only for the time being, they are only temporary. Why? Because a little while before you were not here. And a little while later you will not be here. This is 100% certain.

People are very realistic, but only in petty directions. How are they realistic in petty directions? Everyone has a Life Insurance policy. They know, "One day, I have to die and therefore, let someone benefit even from my death." And so, they insure life and are regular in paying their premium. Even though the Government of India is secular, it is very philosophical and persuades everyone, "Better insure your life because one day you have to depart; therefore from now itself make some provision for your dependents." They are very realistic and correct. People accept the fact of death very wisely and they know also the uncertainties and hazards of life; therefore they also take out accident policies, injury policies, so that accident, injury, medical treatment is assured, and even the motor car gets an accident

insurance and if it has to be sent to the motor car hospital, its medical care is also provided for. But upon the higher level of one's spiritual life, one's real life, no provision is made, nothing is thought about.

Gurudev Maharaj, you see, was a very peculiar personality. He wrote serious articles, then later on, he gave little sentences of Upadesha and sometimes he wrote poems, 'Philosophy in humour', and sometimes he sang Upadesha with deep meaning,

"Serve, Love, Give, Purify, Meditate, Realise. Be Good, Do Good, Be Kind, Be Compassionate. Practice Ahimsa, Satyam and Brahmacharya. This is the foundation of Yoga and Vedanta. Enquire who am I? Know thy Self and be free. You are not this body, not this mind, immortal Self you are. You are not this body, not this mind, immortal Atman. Realise this and be free!"

Serve: be unselfish and serve;

Love: have compassion and love for mankind as well as Bhakti for God;

Meditate: don't be satisfied merely in entering into this life and getting caught in this net; enter into God and enter into liberation.

Realise: know that the ultimate goal of life, over and above all other goals, is to realise the Reality by which alone you will be freed from this wheel of birth, death and rebirth.

Serve, Love, Meditate, Realise. Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga—in four words he summed up the four great paths to supreme blessedness, Kaivalyamoksha Samrajya.

In the same way, you must be endowed with the necessary virtuous qualities, Sattvic qualities, and start proceeding nearer and nearer to God who is the embodiment of all that is virtuous, auspicious and blessed, Ananta- Kalyana-Gunaghana. You must become the embodiment of virtue and purity in order to be able to go near the all pure Atman. Therefore the 16th chapter of Srimad Bhagavad-Gita—‘Daivi-Asuri Sampad-vibhaga yoga’—has been given to you, and Gurudev had his own version. He said, “I will tell you which are the virtues you must cultivate” and he sang:

The Song of Eighteen “Ities”

*Serenity, regularity, absence of vanity;
Sincerity, simplicity, veracity;
Equanimity, fixity, non-irritability;
Adaptability, humility, tenacity;*

*Integrity, nobility, magnanimity;
Charity, generosity, purity.*

These are all the Daivi Sampada of the Bhagavad-Gita.

*Practice daily these eighteen ‘ities’,
You will soon attain immortality.
Brahman is the only real entity;
Mr. So and so is a false non-entity.
You will abide in infinity and eternity;
You will behold unity in diversity;
You cannot attain this in the university.*

All this wisdom he put into little words. And he used to teach ‘Short lectures’ to little children placed upon the platform, and they gave the lecture and then jump down. He used to say, “Insure your life with God. All other insurance companies may fail, but this divine insurance company will never fail. This is my lecture.”

Someone asked Ramana Maharishi, “Life is beset with so many problems. We have all so much suffering. What is the solution?” Ramana Maharishi replied, “All these are no problems. The main problem is your taking birth. This is the biggest disease. If this is stopped, everything will stop.” So the most important thing is to insure

against rebirth. Death is not the problem; rebirth is the problem. Death, as a matter of fact, ends everything. But because you come back, the whole problem is created.'

*Yad gatva na nivartante tad dhama paramam
mama*

(Having gone thither, they return not; that is my supreme abode.'(B.G. XV/6)

In order to insure against rebirth attain that divine realm, attaining which you don't come back again.

The ultimate words of Vyasa's Brahma Sutras is 'Na-punaravartate'

'One who attains that supreme Brahmanhood does not come back again.'

What is the method to do it? In one simple sentence Jagad Guru Lord Krishna says,

Anityam, asukham lokam, imam prapya
bhajasva mam

('Having come to this impermanent and unhappy world, do thou worship Me.')

O ye mortals, wailing and weeping in this Samsara, I will tell you the way. If you want liberation, do not seek petty transitory, perishable

things. They are only deluding you at every moment. That which is endless, beginningless, eternal and permanent, attain that, and once for all you will be immortal. Embodiment will cease forever. Seek the eternal! That is the great and the most natural goal of life. Why? The great sages, after having entered into the illumined state of Brahmic consciousness, they beheld the entire universe through the eyes of Purna-Jnana, complete wisdom-consciousness, and they beheld that every Jivatma is in fact from that infinite source of pure consciousness—that is our original abode, that is where you have come from.

I have answered the question ‘whence’. You have all come from that eternal, infinite ocean of Sat-Chit-Ananda, perfect knowledge, perfect consciousness, bliss and supreme Shanti. That is your abode!

The Upanishadic declaration is,

Anandat vai imani bhutani jayanti

(‘From that great Brahmananda, all these creatures have come into being.’)

In That Being you abide even now. Our source, our cosmic origin is that Satchidananda, Parabrahma Satchidananda Tattva and therefore,

to go back into It is the most natural thing. Our real, eternal abode is that state of perfect bliss, Brahman, Satchidananda. From There we have come and we are here temporarily into this strange marketplace which we call the world. And our ultimate destiny is not to get involved in this and come again and again and weep and wail, but to free ourselves from this wheel and once again attain to that state where we belong.

May the divine grace of the Supreme Being keep you in this awareness, ‘divine am I and divine is my destiny.’ This life is not meant to end in the grave. May He grant you the grace of making use of this life as an upward spiritual ascent into that supreme divine experience; that is my humble prayer at the feet of the Divine with which I close my Seva to each and every one of you fortunate citizens of Bharatavarsha whose life and soul is spirituality. God bless you all. May the blessings of all the saints be upon you and grant you success in this great adventure of life.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Glorious Immortal Atman! Blessed Divinities! Children of the Supreme Universal Being! By the grace of the Lord, by the blessings of all the saints of Bharatavarsha and by our own ‘Purva-Janma Krita Sukrita’ (meritorious deeds of past lives) we have been given this opportunity to take up the consideration of a vitally important question ‘Why are we here?’

Unless we are able to get some idea of our purpose in life and the goal to be attained, our life will only be shallow and meaningless, because all the things we acquire and accumulate we have to leave one day and go. We come alone, and when we go, no matter how many relationships we might have created during our little stay here, no one accompanies us; we come empty handed and we go empty.

But our ancients had a different vision of us, and they probed into the Reality hidden behind the mere appearances to know the higher purpose of human existence. The human being is the

unique form of life endowed with faculties which no other forms are endowed with; due to that he has transformed the world around him and made constant progress in knowledge. I think that man has outdone even Brahma the creator. The things Brahma created seem to be limited in number, but the things man is creating every day—God only knows! But with all this, when you ask him about himself, he has no answer! “What are you here for? What is life? What is this universe? Why are you here? Where have you come from and what is your next destination?” He has no answers, because he has never thought about it!

Our ancients had their share of research, and they did want to know about the earth, the skies and the water; they did have their own advancement in mathematics, astronomy, astrology and all physical sciences. Nevertheless, they found that this is not enough, because our connection with this world is only for a limited time. They said, “What is the use of knowing everything about a place which one day we have to quit and go?”

The reach of man is infinite; there is no limit to man’s intellect and man’s ability for knowledge. Because our essential nature is supreme Jnana,

the Reality which is our source and origin. It is not only Ananda as an experience, but its quintessential nature is Prajnana. Prajnana means Jnana. You all know the Guru-Stotra:

*Brahmanandam parama sukhadam kevalam
jnanamurtim
Dvandvateetam gaganasadrisham
tatvamasyadi lakshyam
Ekam nityam vimalamachalam sarvadhee
sakshibhuta
Bhavateetam trigunarahitam sadgurum tam
namami*

That great Reality is of the nature of pure wisdom-consciousness, *Kevalam Jnanamurtim*, and our essential nature is no different from that Brahma Tattva. Physically we are different from it, psychologically we may be different, but spiritually we are part and parcel of the Brahma Tattva. However, when we put the question “Whence am I?” from a lesser level the answer will be, “I have come from a previous birth in the same earth plane. I have been here before, maybe several times. Due to a certain law I have come into this present incarnation.” That is the lesser approach to this query.

In the ultimate analysis our primal source and origin is a state of consciousness far beyond

birth, death and rebirth. It is that eternal Universal Spirit which we call Paramatma. Jivatma is an Amsha of Paramatma, and from Paramatma we have come into this state of individual consciousness. This is the discovery and experience of our sages, and they have given this knowledge for us to make use of. "I have come from that all-perfect state of divine consciousness. Therefore, why I should unnecessarily suffer this state of limited finite consciousness? I do not want to be in this alienated state." If you are once given the knowledge that you have come from a state of absolute perfection, from the Light of lights beyond all darkness, why should you grope about and weep and wail here? It is precisely this awakening that they desired, and they also stated that the cosmic plan for man is evolution unto perfection. Perfection is already inherent in each one of us as our essential nature, just waiting to be awakened and unfolded. We have come here in order to retrace our steps back into that perfect state of Satchidananda-consciousness. This is the bare truth. And herein lies the true value of life. We have not come here merely to love and hate, weep a little, laugh a little, and then afterwards become extinct and be forgotten. Don't think that people will remember you once you are gone; they

will remember you if you have been a very wicked person or a very godly person. Otherwise 99% are forgotten, because people are too engrossed in their life to think of people who are gone by.

And therefore, in the context of that ultimate supreme destiny, the present life becomes very meaningful. We have come here in order to work out this divine plan. In an esoteric way the ‘Rasa-Leela’ in the Srimad Bhagavat Mahapurana gives us a glimpse of this cosmic process: God, being the centre of countless universes, is by His divine force ever powerfully attracting everything that exists. But unfortunately some wonderful thing has come in between, and that barrier in Vedantic terms is our little self. Our little ego-consciousness makes us believe that we are separate from that Supreme Being, that we belong here. So our individual consciousness is always in relation to some daddy and mummy and friend and relative and never in relation to Him. “I belong to Him, I am His child or I am His eternal part, He is my Whole”—that consciousness is overshadowed by the present-consciousness that we have created with our relationship to the world of things and beings here. Therefore they say: “It is this false consciousness that is depriving you of that great pull of the Lord.” That is one aspect of it.

Now, there is a second aspect to our life here. “Where am I?”—“Why am I here?” You are here because of a great Cosmic Law, and that law is called ‘*Karma-Karmaphalabhoga Shasan*’, the law of cause and effect or the law of action and reaction. Whatever you call it, the Cosmic Law says that any action performed by an individual consciousness becomes a cause which must have its effect. The individual soul has engaged in certain activities—physical and mental—in a previous incarnation, and in order to experience the fruit of Karma we have come into this earth plane. So, from the point of view of this great Cosmic Law we are here to work out the previous Karmas. Whatever experiences unfold for us in this present incarnation are the seeds of Karma we have brought along with us. So each individual soul comes with a Karmic pattern, and as the Karmic pattern starts unfolding, experiences start coming to us.

There is a great misunderstanding about this law of Karma. People have got the notion that the law of Karma is a terrible Danda (stick), and its only business is to give punishment for all the nasty things we have done. This is a very lopsided view. The law of Karma simply says, whatever actions you have done, the result of them you

have to experience. If your actions have been auspicious, good, positive and sublime, the law of Karma will be the giver of multifarious gifts to you. It will go on showering boons. The effect of positive Karma will be that you are given a healthy body and you enjoy every minute of your life, wealth, friends, love and success. And if there is any negative Karma, that also will manifest itself. So, pleasant and unpleasant experiences, joy and sorrow, pain and pleasure, are the result of the operation of the law of Karma, and we are here to work out our previous Karmas. But the most important part of it is yet to come. The Karma already done, whose fruits we now have to experience willy-nilly, that part of life is not the important part of life. What we experience is a very minor and a secondary part of life. There is a third aspect of Karma.

The first aspect of Karma is the accumulated Karma. The second aspect of Karma is that batch which has been taken in order to experience and work out in this particular incarnation. But the most important aspect of Karma is what you are presently engaged in while experiencing the effects of past Karma. You are now engaged in doing fresh Karma—that is the essence of life—that is the most important thing. Pay

attention to that, and take care that the Karma you engage in now is of the right kind. Then you have nothing to fear. You become the master of your destiny. You become the creator of your own future. You mould what is called your Bhagya or Kismat (destiny). Because, even the so-called Prarabdha or Bhagya from which there is no escape, that was also created by you. It is not imposed by some other agent, we ourselves have created it. And now we are the creators of fresh Karma—mental, verbal and physical—each day, each moment.

Therefore, when day dawns, the sun rises, and God gives you a new day, it is up to you to fill that day with so much of positive Karma, actions that bring about the happiness of others and are of benefit to others, that you are creating a golden future for yourself. This law of Karma is a golden key God has given into your hand, saying: “O man! If you use this key in the right way, you can make your future however you desire. You can attain whatsoever you wish, because I have made this law which is just and unerring.” If you bring at present into being such causes that will result in joy, success and attainment, there is no power in the universe that can deprive you of what is your due. This is the plain truth. Even if the whole

world conspires against you, nothing can touch you because you have earned it through the right use of the law of Karma! The law of Karma becomes your greatest strength if you put yourself on the right side of this law, and you not commit the blunder of giving into your desires and going in the wrong direction. If you are engaged in a wrong type of Karma, you are inviting dangers. No one else is doing it, you yourself are creating bad Karma.

So the essence of life is not the experiences that happen to you, but the actions you perform. And this is in your hand. God has given you intellect, God has given you observation—you don't have to go through the mill yourself. Look at life, observe, see the fate of others, and then become wise. Try that mentally, verbally and physically you always engage in the right type of Karma. I gave the analogy of the key because it is the same key that with the right turn can open the door and lead you into freedom and fresh air and sunshine, and with the wrong turn it can make you a prisoner in your own room in darkness. We are here to mould and create our own future. This can be the answer to the question, 'Where are you?' This is a 'Karmabhumi', and this is also

‘Mrityuloka’. Before death comes, we have to achieve maximum good Karmas, so that our future will be assured for us. We can go laughing! When the time comes you can say to Yama: “I am ready! The ticket is here; I have packed my bedding and am ready. I have nothing to regret. I am looking forward to a glorious future, because I have ensured it for myself.”

You can know your spiritual destiny thanks to the great wisdom treasures that the ancients have left for us. We can know that we have come here not merely to do good Karma and attain to some higher state of enjoyment and heaven which is a very petty goal. Because as long as the momentum of your good Karma lasts, you will have a very happy life and maybe even heavenly enjoyment. But it is finite—Karma is created in time, so it is finite. We have to attain Supreme spiritual blessedness, spiritual perfection. Most valuable is your presence here on earth because this is the only plane of consciousness where you can consciously engage in spiritual Sadhana and direct your way towards Divinity. Even the Gods envy the human life because Devaloka is only a Bhogabhumi (place for sensual enjoyments), they cannot have Jnana, Vichara, Viveka, Virakti, Vairagya, Tyaga and Bhakti and Bhajan.”

This body is our bondage now, but at the same time, it can engage in Paropakara, doing good to others. Thus our Antahkarana (interior) is cleansed from the dirt of selfishness and self-centred living and from Raga-Dvesha (like-dislike). And through the body you can worship the Lord, you can serve the Guru and serve saints and all God's creation; through the body you can engage in Yogabhyasa—Asanas, Pranayama, Dharana, Dhyana. This body is therefore a divine gift of God to be used as a raft to cross the ocean of Samsara. So 'where you are' is therefore a most valuable period of existence which can lead you to supreme blessedness and liberation.

The message of the Gita from the 1st to the 18th chapter is Anasakti (detachment). Be in this life, but know that life is not an end in itself; life is a means to the attainment of a higher end.

Lord Krishna says: "Pain and pleasure, heat and cold, Sukha and Duhkha are inevitable. Therefore, don't think that you can escape this. Therefore, give your heart, mind, intellect to that great goal, and just endure whatever experiences life gives you—'Tam titikshasva Bharata'. What should be our attitude towards the experiences of

life? Just stoic endurance, because we are too busy in moving towards that great goal. If that great goal is an all-absorbing thing, then our life will get an inner strength, and you will be able to withstand all the vicissitudes which are inevitable in this life.

The Upanishads tell us how our life should be? It should be like an arrow that has been drawn full-length in the bow and shot from the bow—it weaves its way straight towards the target, not being diverted; its only aim is to go and smash itself into the target to which it is shot! Your life should be like that! Your whole being should be gathered and should move towards the Supreme, which is no other than your original abode, your cosmic source. From there you have come, and back you have to go; and where you are now, is the place and the time where you should be Kushala (skillful) and Daksha (dexterous) and attain that life which is everlasting. That is the great destiny of man. Because even as you are dreaming now that you're a human being, in reality you are a part of Divine Consciousness. You have temporarily lost that awareness; to regain it this wonderful earth life is given to you.

Mystics and poets looking upon life from the height of their transcendental experience cast a regretful glance: “Why do these people want to perpetuate their bondage unnecessarily? Why do they continue in this state of sorrow and trouble?” In one of his Gitananjali poems, Rabindranath Tagore says: “Children playing upon the seashore of life, building castles out of sand and when night falls, they kick it away and go, never suspecting what wondrous treasures there are, if only they’d dive into the deep!” This is how he characterises humanity.

There are wonderful Bhajans of Sri Guru Nanak Dev:

Dina nike beete jate hein

The days are passing quickly. Day by day, life is ebbing away.

*Sumiran karo Sri Rama Nama, tyaja vishaya
bhoga aur sarva kam,
tere sanga na chale eka dama, jo dete hein
so pate hein*

Remember the holy name of Sri Rama, give up sensual enjoyments and all desires. Not a cent will go with you. Those only get who give.

*Bhai bandhu kutumba parivara, saba jeete
jee ke nate hein.
Kisake ho tum kaun tumhara, kiske bala
Hari Nam bisara.”*

Brothers, sisters and family members are related to you only as long as you are alive. Whose are you? And who is yours? Relying upon whose strength have you forsaken the holy name of Sri Hari? *Bhagawan tumhara sarvasva hai.* The Lord is your all-in-all. How have you forgotten Him?

*Lakha chaurasi bharama ke aye, bade bhaga
manusha tana paye,
tisa para bhi na kachu kari kamayi, pheera
pachhe pachatate hein*

You have already traversed the 84 Lakhs life-forms; with great good fortune you have received this human birth. In spite of getting this rare human birth, if you have not made any efforts to attain Him, what is the use in repenting afterwards?

It is a wake-up call, calling us. Invoke His Name. Therefore, do not waste time. Each moment is precious. Be aware of the purpose for which you have come here. Be aware of the goal, and make your life a purposeful union towards that great goal. Gurudev used to sing:-

*Is there not a nobler mission than eating,
drinking and sleeping?*

*It is difficult to get a human birth, therefore try
your best to realise in this birth.*

*Fie on that wretch, woe to that man, who
wastes all his life in sensual pleasures.*

*Time sweeps away kings and barons, Where
is Yudhishtira? Where is Asoka? Where is
Valmiki? Where is Shakespeare? Where is
Shivaji? Where is Napoleon? Where is Hitler?
Where is Mussolini? Where is Gandhiji?
Where is Jinnah?"*

*Tell me frankly, what have you learnt from
the two great global wars?*

*Have you got now real Vairagya, do you
practice Japa and Meditation?*

*Have you got now real Vairagya, do you
practice Brahma-Vichar?"*

All that you have observed in your own time,
if that has not awakened you spiritually and made
you take up Japa, meditation and Brahma-
Vichar, then how can you get peace and joy?

*How can you expect real Shanti, if you waste
your time in idle gossiping,
in scandal, backbiting, in fights and quarrels,*

in novels, newspapers?

How can you expect real peace of mind, real

Shanti,

if you waste your time in cinemas,

restaurants, in cards and smoking,

in radio, television?"

All sorts of pursuit which distract the mind and create more Ashanti and if whole life goes away like this;

When your throat is choked at the time of death, who will help you for your liberation?

Therefore, be up and doing in Yogic Sadhana, you will attain immortality.

Be up and doing in Brahma-Vichar, you will attain Supreme bliss.

This is the ‘Song of Admonition’ which Guru Maharaj Swami Sivanandaji has given to modern man, just like Kabir, Nanak and other people have given their admonitions in their own way and time.

Having given these ideas for you to deeply ponder, I close this Seva of the second evening of our three days spiritual fellowship. And I call upon all of you the grace of the Divine in whose presence we have gathered here. The Upanishadic

vision is not only that man is divine, but that the entire universe is also divine because it is permeated and pervaded by the Divine Presence. '*Isavasyam idam sarvam yat kinchit jagatyam jagat*—This entire universe is pervaded and indwelt by divine consciousness'. We have only to open our inner awareness to the Divinity that indwells everything, and we are in the presence of the Divine, here at this moment. To that Divinity I pray to shower grace upon you all and make you true Sadhaks, Jijnasus and Mumukshus aspiring for liberation. Before death knocks at your door, be liberated through devotion to God, daily meditation and a life of constant remembrance of God. That is my humble prayer at the feet of the Lord.

May the presiding saint of Calcutta, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Dev and Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji shower their grace and blessings upon you, and may they enable you to achieve full success in your spiritual quest, which is the central fact and meaning of your life here on earth. God bless you all!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Radiant Immortal Atman! Beloved and blessed children of the Divine! Devotees of the Lord, Jijnasus sincerely in quest of knowledge that enlightens and Mumukshus aspiring for liberation, Dharma-Premi Satsangis! All of you have by your noble presence and your attentive hearing made my visit worthwhile. May this visit be an extremely gainful and fulfilling one! I invoke the grace of the Divine upon each and every one of you here to bless you with good health and long life, with progress in your various walks of life and grant you peace of mind and a heart that is always serene, full of contentment and therefore also full of joy.

I'm very thankful as this service is also for me a worship of the Divine. For in the ultimate context all things are connected and related to God, because no matter whom you are relating yourself to in the course of your day-to day life, with whom you are dealing and to whom you are offering some little service, ultimately it goes to

That Being who is the Sutratman or indwelling Divine presence—ultimately it is He that receives.

There is a certain story in the Bible, where a person had lived not a very virtuous life; it was maybe more the debit side than the credit side. Ultimately the day of departure comes, and he is certain that he will not be eligible to enter the pearly gates of Heaven—so he knows where he is bound to. But imagine his surprise, when he suddenly finds himself being welcomed into the great hall of God Himself, where everything is wonderful, radiant and effulgent; he is taken aback, and so he approaches some angelic figure and says, “I have not deserved this. In my life I have never done anything good or virtuous, and I think there is some mistake.” Then the angelic figure takes him straight to the great throne and submits his query to God, and God says, “You have certainly got what is due to you.”—“How is it, my Lord?”—The Lord says, “When I was exposed to the bitter cold, you clothed Me; when I was hungry, you fed Me; when I was thirsty, you gave Me to drink; and when I was ailing, you succoured Me.” He says, “Lord! We have never met.” Then the Lord recalls to his mind certain incidents, one after another: “Once, when you were returning from a banquet, having danced with all your

young companions, inebriated and laughing and singing, you passed by on horseback where I was sitting shivering in the winter's cold, and your glance fell upon Me by the roadside, and as you were riding fast with your companions, you took off your cloak and flung it at Me. That cloak covered Me and sheltered Me." He recalls that he had done it to some beggar but not to God! He is wonderstruck. "As a hungry person I stood at your door, when you were enjoying a banquet in your stately home and even the servants would not have Me stand there, but you took a loaf of bread and sent it through your steward to Me." Thus He recounts incidents long forgotten by this man, and He ends by saying, "Whatsoever thou hast done unto the least of My creatures, that verily thou hast done unto Me." In this way, no matter to whom you do something good, ultimately it goes to That Being who is seated in the hearts of all.

When I conclude with the Universal Prayer composed by Guru Maharaj Sri Swami Sivanandaji, which contains two sentences, "Let us behold Thee in all these names and forms," and "Let us serve Thee in all these names and forms", this servant of Gurudev is not only sharing but also offering a worship to the Lord enshrined within you. He is your own eternal companion,

Jeevansakha and the very basis of your being, the very core of your consciousness, the very essence of your existence and to whom your body is a moving temple. I am blessed by this worship that I offer unto the Lord who is seated within you as your own eternal companion. For that, my grateful thanks. May God bless you!

I take up today, by the will of the Lord and the blessings of Guru Maharaj and all the saints, the last portion of the subject, "Whence are you, where are you now and whither bound—an urgent consideration." Wherefrom comes this urgency to consider this matter? This question I will not answer. I will ask you the question, and you yourself decide whether there is urgency or not.

You look at the newspapers, you listen to the radio, you see the television news—what does it tell you about the state of mankind in this world? Firstly, what does it tell you, what does it portend and what does it seem to predict? Secondly, you go and ask any sincere and honest superscientist, ask the top brass of the armies of the world and ask anyone of the heads of the superpowers, "What do you think about tomorrow?" They all will say, "I don't want to think about that." They are constantly living in a state of anxiety, and in this

state of emergency, in this state of mutual distrust and of tense suspicion anything can happen! Certain historians have predicted that if a third nuclear war is to take place, there will be no life on earth. One writer has said, “There will be no victors, and the survivors will envy the dead.”

Long ago, before there was any civilisation, no culture, when our ancestors did not even know the use of fire, when they had to hunt animals and eat the flesh raw, they lived in fear of their environment. They were surrounded by a hostile world, and survival was the one great question. Today, in the fourth quarter of the 20th century, global humanity is facing that same question, “Have we got a future? Will we survive?” If all the civilisation and advancement and culture and refinement has brought us to the same state where survival has become the one great question, as it was in the Stone Age, then it is a matter for serious thinking!

What has happened? If we ponder human history and have a view of what has happened during the last five centuries we see that all man’s attention has been given for improving, inventing and transforming the world around him, building huge cities, improving modes of transportation

and what not, everything outside. He has created a miraculous world around him by his scientific advancement, inventions and technology. But in this process man has totally neglected to pay attention to his own culture. In his nature, in his thoughts, in his motivations, he has regressed, he has gone back, or he has come to a standstill! Over the past 300-400 years, there has been no human culture. Everything has been made good, everything has been cultivated, but man has been neglected.

He has been only exposed to an educational system which either trains him for service or for a career or some profession, all of which serve the great structure of the mechanistic society; man is only made to serve machines. His educational system has lost its soul, it does not try to make man a better man, a good man, a good neighbour, a compassionate human person, so that his life will be based upon idealism. All other cultures, all other developments, everything has been given full scope and gone in tremendous speed, so that now man can fly in the air, higher than any bird. Man can go under ocean water, faster than any submarine creature. He can outdistance the swiftest animal upon the surface of the earth. But he has not learnt to walk the earth as a dignified

human being, as an ideal man with compassion, with love, with kindness, with readiness to sacrifice his self for the sake of others, which is the great ideal of the superman in the context of his own culture.

Bharatiya Samskriti does not envision a superman as a man of great powers who can crush under his heel all others. No, our concept of a superman is one who has risen to such heights of evolution that he has become divine, he has found his identity with the divine Reality. Such a man having attained the Supreme Being, he ever lives in order to work for the good and the welfare of all humanity—‘Sarvabhuta Hite Ratah’. That is the ‘giver concept’ of the ideal human being, the true superman. This I place before you as the ideal to be adopted if there should be a change to the state of affairs today.

As children of this great land we have a great privilege. Our country has evolved a certain ideal for life and given to us certain basic principles. These constitute the most precious and important part of our heritage. More than anything else Charitra (character) has the highest value. To one who is Charitrvan, to him even emperors, kings and most powerful warriors gave respect. When a

man of profound wisdom and great character came, the King got down from his throne, met him at the door of his palace and made him sit on his own seat, and he himself took a lesser seat. That is the value they gave to character and virtue. We inherited this great vision that character is of supreme value, and character is followed by Sadachar (good conduct) and Dharmic Vyavahar (righteous actions).

Unfortunatly Dharma as a value and character as a value have been bypassed in our blind rush for some sort of progress, and therefore nature has been harnessed to serve man. It has gone into the hands of persons with no principles and no ideals, no sense of Dharma and no sense of right and wrong. And so, man devoid of ethics can become the greatest killer.

When Bhasmasura was given the boon of turning to ashes anything upon which he placed his hand, he thought, "Now I'm going to place my hand upon everyone!" When with this evil intention he started to misuse and abuse the power that he had attained through the boon, immediately the great well-wisher of humanity, Sage Narada, divined it and devised a method to nip it in the bud. He went to Bhasmasura and

asked him, “Where are you going?”—“Oh! I’ve got this boon, and I am going to place my hand here, there, everywhere!” And Sage Narada says, “Foolish fellow! Do you think your Lord Shiva will give you this boon? It is all just imaginary! Go and try it; go to Lord Shiva, and see whether the boon is real or not.”—“Yes! Yes! I will do as you say. If it proves to be a false boon, see what I will do to Lord Siva!” He goes back to Lord Shiva who asks, “You were just here, and I had given you the boon. Why are you coming back?” Bhasmasura replies, “I want to try it to out!”—“Okay! You can go.”—“No! No! I will like to try it out on you!” So Lord Shiva started running followed by Bhasmasura. Narada immediately did the second step; he said Lord Siva, “Go to Vishnu!” and so He runs to Lord Vishnu who says, “All right.” Lord Vishnu has to look after things, protect things—because He is Stithi-Karta. He takes the form of Mohini and comes before Bhasmasura. Bhasmasura falls for Mohini’s charms and forgets Lord Shiva, leaves Him alone and goes after Mohini. She says, “I can only wed one who outdoes me in Nritya-Kala (dance competition); that is my pledge.” Therefore they both start dancing, and Mohini gradually comes into a stance where she takes her hand up, and Bhasmasura has to imitate everything. In

that ecstatic condition Mohini puts her hand on her own head, and Bhasmasura also puts his hand on his own head... So there is the end of the problem!

We are now in a very crucial stage in global human history. What our near future is going to be we do not know, and therefore, it is urgent to consider our situation today. From a relative point of view we are here as a result of past lives and Karma. But from the absolute point of view we have descended from the supreme, eternal, indestructible Brahma Tattva—that is our reality. The Gita expresses this in the most thrilling way, “Why do you fear? He who says he kills and he who says he is being killed—both of them do not know what they are saying.”—“Thou art one whom weapons cannot injure, fire cannot burn, water cannot wet, wind cannot dry. Thou art the unborn, eternal, permanent! Thou who art the imperishable soul, nothing can happen to you whether the body is remaining or slain.” In those stirring terms the world teacher Lord Krishna has given to you an introduction to your own essential nature.

Our ancients have said, “This life on earth is like a university course with a school for

perfection, perfection in two ways. Ultimately we have to attain the divine perfection which is inherent in us, but while striving for that perfection, we also have a human dimension, and here our ideal is to be a blessing to our contemporary society. The greatest gift that you can offer is a gift of yourself cultivated and cultured as a good person, a person of integrity, a person refusing to hurt even the least creature of God either by thought, word or action; a person living according to certain principles: never to envy, never to have a retaliatory idea and always exercising charity towards others, taking a charitable view of other's shortcomings and mistakes—forgive and forget! Be a giver, be a Paropakari, a Sevak, a benefactor of humanity. In this way, let our nature be cultivated, so that you become what the great divine teacher Jesus wanted people to be: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, blessed are the peacemakers, blessed are those who want peace." In this way, we may be a minority, but a little catalyst brings about a reaction and can bring out something which is good for all. When there is insecurity and fear of the future everywhere, make your life a manifestation of the divine quality, not the undivine quality, and

through your life try to bring about a subtle change. Because this entire human world is one unit.

In the invisible plane of the mind and consciousness we are all connected. Therefore, if you release day after day good thoughts, thoughts of peace, of friendliness, of brotherhood, of harmony, thoughts of love, those thoughts will envelop the entire globe, and wherever there is a receptivity, it will find a lodgement there. For this reason from the age of the Vedas, whenever our ancients started something auspicious, first and foremost they said Shanti Path. Living in the calm, secluded forests, these sages sat, envisioned humanity and sent forth these thoughts:

*Om sarvesham svasti bhavatu
sarvesham shantirbhavatu
Sarvesham purnam bhavatu
sarvesham mangalam bhavatu*

*Om sarve bhavantu sukhinah
sarve santu niramayah
Sarve bhadrani pashyantu
ma kashcid duhkhabhagbhavet*

*Om dyauh shantih antarikshgum shantih
prthivi shantih, apah shantih oshadhayah shantih*

*vanaspatayah shantih vishvedevah shantih
Brahma shantih sarvam shantih shantireva shantih
sama shantiredhi Om shantih shantih shantih.*

Om. May there be peace in heaven. May there be peace in the sky. May there be peace on earth. May there be peace in the water. May there be peace in the plants. May there be peace in the trees. May there be peace in the Gods. May there be peace in Brahman. May there be peace in all. May that peace, real peace, be mine.

This was based upon their knowledge, to wish for the welfare of all mankind, all existence, even elements, and if it comes from the bottom of the heart, it will have its effect. Therefore, more and more people nowadays are forming prayer groups all over the world. They say, “Let the entire humanity become knit in a network of prayerfulness, of auspiciousness and the good of man.” In this way we have to now recognise our heritage of divinity, and in these very troubled and critical times let us make our contribution upon the inner plane of human thought and consciousness. All actions and all conditions prevailing in society, are ultimately the result of the hidden thoughts and motivations of man. And if you direct your thoughts and attention in

bringing about a change in that prime origin of human action, it will be a great contribution.

It is an urgent consideration of how you can ennable your own life and how you can help other people to ennable their life. When the astronauts went out into space, they looked upon this little globe, spinning in the vast, endless space. They said "My God! Our entire human society is nothing but a little spaceship in which all the beings are living." They looked upon this earth as a spaceship with all of us as passengers. They then found that really it is humanity's home. When we are here, we don't see the other part of the globe, and we think we are different from others. When they went into space, they took an objective look at the universe and realised for the first time, it is a home for the global human family. That is true. We are living in a house called earth, and the entire humanity is our brothers and sisters. This truth can be expressed by making our lives far above the humdrum of selfishness, fighting and quarrelling, Raga-Dvesha and Kama-Krodha. We can begin to be what we really are, children of God, and express this divine quality in the form of all that is auspicious and good, all that is virtuous.

Compassion and kindness towards all the creatures, truthfulness and honesty in dealing with our own brothers and sisters, purity of personal conduct and character. These three are the gateway to Moksha.

Yadi moksham icchasi chet tata vishayan
vishavat tyaja
Brahmacharyam ahimsa cha satyam
piyushavad bhaja

If you aspire for liberation, give up hankering after sense indulgence as the very poison; it is destructive to your higher nature. As the very ambrosia or nectar, accept into your life the three great qualities of chastity, purity of character and conduct, compassion and Ahimsa (non-injury) compassion and kindness towards all, and Satyam (truthfulness).

Realise that you are not far away from your divine source. That Brahmic essence is here right now. The mystical experience has clearly stated this experience in the words which I want you to etch in your heart deliberately: “We live, move and have our being in God.” God is the most vibrantly ever-present reality. His existence is in every atom of matter, in every speck of space. This world is

God. Therefore, the field for this inner transformation, to be what we are and express divinity in every detail of our day to day life is here and now, because we are in the presence of God. In the home, is God's place. God is the master of your family and your home. Your home is filled with the presence of God. In the bedroom, in the dining room, in the drawing room, in the verandah, in the garden—everywhere He is present. The family lives in the presence of God. If this truth is adhered to, each home will become Char Dham. All the Sapta-Tirthas: Ganga, Yamuna, Saraswati, Godavari, Narmada, Sindhu, Kaveri will flow in that home and sanctify it. Rameswar, Dwarka, Puri Jagannath and Badrinath will be in that home, where people live in the awareness of this fundamental truth of Satya Sanatana Vaidika Dharma:

*Jale Vishnu sthale Vishnu Vishnu
parvatamastake
Jwalamalakule Vishnu sarvam Vishnumayam
Jagad*

(Vishnu is in the water, Vishnu in on the earth, Vishnu is on top of the mountain, Vishnu

is in the fire, The whole world is permeated by Vishnu.)

*Yat cha kinchit jagat sarvam drishyate
shruyate api va
Antar bahischa tat sarvam vyapya
Narayanaḥ sthitah*

(“Whatever is seen or heard, inside and outside, is filled with this Narayana Tattva.”)

*Vasanat Vasudevasya Vasitam Bhuvana
Trayam
Sarva Bhuta Nivasosi Vasudeva Namostu Te*

The three worlds exist because of your presence O Vasudeva, And you live in all beings as their soul. Salutations to you O Vasudeva!

*Purushamevedam sarvam yad bhutam
yad cha bhavyam*

(Essentially, the whole universe is He himself: whatever was, whatever is, and whatever will be – all are His manifestation.)

*Isavasyam idagum sarvam yat kimcha
jagatyam jagat*

Again and again this central truth which is the heart of the Satya Sanatana Vaidika Dharma is expressed. Even mystics express this truth “*Moko kahan dhunde re pyare mein to tere pasa mein*—“Why are you unnecessarily searching for

Me here and there? I'm by your side all the time," and this has been the vision experienced by all.

And to bring it before us in a vivid way the 11th chapter of the Gita gives the vision that this entire universe is nothing but a vast manifest form of that one Supreme Reality. Everything He alone is. Let us therefore try to keep this vision through our Bhava (feeling) until we reach that experience.

In order to develop it right from the very beginning, our ancients told the children:

*Matri devo bhava pitri devo bhava
Acharya devo bhava atithi devo bhava*

Look at mother, father, teacher and guest as visible Gods to you and even inanimate things. Then, they go into the Vibhuti Yoga of the Bhagavad-Gita, He identifies Himself with all forms of existence: rivers, seas, stars, mountains, forests, animals, birds. And to bring it out in a more graphic way, He took the form of a fish, of a tortoise, of the much-hated pig; He took the form of a beast and a man, and He took the form of an insignificant dwarf! So He took all these forms to show that His presence is everywhere. Keeping this in mind a devout Sanatani while planting or watering a tree, says:

*Mulatah Brahmarupaya madhyatah
Vishnurupine*

Agratah Shivarupaya Vriksharajaya te namah

This is the great vision of the Sanatana Dharma. Make it your own now! Wherever you are operating, in the home, in your professional field, in your business place, in society, always be aware that you are in the presence of God. All life is being lived in the presence of God. Therefore, do it in a way worthy of His Divine presence.

This is my humble sharing with you. Our presence here can be divinised, and through such a transformed life we may be able to bring about a change in the etheric atmosphere of today's world which is in a very precarious condition. By the force of your own divinised life there may still be a chance that the world may have a future and people's thinking may change to usher in a new era of better human relationships so that all work for the welfare of everyone. That is our prayer to the Lord, and that is our fond hope for mankind and the globe which is mankind's home. I close with a little song Guru Maharaj has made to bring out this immanence. It is called the 'Song of immanence of Ram':

Om Sri Ram Jaya Ram Jaya Jaya Ram

Om Sri Ram Jaya Ram Jaya Jaya Ram,
In earth, water, fire, air and ether is Ram,
In the heart, mind, Prana and senses is Ram,
In the breath, blood, nerves and brain is Ram,
In sentiment, thought, word and action is Ram,
Within is Ram, without is Ram, in front is Ram,
Above is Ram, below is Ram, behind is Ram,
To the right is Ram, to the left is Ram,
everywhere is Ram,
Vyapak is Ram, Vibhu is Ram, Poornam is Ram,
Sat is Ram, Chit is Ram, Anand is Ram,
Shanti is Ram, Shakti is Ram, Jyoti is Ram,
Prema is Ram, mercy is Ram, beauty is Ram,
Bliss is Ram, joy is Ram, purity is Ram,
(All this is Ram. But what is He to you and me?

What is He to us?)

Refuge, solace, path, Lord, witness is Ram,
Father, mother, friend, relative, Guru is Ram,
Support, source, centre, ideal, goal is Ram,
Creator, preserver, destroyer, redeemer is Ram,
The goal ultimate of one and all is Ram,
Attainable through Sraddha, Prema and
worship is Ram,
Accessible to devotion and surrender is Ram.

Approachable by prayer, Japa and

Kirtan is Ram,

Hosanna to Ram, glory to Ram, victory to Ram,

Adorations to Ram, salutations to Ram,

Prostrations to Ram.

Om Sri Ram Jaya Ram Jaya Jaya Ram

Om Sri Ram Jaya Ram Jaya Jaya Ram

Beloved immortal Atman! Blessed children of Ram! Blessed children of God! Let us raise our life into a sublime state by being aware that we are living in the majestic presence of the Divine. May God bless you and grant you constant remembrance of this central truth of your Vedic religion. May God bless you and grant you the inspiration to adopt this way of life and grant you all success in raising your life to a Divine Life. God bless you all!

I thank you for giving me this wonderful opportunity to speak of the Supreme Reality, thinking of Him and our relationship to Him. And I thank Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj for making me an instrument to serve you. More than anything, let us all thank Bhagawan for being so gracious to allow us to be in His presence

all these days and let His presence ever continue
to be with us. Hari Om!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Radiant Immortal Atman! Beloved Immortal Self, children of the Divine, Sadhaks and seekers, spiritual aspirants assembled here in Gurudev's spiritual presence! We are now heading towards the commencement of the second year in the Divine Decade, the second year of the nineties. Counting always starts from one, never from zero. According to this tradition 91 would be the first year of the Divine Decade, and thus the 10th year would be the commencement of the twenty first century.

Time passes. Two nights ago I was prompted to hold the ticking clock before the microphone, so that all could hear. Inexorably, time and tide wait for no man. If you delay and postpone, time is not responsible for what you cannot achieve. If you bring a gap between your thought and action and postpone the action, then in spite of the highest and best thoughts, you will regret having done so. Time and tide wait for no man. Inexorable is the passage of time. When we were in a period of

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silence, each tick of the clock was accentuated. We were aware that time was passing, so loudly it was ticking. Time is passing; time is not standing still for us, waiting for us to get ready and translate our thoughts into actions. It does not care. It says rather: "Do it or don't do it. I do not care. I pass on."

In this way, there is a very significant saying that should always be brought before our mind's eye. It says: 'He who hesitates is lost.' Always remember!

Time is the swallower of the entire world. It swallows all forms of life, all living beings. It is a life-consumer. It consumes the whole world of living creatures. It is inexorable. It does not wait for anyone. It does not care. It marches on. If we keep in step with it, we will also march on and progress and attain the goal. If we lose step, if we hesitate, sit by the wayside, time is not going to say: "Alright, I shall also wait." It will not tarry for us.

'Kalosmi Lokakshayakrit'—'I am the mighty world-destroying Time' says Lord Krishna in the 11th chapter of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, while explaining 'the Yoga of the Vision of the Cosmic Form' to Arjuna. He is Grace; we must avail ourselves of Grace. He is Time. We should also be aware of Time and avail ourselves of Time.

One who uses time is not used by it. One who consumes time in a practical, constructive, creative, dynamic manner, he is not consumed by time. But he who fails to consume time in a practical, dynamic and creative manner is consumed by time. Everything is swallowed and vanishes into oblivion, sent into limbo, by this mysterious manifestation of the Supreme Being called Time. It ticks. Inexorably, it moves on. If we move on, if we go ahead and march on, we use time. If we don't move on, we are left behind and consumed by time.

Therefore it behoves us to 'be up and doing and to heed the Upanishadic call: '*Uttishthata jagrata prapya varan nibodhata*'—Arise, awake, approach the illumined ones and receive wisdom and become illumined!' The ancients knew well that it is a question of either us or time.

Therefore radiant Atman, manifest your divinity, be a true Sadhaka. Strive and endeavour to make efforts ceaselessly. All attainment, all victory, all success is for the one who is vigilant and ever climbing up. It is the climber who scales the mountain and attains the pinnacle. It is the one who keeps on climbing—not the one who stands below and contemplates the height and wonders whether he can make it. Never cease climbing, keep on climbing and do not care about whether you will attain the peak or not. The peak

will come towards you! Therefore boldly struggle on. Keep up the effort and each day climb higher and higher.

That is the adventure and the value of the day. It opens up the wondrous opportunity for you to climb onward towards the ultimate peak of Self-realisation. Each day offers yet another wondrous opportunity. Never stop. Never be still.

‘Alone you come, alone you go.’ That is what the mystics and poets say. It is true, but yet not entirely true. Each Jivatma, each individual soul when he takes a new body and comes into this world is never alone. He is accompanied by two life companions. One is God and the other is the god of death, i.e. Time. They are our eternal lifelong companions, ever with us. We do not have to raise our hand to touch them; they are closer to us than our own selves; they are part of ourselves. Time keeps on ticking in our heart-clock, and God radiantly and resplendently shines in the chambers of our heart as our indwelling Reality. These two are our life’s companions. If we are aware of both of them, the world cannot touch us; Maya cannot play any havoc with us; nothing can affect us. We will overcome all things. For with God, everything becomes possible. And if time is utilised well, then it becomes your greatest friend, not merely your companion, not a treacherous companion, not a companion who is taking you

slowly and steadily towards the departing moment, towards the grave, towards the crematorium, but rather it becomes your greatest friend, your greatest helper. Try to contemplate the significance of this, and make a success of your life.

This is pragmatic mysticism, not academic or theoretical mysticism. It is a pragmatic and mystical way of looking at oneself. I am never alone. God is always with me. I am never alone. Time is ever with me. Therefore let me be alert, vigilant and ever moving forward. For I must know that time walks with me, and time is none other than death. Death and time are interchangeable terms. And God is my eternal companion.

Let us live with this new awareness as we move towards the conclusion of this year, and let this knowledge make us dynamic Yogis. Let this knowledge make us active Sadhakas. Let this knowledge make our spiritual lives progressive and creative. Let this knowledge bring into you a new alertness, a new vigilance, a new dimension of dynamism, an actively lived spiritual life. This is the great gain of living in awareness. God bless you all.

Om Namo Narayanaya—Om Namo
Narayanaya—Om Namo Narayanaya!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage unto the Supreme Reality, the eternal Cosmic Spirit, the Universal Soul of whom we are part, whose nature is our innermost, essential nature! Loving adorations to the glorious spiritual presence, whom we call Gurudev, whose teachings are the inner source of our aspiration, dispassion, Vichara and Viveka. Gurudev's teachings are the unerring source of the direction in our life. They are the secret source of spirituality and of our sustained interest in and enthusiasm for the spiritual path. The wisdom teachings of Gurudev fill and animate our lives. They throw light upon our path. To that spiritual source of our aspiration, loving adorations!

My silent adorations to the Divinity that indwells you all, to which your body is a moving temple and for which your heart is a throne. That Divinity is the imperishable soul within your perishable body, the eternal reality enshrined in your temporary human personality. Silent salutations to Him, who is that indwelling power! May the grace of the Supreme and the choicest benedictions and blessings of worshipful Master ever be with you and enable you to recognise your hidden divinity. May your Sadhana enable you to

recognise this hidden inner divinity day by day ever more, until that becomes the one and only reality in your life. All other things will fade away into their respective places in the circumference of your life. This recognition and awareness then will occupy the central place in your consciousness. Thus your life becomes God-based and God-oriented. Such is the life that beloved and worshipful Holy Master Gurudev left for us as his legacy, as your heritage. This is the essence of our life in Sivananda Ashram, the centre and source of the divine life ideal in this modern world. May we thus live, knowing this to be the very quintessence in Sivananda Ashram—a life divinely lived.

Alfred Tennyson was a poet who has written many poems of high order as well as small compositions of fourteen lines, called sonnets. He also wrote some lighter, small poems. Shakespeare wrote great dramatic pieces, but he also wrote ‘Seven Ages of Man’, which was very short and to the point. Among these lighter poems written by Tennyson is one entitled “The Brook”. In this poem, the last line of each verse is a refrain. This is like the famous song of the Sannyasin of Swami Vivekananda, which ends with the refrain or final line, ‘Wake up Sannyasin bold, say Om Tat Sat Om!’ Similarly, in ‘The Brook’ the refrain is, ‘I go on forever’—‘For men

may come and men may go, but I go on forever'. Until I reach my destination, I do not stop. I keep on overcoming all obstacles on my path. Though I may have to traverse difficult ways and terrain, I do not stop. I jump, I twist, I turn, but I am going on forever. Thus 'The Brook' becomes a stream and then a river; it joins the sea and finally becomes the ocean. It succeeds in becoming the ocean because it never stops—Chareiveti Charaiveti—it keeps on going. That is the secret of success.

Never stop. Keep moving onward. All obstacles are to be overcome, circumvented or avoided in order to overcome. Nothing, no obstacle, shall stand in the way of my attaining the goal. That is the one sure thing in my life. Nothing will stand in the way of my goal. All obstacles will, in some way or another, be overcome. 'For men may come and men may go, but I go on forever.'

This is a world of birth and death. People come, people go. Even so, you also have come and one day you will also go. I am here, and one day I also will go. Rama came and He went. Lord Krishna came and He went. Lord Buddha came and He went. Great conquerors like Ashoka, Napolean, Alexander the Great, all came and all went. Multi-billionaires came and went. Great warriors, strong people who overcame all others,

also came and went. But Indian spirituality, the great aspiration of the human soul towards Divinity, the living spiritual experience and the greatest treasure of humanity, has abided through millions of centuries—it goes on forever.

Thus should be the inner life of each one of you, ever moving towards divine perfection and liberation. Ever moving towards the ideal of divine life and divine experience. You must be able to say like the brook of Tennyson's poem, "For men may come and men may go, but I go on forever". I go onwards, God-wards. I continue always towards the Supreme. Whatever may come, my life will be this unceasing flow directed towards the consummation of becoming one with the supreme sea and the great ocean. Your true life, your inner life, always should be this all-conquering movement of the spirit towards its supreme source, the universal Spirit Divine. 'For men may come and men may go, but I go on forever'. Whatever may come, my spirit, my aspiring soul, will go on forever. It will not stop. It will not hesitate. It will never be discouraged. It will never change direction. It will never forget its goal, forever and ever it is going onward, Godward.

This is true spirituality. This is true Sadhana and authentic spiritual life: the secret, silent inward movement, ever-present, ever moving towards the great goal, God. Such is true and

genuine Bhakti. Strive to make your inner life thus. May the grace of the Divine and the blessings of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji and the benedictions of all the saints grant you fulfillment in this one and only life there is. May they grant you fulfillment in this life. God bless you all.

Om Namo Narayanaya—Om Namo
Narayanaya—Om Namo Narayanaya!

O Thou Universal Being, Thou who art the eternal One, beginningless and endless, Thou who art the infinite One, boundless and limitless, everywhere present, the indwelling splendor within all things that have name and form—the indwelling splendor within the atom, within the sun, within the galaxies, the indwelling splendor within man! Thou who art the indwelling divine splendor within each and every one of us sitting in the spiritual presence of beloved and worshipful Holy Master Swami Sivanandaji—O Thou Indwelling Divine Splendor within our body temples—to Thee our worshipful homage!

Grant that we may ever live in the awareness of Your constant presence within us, ever live with the awareness of the sanctity and the holiness of this moving temple of Yours, our body; ever dwell within the awareness that we have You as our constant companion and we are co-tenants in this most mysterious of your handy works, the human body. Grant that our life might be characterised

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with this light of inner wakefulness, that we dwell in You and that You dwell within us. This awareness would perhaps be the key to making our life divine.

Loving adorations to you Gurudev, for blessing us each morning by drawing us into your presence and pouring your grace upon us, so that we might live filled with grace and guided by the light of your wisdom teachings. Let us live inspired by the awareness that you live ever by our side, guiding us, pointing the way and giving us the right direction. Let us live in the awareness of the light of your wisdom teachings in your holy Ashram on the banks of Divine Mother Ganga in Uttarakhand and sacred India, the land of Vedas, Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita. At this moment when we are concluding this early morning gift of yours, this spiritual fellowship among Sadhaks, we ask of you that we may live in the light of your wisdom teachings that ever illuminate our path.

Blessed are you all who come to this spiritual fellowship morning after morning, so that you may commence each day in a sublime and spiritual way. Be aware of your good fortune. Avail yourselves of all the opportunities and facilities provided especially for you by Gurudev. That which is very near, we sometimes miss seeing. But our fortune is great if we keep our eyes open. Having eyes alone is not enough. ‘He who has

eyes, let him see.' It is necessary to look and see, then you can find.

Yah pashyati sa pashyati

'He who sees this, verily he sees.'

Thus in the Srimad Bhagavad Gita Lord Krishna gives a hint about what type of vision He wants us to have. He says, 'He who looks with this vision, he alone sees.' Otherwise even having eyes, yet we see not.

Why do we fail to see? Because we are looking at something else. Yesterday we spoke of what is easy and what is not easy. How easy it is to think about ourselves and about what belongs to us—our wrist watch, our fountain pen, our clothes, our vessels, our coffee and lunch—ours, ours, ours. How easy! Why? Because we are identified with ourselves. It is easy to think about ourselves, to identify with ourselves and to think about that which belongs to us; because the things are dear to us, we are attached to them and we feel that 'this belongs to us, it is mine'. 'I'-ness and 'my'-ness make things easy. Perhaps this gives us the key how to make difficult things easy!

It is difficult to think about God. It is difficult to think about others. If you want to make it easy, think that they belong to you. Identify yourself with them, even as the son identifies himself with his father: '*I and my father are one*' (John-10:30).

Then identify yourself with God, as you identify yourself with others. Treat others like yourself. Do to others that which is pleasing to you. Refrain from doing to others that which you do not like. The feeling about God that ‘He is mine, I belong to Him’ provides you with the key to overcome this self-absorption. Too much absorption in things to which we are attached is the main barrier to God-thought, to meditation, to Smaran (remembrance), to Yoga. Transfer your identification, your affection and attachment for others, to God. “He is mine. I really and truly do treasure God as my wealth of wealth.”

*Twameva mata cha pita twameva
Twameva bandhuhs cha sakha twameva
Twameva vidya dravinam twameva
Twameva sarvam mama deva deva.*

Really and truly, regard Him as your all-in-all, wealth of wealth, mother, father and everything that you hold precious. The spiritual person thinks of God in that way. Then the difficult thing becomes easy, natural and spontaneous. Mother never has a problem in thinking about her child. A lover never finds a problem in thinking about the beloved. A drunkard never finds a problem in thinking about whisky and wine and liquor... Even so, the true devotee never finds a problem in thinking of God, because he has love for God.

Therefore, the solution is contained in the problem. It shows why a thing is easy and why another thing is difficult. Why is it so difficult to find the indwelling God who is present everywhere? Because we are busy seeing the outer name and form. We see the many. We see the multifarious. We get attached. It is only difficult to remember God, because we are constantly thinking about so many other things. So you have the disease and the remedy. Whether you will cherish the disease or whether you will apply the remedy—that no one can decide except yourself. Great ones have shown through their lives in which direction lies blessedness and wherein lies the supreme good. Therefore, be wise and do not cherish the disease, the bondage and the darkness, but quickly and eagerly apply the remedy and rejoice. That would indeed be wisdom.

A great sage said, “When you have entered the railway compartment and taken your seat, why should you still hold your bundle on the head? When the whistle blows and the train begins to move, the whole thing moves. Keep the bundle on the floor, and it will also move. Wherever the train takes you, that same train will take the bundle also. So do not perpetuate the burden. Keep it aside and it will come along with you.”

Even so, do not unnecessarily prolong your bondage. Apply the solution, become light, and the Divinity will take you to supreme blessedness. At every step you must live in wisdom. Mere intellect is not wisdom. Mere intellect is not discrimination. Vichara is different from mere Buddhi Chaturya (cleverness of the intellect). Ability to be a little clever does not indicate that you are spiritually awake. Analytical, discriminative Vichara, Vishleshana (analysis), Viveka are different dimensions, different qualities. The sages always want us to be Vicharashila, constantly active in discrimination, ever keenly enquiring into the real nature of things. God has given you the ability to make Him the be-all and end-all of your life and to keep Him constantly before your mental vision as the goal for which you are living, the Being in whom you are living. This is real vision, this is real wisdom, real intelligence. The lesser intelligence may only strengthen the barrier between you and God, instead of breaking it down and taking it away. Therefore, sometimes devotees pray, "Please do not give me intellect. Give me faith, give me trust, give me devotion, give me true love, give me a great yearning for You, give me thirst and hunger!"

Therefore, if you want to be spiritually awake you should live in the awareness of these great truths: God is not inside scriptures, God is not

inside temples, God is not beyond in the sky, but God whom the mystics experience is now and here. God is to you the nearest of all things. And know that, before you start seeking Him, He is seeking you! That is the mystical truth. Otherwise, He would not be sending saint after saint, sage after sage, seer after seer, Rishi after Rishi through the centuries to keep calling you to Him. God is constantly calling you. He is constantly knocking at the door of your heart. All scriptures constitute only God's voice calling man, "Arise, awake, attain Me and become forever blessed". So it is not so much that you are calling—it is He who is calling. He has always been calling. Our only good fortune seems to be that we have answered that call in this life. That is what makes our life so wonderful. We have answered Him.

But then once you answer, you should not keep sitting in the same place. The moment you have heard the call and answered, you must start moving in that direction. That is Sadhana. That is Yoga and dynamic spiritual life. That is Vedanta. Keep moving towards Him. Having heard His call, having responded, now start moving towards Him. Go in that direction, every moment nearer and nearer, each day, in and through each thought, word and action, nearer and nearer to God.

Drawing nearer and nearer to God, think: “Through each word of mine, am I drawing nearer and nearer to God? Through each action, am I drawing nearer and nearer to that Supreme Being, that great Splendor, the Cosmic Reality?” This should be the constant look-out and query of every Sadhaka, every Yogi, every devotee. “Through all my doing, am I drawing nearer and nearer to that great experience, to that grand destiny of mine? Am I drawing nearer and nearer?” And if this orients each and every moment of yours, then you are indeed supremely blessed. Nothing can prevent you from attaining that supreme goal. No power in the universe can deprive you of your due, if you live with this consideration. May God bless you to live such a divine life and crown it with the supreme divine experience, which liberates you!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Radiant Immortal Atman! Beloved and blessed children of the divine, Sadhakas and seekers, spiritual aspirants, devotees of the Lord and also devoted to Divine Life and to the leading of a life of Dharma! Most blessed indeed are those who live in the recognition of their divine destiny on earth. You have come with a divine mission to fulfill in your life. Not so much through society or global humanity—that may be part of the activity; it has its own greatness and importance in your life. But nevertheless, it is not so much this dimension and aspect that is referred to when a divine mission in your life is spoken about.

However glorious the offering of your service, energy and attention in the field of dissemination of spiritual literature, of spiritual awakening may be, nevertheless it would be incomplete and fruitless if simultaneously there was not a steady awakening within your own inner self. There has to be an awakening and a steady movement towards the ideal of divine perfection and divine

experience. If this keeps pace with your outer activity and the dissemination of divine life, then all is well. Then things are as they should be.

I would even go to the extent of saying that if your activity in this outer field of serving humanity through the dissemination of spiritual knowledge, by calling them to claim their divine birthright, directing their minds and their attention to their divine heritage from India's glorious past— even if your activity in this outer field may not be so very vigorous or prominent— yet, if you are an awakened soul, all is well. You are keeping ever awake that ideal of “I have a divine destiny to fulfill, I have come with a divine mission, I am divinity temporarily in a state of self-forgetfulness, but within me, behind this mundane facade, I am a shining effulgent light—I am divine, and divine is my origin. Divine indeed is my authentic life, for I am divinity expressing myself through my humanity, and divine indeed is the goal that I am striving to attain. Yes, fullest experience of divine perfection, fullest experience of my eternal divine state of fearlessness and freedom, of transcendental bliss, peace and effulgence! That verily I must achieve, and that is my true fulfillment in life, my ultimate goal supreme.”

If your entire life is divinely oriented, divinity based, divinity directed, then you are indeed a

gem and a jewel. You are indeed a worthy follower of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji and the modern saints like Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Aurobindo, Sri Ramana Maharshi, Swami Ramdas, Sri Sri Anandamayi Maa. You indeed would be a true disciple and a real devotee of such beings.

They were forthright in declaring the supreme goal as the most important thing to be attained. They were uncompromising. They made no bones about it. They did not dilute their message. They said: “Come, come, the goal of life is God-realisation! You are a part of God. To attain to that fullest experience is your most important duty. Attain that and become free!” Their message was unambiguous, direct, forthright and plain, and it was a call to glory, a call to the fulfillment of your destiny.

Therefore, your life should be one of awakened divine consciousness, constantly moving you in the direction of your essential divine nature. To that end, do all that is necessary. To that end, take help from all the ten directions—receive, listen, absorb, assimilate and experience! This is the key. Yesterday we mentioned the necessity of absorbing, assimilating and translating into spiritual energy all that we study, read, reflect upon, all that we listen to, all that comes our way. The great need is to absorb, to assimilate and to become a living

embodiment, a dynamic expression of all this. To this end be ever alert, be ever active within and be ever progressive.

This is divine life. This is the life of spiritual Sadhana, of Yoga: this is true Vedanta and the one and only thing worth learning. This is the only substance, the one and only worthwhile manner in which to live and the only goal to strive after. This is what your life is meant to be—divine in every part of it. And it is towards such a life that the ancients called us:

*Uttishthata jagrata prapya varan nibodhata!—
(Arise awake and attain illumination!)*

Let our life be a response to this eternal call of the divine in and through its illumined saints, seers and sages.

Take advantage of auspicious anniversaries, annual points in the year, to be very active, dynamic and vigorous in your inner life, which is more important than the outer. While serving and benefiting others, fulfilling a mission on the outer plane is necessary, even more necessary is your own spiritual awakening, your inner unfoldment and attaining illumination. Never forget it! Throw yourself into it heart and soul! Be ever engaged in it, with great enthusiasm, much dedication and devotion. Then you will be crowned with success and your life would indeed be fulfilling a divine

mission and attaining a divine destiny. That is what should be, and that is what I wish for you.

May the grace of God and the choicest benediction of beloved and worshipful Holy Master make this consummation a fact, not only possible but actually attained in this very life. May you be ‘Kritakritya’ (who has accomplished all duties) and ‘Aptakama’ (whose desires are all fulfilled). May you be one who has lived life grandly and not vainly. So ponder these points, be wise, be awake and dynamically progressive. Serve humanity and attain divinity. This is the quintessence of life: serve humanity and attain divinity—that is life for you! God bless you all!

Om Namo Narayanaya—Om Namo
Narayanaya—Om Namo Narayanaya!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage to You, You all-pervading eternal Reality, You supreme Cosmic Being, You Universal Soul; to You who are the indweller of the minutest atom, to You who pervades endless space, to You who are within and without, the one ever-present Reality amidst countless ever-changing manifestations of names and forms which are unstable, evanescent, transitory and perishable. You who are the eternal amidst the non-eternal, the imperishable amidst the perishable, the Reality amidst appearances, homage unto You! May Your divine grace enable man to perceive and abide in Your presence and thus uplift his life into divine awareness, go beyond sorrow and become established in You, who are peace profound, bliss absolute, the Light of lights beyond all darkness. Thus may the seeking soul abide in light, peace and joy! This is all that we ask of You in humility and reverence.

Adorable and worshipful spiritual presence of Gurudev, abiding in this Samadhi and showering grace upon all those who draw near you in devotion and faith—may your glance of grace awaken the awareness of our inherent divinity

our essential inner perfection. May your Guru-Kripa and benedictions enable us to make our life an earnest and uninterrupted attempt to awaken the sleeping awareness and make life a sublime endeavour to manifest this hidden divinity of our innermost nature. That life may shine with this quality of the Divine, that each thought, sentiment, word and action may be instilled with this awakened divinity, so that one's life becomes divinely lived; so that one's life becomes a source of blessedness to one and all by being transformed into a perennial stream of beauty, auspiciousness and truth—Satyam, Sivam, Sundaram. What we are, may we live and manifest minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day. This is our supplication before your beloved and worshipful spiritual presence. We are supremely blessed. May we live in the awareness of this blessing and utilise it in the highest measure possible, endowed with discrimination and determination. Thus may we shine! This is our special prayer to you at this moment when you have graciously drawn us into your spiritual presence in this sacred Samadhi Hall. May our life be an active expression of these blessings!

Radiant Atman, beloved seekers and spiritual aspirants, beloved Jijnasus and Mumukshus, beloved devotees of the Lord, lovers of righteousness, beloved Yogis and Sadhakas of Sivananda Ashram! May we ponder well our present position of blessedness! Life is short and

time flies. ‘Take time by the forelock’ is an expression. Let us not take time by the forelock only once in twelve months, on the 31st of December or at the beginning of the new calendar year of the Hindu religion. No. Let us take time by the forelock each day that comes before us in continuous succession. Our year is filled with 365 golden days. Let us utilise each hour of the day purposefully and with great enthusiasm and willingness to pay the price for this supreme attainment. For one who is prepared to pay the price gets what is worth having. Even so, let us be ever prepared to pay the price in terms of exertion, in terms of setting aside petty considerations, small goals, in terms of willingness to renounce that which stands in one’s way of achieving the highest and supreme blessedness. For in grasping that which is temporary and evanescent, we lose that which is eternal and permanent. For in grasping that which is little and limited and finite, we lose that which is infinite and the greatest good, the highest blessedness, the supreme treasure.

Even as a person who knows of a small plot of land with a buried treasure in some part of it, makes up his mind to sell everything else and purchase the little place which contains an illimitable treasure—in the same way one who becomes aware of the presence of ‘the pearl of surpassing price’ in one’s own being, one’s innermost Self, deems no sacrifice too great, or no

sacrifice a sacrifice at all. In a seeming loss, he sees the greatest gain. For in setting aside the petty and the small, the temporary and the changeful, he knows that he is attaining that which is the Supreme, the Eternal and the Infinite. Thus renunciation is no renunciation. Sacrifice is no sacrifice. Loss is not loss. He is able to see things in a different manner than the ordinary person whose vision is veiled in delusion.

The seeking aspirant, the soul that has been awakened to Reality, sees renunciation as a positive step towards the supreme gain. The vision of the seeker is different from the vision of the Ajnani (ignorant) and the Avichari (thoughtless). All things in our life we should view with an illumined vision, with this different scale with which we evaluate things. Thus we should move from unrealities towards the Supreme Reality. We should move from darkness or lesser light towards the supreme light, supreme enlightenment. We should move from death and mortality of body-consciousness or human awareness to immortality and everlasting life in Divine spiritual consciousness, which is our essential native state.

Thus indeed Gurudev used the significant term 'birthright'. Claim your birthright now, not in the distant future, but now! It is something over which you have a right, which you only have to claim, and your claim will be granted. Make this

life a process of claiming that which is your birthright—this process of knocking, asking and seeking, so that it may be opened unto you and it may be given to you, and you may become blessed. Make each day of your life this process of claiming your birthright, not forfeiting that which you have deserved, but claiming your birthright, not forfeiting and lamenting later your folly.

May our life be a glorious ascent of the spirit towards its pristine state of liberation, fearlessness, freedom, divine perfection, fullness and supreme blessedness. Thus living, may we rejoice and not lament. Thus living, may we be filled with eternal satisfaction, not with vain regrets. Thus living, may we crown our life with a supreme state of a regained paradise, to use a well-known term. May we live unto bliss and peace and the fullness of the supreme absolute experience. May this life be full of meaning, filled with much content. This is in our hands, and may we realise that what we wish we can become!

Om Namo Narayanaya—Om Namo
Narayanaya—Om Namo Narayanaya!

Worshipful Presence Divine, Thou who art within and without, all-pervading and ever-present, worshipful homage unto Thy presence! At this moment of adoring Thy invisible presence, this humble servant of worshipful and beloved Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji prays that your divine grace be upon all these devotees of the Lord, spiritual seekers aspiring after liberation and illumination, Yogis, followers of Gurudev's teachings and lovers of righteousness. May your divine grace be upon all who have assembled at this moment at this sacred Samadhi Shrine of Gurudev's holy Ashram on the bank of Mother Ganga. This is my humble prayer on this Thursday morning, 21st May 1992, the second year of the Divine Decade. May your grace enable them to receive this Guru Prasad, the essence of divine life, placed before them out of your infinite love and compassion and your keen desire that they not forget the goal of their life, the objective for which they have taken up their abode in Uttarakhand. With this intention, you have

prompted this Guru Prasad to be placed before them.

Beloved and worshipful Gurudev, loving adorations to you! Thank you for enabling me to present you to this assembly of most fortunate and thrice-blessed souls, who are here to start their day in a divine manner. Allow me Gurudev to put before them your often quoted saying: "Obedience is better than reverence". May they all receive this saying of yours and obey you and practice your teachings, instead of merely prostrating before you and showing reverence and offering worship. All these are very important. But more important and of greater significance than these three is to obey you, to follow your teachings and practice your instructions." It is now up to them to receive this Guru Prasad and to crown themselves with glory by trying every day to earnestly practice what you have practiced and lived, what you have preached and taught and what you have left as your legacy to the spiritual world of this twentieth century. Divine Life is the quintessence of Dharma embodied in truth, purity, nonviolence and compassion. In your concept of Divine Life, you have given the essence of Dharma and the essence of the four Yogas. This ideal is being placed before these earnest spiritual followers at this moment. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for enabling me to sum up for

them the quintessence of the entire range of your teachings.

Radiant Atman, beloved children of the Divine! Life is short. Time passes away. Time does not wait for you. If you have not finished something, time does not stop and say: "Alright you finish it before I proceed further." It does not care; it cannot care. It moves. Night gives place to morning, and evening gives place to night, and night absorbs you in slumber and forgetfulness once again.

‘Day and night, morning and evening, autumn and spring, come again and again. Time plays, our life passes away, yet even then the air of desire does not leave us.’

Time plays. Do not become a plaything of time. Command it, control it; make it your tool. Utilise it and become blessed. Time should not consume you. You must utilise time, enrich your life and rise to the supreme height of glory, of being a Jivanmukta, a Mukta Purusha. That is the least you can do to say 'thank you' to God who has so richly endowed you. There should be no moment in your life without Sadhana; there should be no absence of Yoga; there should be no

moment without spiritual thought—100% spirituality is to be practiced. And the key to it has been given by Jagadguru Adishankaracharya,

*Yadyad karma karomi tattadakhilam Shambho
tavaradhanam*

‘Whatever activities I perform, they are all acts of thy worship.’

Everything—every moment of my being, every act of my life, mental, verbal or physical, all is adoration. I offer it unto Thee. Nothing is outside of worship, nothing is outside of Yoga, Sadhana, of spiritual life. Everything, all movement, all activities, every moment should be oriented towards God, should be a forward progress towards the great goal of liberation, enlightenment, of God experience.

Thus, in order to live wisely, constantly fill yourself with Bhava. Every movement of your life, while sleeping or awake, should be regarded as a spiritual process. Every moment should be transformed into a movement of your consciousness towards the cosmic consciousness, towards the origin and source of your being, which is God, which is Allah, which is Ahura Mazda, which is Brahman, which is Satchidananda—of Whom you are a part.

They gave us the vision, “You are ever in the presence of God. You live, move and have your

being in Him. The all-merciful God resides in the chambers of your heart. He is quite close to you. You have forgotten Him. Give up your self-created responsibility and be at ease. Have perfect faith in Him. Do total unreserved self-surrender. Open your heart to Him freely like a child. All miseries will come to an end. Say to Him with sincerity, ‘I am thine, my Lord. All is thine. Thy will be done. Thou doest everything for my own good.’ You will become one with God as you live in His presence.” We must live in this consciousness. Every thought, word and action will be a purposeful, devout move in the direction of God. Life will become God-oriented. Your whole life will become a Yogic activity, a concerted movement towards Divine experience.

That is this morning’s Guru Prasad. Absorb the inner meaning and implication of each and every word that is being told. But hearing is not enough. You have to listen very carefully, with attention, keen interest and sincerity. Then nothing can prevent you from attaining liberation in this very life. This I can promise you—if you fulfill the conditions, you will not go out of this life in bondage and darkness. You will go out of this life laughing aloud, a liberated being filled with the light of God. This is the truth. This certainly is the truth. God’s divine grace and choicest

benedictions and Guru Kripa of Guru Bhagavan be upon you all today and all the days of your life.

May you ponder these home truths that God is here and now! Your life is directly connected with Him. Each moment that you are alive, you should make this truth the basis of your being, "I am in His presence. I live to adore Him and attain Him. My whole life is adoration and worship. Everything that I do, everything that I am, is His worship!"

God bless you all. Vichara, Achara, Prachara – enquire, practice, propagate. Follow this order; reflect well and practice what you have heard. Then try to convey it to others, spread it to others. But first of all reflect; secondly practice, and then propagate! God bless you all!

Om Namo Narayanaya—Om Namo
Narayanaya—Om Namo Narayanaya -

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Blessed Immortal Atman, beloved children of the Lord!

At this moment, when the all-pervading Cosmic Spirit Divine, the Paramatman, the Sarvavyapi Bhagawan, when He has drawn us all together into His Divine Presence, the prayer of this servant is that His grace may ever abide in you and the benedictions of Gurudev may be with you at every step in your sincere and earnest spiritual living.

First comes spiritual living, then comes spiritual striving—within the frame work of a life lived spiritually—then comes the ultimate fulfilment of this aspiration and striving. In this connection, we must mention that Lord Sri Ramachandra, Maryada Purushottama, did not merely incarnate in order to destroy Ravana. That was the secondary aspect. He did not merely come to do something, to perform an action. He also came to live in a certain way and to show us a certain path. We see how he represents for all mankind an ideal of human life, human

relationship, human behaviour. But that was the outer objective aspect, the relation in this world with fellow human beings, with all creation, birds and beasts.

These are valuable in themselves in how your life, your conduct, your behaviour should be, how you should move amongst others, how you should relate to others. These are important in themselves. But then, personally and subjectively, how are you, what are you within yourself, that is even more important. Because the objective, outer pattern of your life is beheld by the world around you. So in terms of their perception of you, it may be important, so that you acquit yourself in an honourable, dignified way in the eyes of the world, not putting on an appearance, but sincerely being what you are. And this counts for something in one's place in society. The world beholds you from outside, and it is either inspired or debased by you, either uplifted or not uplifted by you.

But then the inner aspect, your individual aspect, is even more important, because that God beholds; He looks. He is the inner silent witness. How do you appear in the eyes of God? What does He see in you whom he has sent here in order to educate yourself, train yourself and gradually raise from a lesser to a higher state until you attain perfection? He is much concerned in what you are doing. But even more concerned with

what you are in your being. The world may not know it, and you may be not aware, but God the Antaryamin, the ever-present witness, He sees you from within, and He knows you from within.

Therefore, it is important that you do not let Him down, that you are true to His image in which He has made you; you must be true to the relationship in which you stand to Him, namely that of a child to the father, an heir to the King of kings. He is Anantakoti Brahmanda Nayaka, and you are His Amsha.

*Mamaivamsho jivaloke jivabhutah sanatanah
Manah shashthanindriyani prakritihsthani
karshati”
(B.G. 15/7)*

(An eternal portion of myself having become a living soul draws (to itself) the five senses, with the mind as the sixth, abiding in Nature.)

You are a part of Him. Therefore He beholds you in this way, and to be true to His expectations of you as His Divya Amsha, you have to be Divya. Therefore we said that Bhagawan Sri Ramachandra came in order to hold a lofty ideal before all mankind, to show how life should be a sublime process of revealing your Reality, and specially in the Ashram as a Sadhaka. A Sadhaka is expected to be a Tyagi, a Tapasvi, an Adarsha Satcharitrvan (ideal individual with lofty character), a Sadachari, a Sadhaka and a real

Yogi, because that is what God called for: “*Tasmat yogi bhava Arjuna*” (therefore be thou a Yogi, Arjuna!). And how such a Yogi conducts himself, how he behaves, in what way God is pleased with him, you get a very clear picture in the latter half of the 12th chapter of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita Jnana Upadesha. The wisdom teachings of the Bhagavad Gita does not leave anything unsaid. And for our guidance a blue print is placed before us in the last eight verses of the 12th chapter. After beholding the Cosmic Form of the Lord, when Arjuna comes down to normal consciousness, the Lord deems it the most appropriate time to tell Arjuna what he expects in a devotee who is most dear to Him. He keeps before him a certain ideal, Adarsha.

A person who is a Sadhaka should be an ideal example of Samyama (perfect restraint), Tyaga (renunciation), Anasakti (detachment), Tapasya (austerity), Saralata (simplicity), Nishtha (steadfastness) and Shraddha (faith). And a Sadhaka who is a follower of Gurudev is also supposed to be a Nishkama-yogi, a Bhagavad-bhakta, a Dhyani and a Viveki, ever striving to differentiate between Anatman and Atman, Anitya and Nitya, Asat and Sat. Because, Gurudev has placed before us the ideal of ‘serve, love, meditate, realise’.

And what can ensure that we rise up to the expectations of God within? “*Sakshi cheta kevalo*

nirgunashcha". He is Sakshi, witness. He always sees. He always knows. He always is aware of what is going on within your interior. He is the silent witness as it is said, '*Sarvadhi sakshi bhutam*'. He is the silent witness of all Antahkaranas, all inner instruments. He abides in all. What can ensure that you rise up to the expectations of God within, the Antaryami? What can ensure that you rise up to the expectations of one whom you have called Guru, what can guarantee that you rise up to the expectations of the society in which you are living?

Let no expectations of human society be belied by you, let it be fulfilled to the fullest satisfaction. Therefore what can ensure and guarantee that you fulfill the expectations of human society as an individual in that society, that expects something? That would be the sharing of today.

If there is any one factor that can ensure that you rise up to the expectations of society, God, yourself, your Guru, that can ensure that your life is noble and sublime, it is idealism. You should think, "I am a Sadhaka, I must be an ideal Sadhaka. I am a devotee of God, I must be an ideal devotee of God. I am a disciple, I must be an ideal disciple. I am a Yogi, I must be an ideal Yogi. I am a 'Nishkama Karma Yogi', I must be a worthy and ideal servant of humanity. I am a human individual, I must be an ideal human individual".

This great aspiration, this ideal, is the one unfailing and absolutely sure way of living up to the expectation of life within and without. If you do not have idealism, you are at the mercy of your lower passions and of the compelling force of the senses. In every way you become like a tossed ship in the open sea, without sail, rudder or oars. “I must attain that goal; every moment I must keep moving towards that goal, every step I must be in that direction”, if you have a very well conceived goal to attain, if you are filled with this sense of purpose and you have a clear cut way, not rigid but flexible, this then is the secret of attaining what you have come here for. If there is any factor, any power that can keep your life always uplifted and prevent you from going to a lower state, it is idealism. It is a powerful upward pull, constantly being exerted upon your life and all its actions within you.

This then is to be meditated upon, reflected upon and closely adhered to and striven for. For it is that which ensures that your life will fulfill itself, that you will attain the goal, for which you have come here as a thinking, reasoning human animal. May the grace of God and the blessings of beloved and worshipful Holy Master enable you to attain success in such a life. God bless you!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Radiant Atman! Time and tide wait for no man. Radiant Immortal Atman, let this truth be ever before us; keeping this truth ever before us, let us not waste time, let us not neglect our highest welfare in vain expectation of some tomorrow that will never come. Tomorrow is a concept that ever deludes through the trickery of the mind. The truth is that there is only today by which it is not to be understood that there is only Monday the 27th of December. The truth is that every day is only a today, and what you have is only today.

Therefore, each dawn grasp with both your hands this one little period of life that you have, and that is today. If todays are taken care of, man will never regret. If today is taken care of, man will never cease to progress onward, Godward. The wise Sadhaka is keenly aware that it is the here and now moment which is the most precious of all moments. The wise Sadhaka says, "Let me take

care of today, let me take care of this hour, let me take care of this moment, and at this moment let me be divine, in this moment let me be a fulfilment of Gurudev's wish for me." If that is understood and fully utilised, we have done our duty, and it is God's turn then to fulfill Himself.

Great is your good fortune to be alive and awake and to be in the light and not in darkness. Great is your good fortune that life has been given to you. Awakening has been brought to you, and light has been bestowed upon life's path thanks to the glorious teachings of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, of the Upanishads, of the New Testament, of all the scriptures of the world and the glorious teachings of beloved and worshipful Gurudev; he has sought to place before you the down-to-earth practical admonitions of the essence of the teachings of all the scriptures of all the sages and seers. He has laboured for you that you may not labour. He has spent hours of deep study and much effort in order that you may be spared much philosophising and much effort. We have only to make use of what he has given to us. He has hewn down trees, he has scorned the timber, he has cut fire wood. We have only to light it and warm ourselves and cook and eat. All the hardest part of the work he has done for us and given to us ready to apply and to live. Knowing what he has done he has ended his teachings and practical

instructions by saying, “This is the essence of all scriptures and the teachings of saints and sages. These Niyamas or spiritual canons must be rigidly observed. Do not give leniency to your mind.”

This is Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji at the end of his compact, concise, yet comprehensive 20 Important Spiritual Instructions. Beloved Sadhaks, what will be your resolution in regard to these instructions as the old year is fast concluding, and the New Year 1994 is soon to be upon you?

Blessed Atman! Blessed Jijnasus and Mumukshus, Yogis, devotees of God, lovers of righteousness, O you all assembled here, Bhaktas, Jnanis, Raja-yogis, Karma-yogis, Japa-yogis and Sankirtan-yogis, how will you relate yourself to this quintessence of all scriptures? In what way will you receive this gift of Gurudev, the 20 Important Spiritual Instructions, as you are concluding one year of spiritual living on the sacred banks of Divine Mother Ganga in Gurudev’s Ashram? What will be your attitude? When this supreme blessedness has been bestowed upon you and you have been given this great gift from the all-loving world awakener and enlightener in whose presence you are sitting at this moment, what will be your attitude? In what way do you wish to relate yourself, and how are you going to utilise this precious gift, the fruit of

his labour, of his deep study, the fruit of his earnest desire to benefit you and take you up to illumination and liberation? What will be your attitude towards this golden gift, this divine gift? Ponder this, decide, and upon your decision will depend your fate and ultimate destiny.

Lord Krishna concluded his Gita Jnana Upadesha by this amazing remark, “O Arjuna, having reflected over it fully, act as you wish.”

It is this supreme love that gives freedom for the beloved one to do as he wishes. I do not force, I do not compel. I have given of Myself. Now as you wish, you decide and do. That was Lord Krishna. That too is Swami Sivananda. You must be keenly eager to raise yourself by your own effort to the highest state of divine perfection and blessedness.

That is what all your life is about, and in this there should be no hesitation; there should be earnestness, sincerity and serious aspiration and determination. This is the sign of a Yogi, a Bhakta, a true devotee of God, of a Sadhaka. I deem it a great good fortune that during this concluding 50 day period of glorifying Lord Vishwanath, it has been my privilege to bring to you in a vital manner the quintessence of Gurudev's practical spiritual teachings for your consideration. For this privilege, for this great good fortune I thank the Supreme Being. I also humbly offer my thanks to

Beloved Gurudev and to all of you who, by assembling here morning after morning, have been instrumental in granting me this privilege. Life is short, time flies away. It is wise therefore, to make use of what we have now and here and not to postpone that which is the most important. All other things may be postponed, but not that thing for which you have come here as a human being. That is what endows life with a purpose, without which life is but an empty dream. Gurudev used to say, "It is like the bellows of a blacksmith. It means merely life-repairing through the lungs, inhaling and exhaling and being alive. Even the bellows of a blacksmith puffs air in and out."

Life becomes significant, precious and lofty when it is utilised for the purpose for which it has been granted to us. You are all intelligent people. You are all people with understanding and knowledge. It is therefore enough to say this in brief, and you will be able to grasp and bless yourself. God has blessed you. Gurudev has blessed you. Receive this blessing and benefit yourself and become blessed.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage unto the Divine Reality, the all-pervading, ever-present and unchanging essence of all beings, of all existence, and the source, support and ultimate fulfilment of all life. May supreme grace flow from that Being and uplift your life to the heights of spiritual realisation.

Loving adorations to beloved and worshipful Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj whose glance of grace is ever upon all sincere aspirants, who exists to support, guide and illumine all sincere seeking souls; having come into this phenomenal existence characterised by birth, growth, change, old age, disease and dissolution, they are struggling to reach a spiritual goal. Upon all such is the glance of grace of Gurudev ever ready to help and to guide them until they reach the Goal Supreme. To that Gurudev our loving adorations! May his grace be upon you all.

Radiant Atman! There are four things in this human world that make life worth living and that make life to be regarded as counting for something. The first is what a human being is able to do for others, to bring joy into the Lord's creation, and to remove sorrow, suffering and pain of God's creatures.

The second principle that makes life worth living is having come into this world of pain and death and having been endowed with the supreme status of a human being, is the question: are we remembering that Being who has thus blessed us and made us the crown and glory of His creation, do we remember Him or not? Are we day after day trying to glorify Him, to praise Him, to adore Him, to pray to Him and to abide in Him? If we are doing this, life is worth living. Having received everything from Him, if we then ignore Him or give Him a secondary place and regard Him as something to be remembered only once in a while, then most unfortunate are we! For we are gathering chaff and foregoing the grain, we are accumulating sea shells and forgetting the pearl in the ocean, we are accumulating pieces of glass, casting aside priceless diamonds. It is by the extent and the measure to which we keep a progressive and a positive relationship with God, that our life counts for something. Devoid of God our life becomes worthless and empty.

The third factor that makes life worth living is with what are we connected. Is our life wholly and solely a matter of being involved in Maya's market place, with this passing show, or is it related to and involved in the transcendental Reality? What is our connection, what is our state? Is it a total involvement in the outer world of passing names and forms or is it a steady attempt to connect ourselves with the reality through serene contemplation and peaceful one-pointed meditation? If the latter is the case, life is worth living, and it counts for something. If there is no progressive, ever growing connection with the Supreme Reality, day after day, if we do not strive to live, move and have our being in that Supreme Reality, then our life counts for nothing. It is as good as not living.

And the fourth factor that makes life worth living and count for something is your answer to your question. With what objective am I living my life? For what am I eating, drinking, sleeping, breathing, moving about and acting? What for? What is my goal? What is my objective? To attain what, am I living? If the answer is to attain enjoyments of this outer physical world and its things, names and forms, then we have lost the supreme gift we been endowed with. We are gathering sea-shells and foregoing the pearl. We are accumulating pieces of glass, and we are

losing the priceless diamonds. We are collecting the chaff and losing the grain.

‘Seek ye first the kingdom of Heaven!’—‘The goal of life is God realisation!’ Attain this through selfless service, devotion, worship and meditation. So what are you living for? Ask the question, what is my intention, what is my objective? For what achievement am I living, breathing, moving, striving, day by day? What is my goal?

Upon your answer to this question will depend whether your life counts for something or is a cipher. There are these four things that make life worth living, that endow life with a higher meaning and deep inner significance and that make life real life. These factors constitute the very pillars of true life that has some value in the eyes of man and God. The means to approach God are selflessness and service, devotion and worship, discipline, concentration and ceaseless pursuit of the Reality hidden behind the outer appearance of names and form that veil the Reality. The curtain is to be drawn aside so that you may glimpse the Reality.

Therefore, strive for these four principles that have been declared by all the scriptures, all the saints and sages. They have been given for our following and our practice by worshipful and beloved Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj

in whose presence we have all gathered at this moment. Such is our blessedness. And may we bless ourselves by the manner in which we live our life. More than any other blessing, this is the supreme blessing—the manner in which we live our life.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage to the Almighty Spirit Supreme, the eternal Divine Reality, ever present behind all these vanishing names and forms that constitute what you call this world, this phenomenal appearance. May the divine grace of that all-pervading, ever-present Divine Reality be upon you!

Loving adoration to beloved and worshipful Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. May his glance of grace and hand of benediction be upon all you sincere seeking souls. May Lord Viswanath bestow upon you all the four Purusharthas. This is the sincere prayer at this moment when we are together in the spiritual presence of Gurudev.

Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya who is installed between Gurudev upon the Samadhi Shrine and Lord Viswanath in the Viswanath Mandir says, “O Man, there is no trusting the breath in your nostrils; you cannot rely upon it. Any moment it may stop.”

Any moment it may stop, and life will also stop. Breath is a fleeting phenomenon, there is no guarantee that once it has come in, it will go out again. Knowing this, wise people have admonished us, '*Kalakshepo na kartavyam*', time should not be wasted. Life becomes shorter moment by moment, and when the last moment comes, the one who is to take you to the beyond, he will not listen to your pleas to concede some more moments for you within the body, so that you may call upon the Lord or go down on your knees and pray. That moment is exact, precise, correct to the split second. Therefore, one should ever be dwelling in the Divine, one should chant His Name, remember Him, direct one's mind towards Him; one should be linked up with Him and enquire about the reality of appearances and of that which is beyond, through dedicated action of the body, through devout love in your heart, through constant Godward thought of your mind and through discrimination, intellectual enquiry. Constantly dwell in the Divine, be linked up with the Divine.

Every moment life ebbs away. Why? Because we never cease breathing. Yogis, the great ones who are mystics, they calculate human life not in terms of years, months, weeks, days, hours, minutes. No. They calculate it in the number of breaths that has been allocated to each Jivatma

from the moment of birth. Each Jivatma is allocated so many inhalations and exhalations. Therefore the great Yogis advised us, "Engage in activities in such a manner that breath is not expended excessively. Abstain from such activity where breath is expended rapidly and in a excessive way. Anger is something which makes the breath come fiercely in and out. Any type of emotional upheaval, working yourself up into a state of excitement compels one to breathe forcefully. Carefully you have to watch: what are all those actions, what are all those moods, those inner states of mind which cause one to expend breath in an excessive manner? They taught the science of breath control, of breath restraint, by which one would carefully preserve one's breath and regulate it, so that it is not excessive. One should make a careful study of one's inner and outer states and the state of breath during a typical 24 hours or several typical 24 hours. Studying this, one soon comes to know the behaviour of the breath, the way in which breath acts in the body. Rapidity of inhalation and exhalation, except in specific Pranayamic exercises like Bhasrika and Surya Bhedi, is to be avoided, and any emotional state or condition which compels a rapid state of breathing should be limited. In these ways our great yogis have told

us the precious nature of life, the great gift of God, and how one can preserve it and prolong it.

They also stressed the need to constantly dwell in God. For this breath never stops. From the time you are born you start breathing. That is the one function over which you have no control, which goes on and on and on. Even when you are resting in deep sleep, even then breathing goes on. It does not stop. Twenty-four hours around the clock, whether you are active or inactive, breath is constantly moving. It is inexorable. You cannot stop the advent of that ultimate day, when the last breath is to leave the body. That is something you cannot stop. Therefore, the great ones said, "What is your duty? To think of the Lord, to chant His Name, to remember Him, to dwell in Him, to be ever united with Him inwardly and outwardly by dedicating your activities to Him, remembering Him and engaging in activities with the Bhava of worship; make Him part of everything—your eating, drinking, sleeping, working, moving."

For God is present even in the midst of activity. So engage in action in a worshipful attitude, remembering and dedicating your activity to God at the end of the activity. Make activity a way of connecting yourself with the all-pervading presence of God in whom you live, move and have your being. This truth should be

constantly contemplated. It must become part of your awareness. The great need is to dwell in God.

Then alone you will be engaged in total Yoga all the time. Then no part of life will be disconnected or unrelated to Yoga. For everything that you do each moment is directly linked up with God and done in His presence. That is the inner truth taught by Gurudev, focusing our attention upon action, devotion, meditation and realisation and linking them all up together in His concept of Divine Life. May such a divine life be yours! May God bless you to live such a divine life, live in Yoga, live in close proximity with God. May Gurudev's grace enable you to succeed in this inner endeavour.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage unto the supreme Eternal Reality, the one unchanging, all pervading, ever present, immanent and indwelling Reality that is behind and beyond the ever-changing and perishable, vanishing names and forms that constitute this external phenomenal appearance we call the universe and the world. May His divine grace bestow upon you all the four Purusharthas and grant you success in your pursuit of an ideal life of supreme illumination and liberation.

Loving adorations to beloved and worshipful Gurudev in whose presence we have gathered here on the last day of 1993, the third year of the Divine Decade. As we enter into 4th year of this Divine Decade, may you contemplate your Reality

You are the fourth beyond the three states of consciousness, waking, dreaming and deep sleep. You are beyond these. You are the ever present awareness—*shuddha chaitanya swarupa atma*

tattva. You are transcending the three bodies, Sthula, Sukshma and Karana (gross, subtle, causative); transcending the three states, Jagrata, Swapna and Sushupti (waking, dream and deep sleep); transcending the three Gunas—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, you are Gunatita, you are *sharira trayatita vilakshana, shuddha chaitanya, kevala satchidananda- svarupa-brahmatattva*. That is your unchanging, eternal Reality. May you be rooted in that awareness. Rooted in this awareness, may all your life and its movements, and actions be an expression of that all-perfect Divine Nature, Shuddha Sattva, Trigunatita, divine nature, beyond time, Kalatita, beyond past, present,future. You shine eternally.

Therefore on this last day of the present year 1993, let not merely the calendar year move into its fourth numeral, but let your consciousness also move into the fourth state which is your native state, your ever-present state and the substratum of your very being. Thou art That. What you are, That may you be. That may you express and manifest. This is the sharing at this most auspicious, beautiful and blessed hour in closeness with the Spirit that shines resplendent in this last resting place of him who was Guru Bhagavan, Swami Sivananda. The great beauty

and the blessedness is your ever-present Reality, to which the Upanishads woke us up with the call, “Arise, awake, know thyself”. May your life be a glorious expression of the Divinity that you are!

May the 1st of January dawn with this awakened awareness. May all the 365 days be filled with the light of this awakened awareness. May your life once and for all cease to be a half drowsy state, but let it be an awakened state. We are stepping into a new year at midnight, and may it be for you an emergence into a new dimension of consciousness which is your native state, the fourth dimension, beyond the three states.

This is your great occasion and the opportunity of answering the call of the Upanishads. “Yes, no more shall I slumber; awake I am at this moment, hearing your call and awake I shall continue to be. No more shall I slumber.” At every breath, at every step, each moment, may your inner being respond to this call and slumber no more. Awareness, wakefulness and dynamic manifestation of this awakened awareness shall scatter divinity as you walk this path towards the great Goal.

Thus may the year 1994 be. May you be blessed and may you continue to be blessed; may

you bless all beings you come into association with by providence and Karma. Rejoice in this great occasion. Unparalleled is the value of this precious moment and occasion. May you rise upon the crest of this wave of spirituality that Lord Vishwanath has created, that has been building up over these 12 months and that has been building up over these 50 days specially; and today, the 50th day, this wave has reached its peak point, and so may you rise upon the crest of this wave and elevate yourself, into a higher state of consciousness to be established in it for all times. May there be no turning back.

May thus the Supreme Divinity that dwells within you and pervades everywhere, may that Divinity bless you that your life may be such radiantly divine. May beloved and worshipful Holy Master shower his benedictions upon you and respond to your aspiration and grant your longings. The divine grace of Lord Vishwanath and the loving benedictions of Gurudev, may they achieve this miracle of miracles of your inner transformation here and now.

This is the enchanted day, this is the enchanted hour when we move towards the meeting point between the 12 months of the year that has just gone by and the year that is now

nearby. '*Uttishthata jagrata prapya varan nibodhata.*' May each dawn be an awakening not to a sound from outside, but to this eternal call from within. May each morning be an answering to that call, an awakening upon the inner dimension of your essential divinity. May each day therefore be an awakening to that ever recurring call of the Upanishad!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Radiant Immortal Atman, beloved and blessed children of Light! Sadhaks, Yogis, devotees of the Lord, Lovers of righteousness, Satsangis assembled together here in your daily morning hour of silent spiritual fellowship in the spiritual presence of Gurudev!

Some time ago, maybe last year, we mentioned some great man having said, "Even if all the religious books of the world were to be lost due to some great catastrophe, if humanity were to lose all holy books, all scriptures, yet the situation is not hopeless. Man would still be able to lead a lofty life and attain the great goal if only one little verse of our Upanishads remained alive in the memory of man." Many persons would have in their memory these great Upanishadic thoughts. If in some person's mind this one little Upanishad Shloka is still enshrined, still remembered, then all is not lost. Mankind will find

a way, it will be shown the way, and there is still hope.

And which was that Upanishad and which was that Shloka? He said that it is the Isavasya Upanishad and its very first Shloka:

*Isavasyam idam sarvam yatkincha jagatyam
jagat
Tena tyaktena bhunjitha ma gridhah
kasyasvid dhanam*

(All this, whatsoever moves in this universe and that which moves not, is covered by the Lord. That announced, enjoy. Do not covet the wealth of others.)

If this one verse is still available, hope is not lost. Once again humanity will find its way to enlightenment. Spiritual idealism will be there. Life will still be divine. It is possible, if this one Shloka is there.

It occurred to me that this statement is very true. This one Shloka is filled with so much meaning, so much significance and of such immediacy to the human individual, such vital working value; it is such a compelling fact of the now and here existence, that it can transform human life every moment, every day; it will give a divine vision to man, a noble radiant ideal to live

by. Everything it will achieve. Such is the power of this one truth.

Then it occurred to me that there is another equally valid concept that is even briefer and more ancient. The above Upanishadic verse has got four lines; this other great idea has three simple sentences. If this great idea is not lost, everything is not lost. And what is this other equally significant, deeply meaningful and most wonderful concept of your ancient prayer? The first verse of the Isavasya Upanishad may not be so much invoked, and all may not be familiar with it. But who is not familiar with this other idea?

In Gujarat, every child, every young student, in every school it is chanted in the morning. This prayer is:

*Asato ma sadgamaya
Tamaso ma jyotirgamaya
Mrityor ma amritam gamaya*

Lead us from the unreal to the Real;
Lead us from darkness to Light;
Lead us from mortality to Immortality.

If all the sacred books are lost, but mankind manages to remember this prayer, then humanity need not despair, there is still hope. For this great prayer tells us what we should ask for from the

Supreme Being, what we should strive for by our own effort, for what we should appeal from the Supreme Being, pray to Him, and what we should live for. It gives us in these three lines the key to the life sublime, the secret of spiritual unfoldment and gives us an ideal to live by. It tells us the way our ancient men of wisdom saw the human family on planet earth, saw life. They said that it should be an ascent from darkness to light; it should be an ascent from unreality to Reality; it should be an ascent from this body-bound consciousness to the infinite eternal consciousness, God-consciousness. That is what life should be. Knowing this to be the real life, we must try to make our life an ascent towards the great Reality, towards the light of wisdom and towards immortality. For, we are the children of Immortality. We are created out of that great Reality or Truth. Ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti (Truth is one, but is spoken of in many ways). That 'Sat', that Reality, is our origin. Therefore, this concept should throb in the hearts of you all. This concept should fire the minds of you all and pervade your thoughts and your daily life. Every morning when you wake up, you must say, "Today I must proceed still further in this process of

banishing the darkness of Maya, Avidya, and move towards the brilliant light of Vidya, Jnana”.

Every moment you should strive to go beyond the petty level of human consciousness with this ego, selfishness, failings, defects, with its anger, jealousy, with its temper and its greed, with its cunningness and crookedness. We should try to shake this off and arise into Divine Consciousness with its truthfulness, reality, purity and sublimity.

A train of thought arose in my mind while discussing the sacred thread ceremony of several young boys here in this Yajna Shala on the 29th of this month. It was invoked in my mind as I heard the chanting of Mrityunjaya Mantra Japa going on,

*Om trayambakam yajamahe
Sugandhim pushtivardhanam
Urvarukamiva bandhanan
Mrityormukshiya mamritat*

(Om, I worship the three eyed God Siva, who is fragrant and who is the nourisher of all beings! May He liberate us from death for the sake of immortality, just as the cucumber separates from its bondage to the creeper.)

The Pandits were repeating the Mrityunjaya Mantra in the Yajna-Shala and hearing that, I suddenly remembered another Mantra.

In the same Yajna-Shala on the 29th we are going to have the thread ceremony of several young boys. And then the Mantra that would be imparted to them would be the Gayatri Mantra, the Brahma Gayatri Mantra. And in this Gayatri Mantra, the central thought is an appeal to Surya Narayana Bhagawan to come and remove from our heart, mind and intellect the darkness of Ajnana—‘*tamaso ma jyotirgamaya*’. *Tat savitur varenyam bhargo devasya dhimahi dhiyo yo nah prachodayat*”. Come, remove the darkness of all that is implied by the terms Ajnana and Avidya and bring a flood of light into my interior. May my interior become radiant, effulgent, filled with light, with all that is auspicious and blessed—‘Satyam, Shivam Sundaram’—all that is beautiful. Let my interior become filled with that divine radiance. That is the central supplication in the Gayatri Mantra, ‘*dhiyo yo nah prachodayat*’.

These concepts, Light and Jnana, are central to our culture, central to the Indian approach to life. Our view of life is life with a movement towards Light, Jnana. It is a movement towards Jnana, movement towards Sattvikata. Sattva Guna is bright. Our concept of life, given to us by

our ancients is a movement towards Light, a movement towards Reality, Truth, Immortality. If this central truth is always borne in mind, always kept before us as our ideal, then this has the power to transform our life and make it divine. This one prayer alone contains the quintessence of all prayers.

Our Parsi brothers, the followers of the Zoroastrian religion have the symbol of blazing light as the central concept of Godhood, and their shrines or temples are called ‘Fire Temples’. Zoroastrian temples always have a perpetual blazing fire, Akhanda Agni-Jwala, that burns away all impurity and spreads light in all the ten directions and does not allow darkness to prevail.

Those who have to work in the forest either in the Himalayas or in Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, people in the forest department and also Sadhus living in the forest have learned one thing: even in the darkness of night, when jungle animals prowl about, they are safe if there is a fire where they are sitting. Because these jungle animals do not dare to approach fire; they shun fire and run away from it.

And so where there is this awareness of life being a process of ever moving from darkness to light—‘*tamaso ma jyotirgamaya*’—nothing gross,

animalistic can approach that Sadhaka, that seeker, that devotee of God, that Dharma-Premi who always has in his heart this idea: “I must live and strive to rise from darkness to Light. I must banish all darkness out of my heart and nature and my life, so that I shine with the light of God, the light of Sattva.” If this one concept is there, everything will take care of itself. The whole life will go in the right direction. Our thoughts, words and deeds will be of the right quality, and our life will lead to enlightenment.

This is the great call of this ancient Vedic prayer.

*Asato ma sat gamaya
Tamaso ma jyotirgamaya
Mrityor ma amritam gamaya*

Let us live to fulfill this prayer in our heart, in our own life, in this very body. Let our heart have but one aspiration—to be a source of light, a source of effulgence, a source of divine brilliance.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

24th September 2016 marks the auspicious occasion of Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out one hundred booklets comprising illuminating talks of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

To propagate Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's gospel of Divine Life, Worshipful Sri Swamiji Maharaj travelled extensively in India and abroad and showed the path of divine life to countless seekers through his spontaneous and highly inspiring lectures. His lectures, in Sadgurudev's words, are the outpourings of his saintly heart, the revelations of intuitive wisdom.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of his hitherto unpublished lectures in a booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary. The present booklet 'The Light of Wisdom' is a compilation of his four inspiring talks, one given at the Sadhana Shibir at the Musoorie Retreat in

1984 and three talks at the sacred Samadhi Shrine during the year 1998.

We express our heartfelt gratitude towards the inmates of the Headquarters Ashram for their loving service in transcribing, editing and compiling these talks.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—The Divine Life Society

*Om Mitraya Namah.
Om Ravaye Namah.
Om Bhaskaraya Namah.
Om Marichaye Namah.
Om Hiranyagarbhaya Namah.
Om Adityaya Namah.*

Worshipful homage to That Supreme, all-transcending, infinite, eternal, all-full, all-perfect resplendent reality! The Brahman of the Upanishads, the Bhagawan of the devotee, the Creator, Preserver and Dissolver of universes, the Being pointed out by the Upanishads as the supreme goal of human existence by experiencing whom you become liberated once for all from all pain and sufferings!

This body-bound condition is in itself an affliction, a disease, an unnatural condition for you who are nameless, formless, ever free. Those who have attained illumination have clearly realised that you in your real nature are a part and parcel of that great Being. You worship that Being as God, and all scriptures try to describe it, and all the saints and sages who have become liberated, called out to us: "Come! Come! Walk this path which we have taken. We have attained that splendid Being, and all our sorrows have come to an end. We are in a state of perennial Joy. We have attained the peace that passes

understanding; we have attained the Bliss beyond all description.” They called us: “*Hey Martyah Shrunu Vakshyami Paramahitam Sankshepatah*—

O ye mortals! Listen! We have come to declare to you your highest good, your highest welfare. We will briefly tell you”:

In this land of the Vedas and the Upanishads, the Himalayas and the Ganga, in this land of the illumined and enlightened sages and seers, the highest value has always been given to knowledge and wisdom. All your suffering, all your weeping and wailing and beating of the breast is because you have been caught in the net of unwisdom, Ajnana. You are bound by Ajnana, ignorance. Jnana alone can liberate you. Darkness can only be removed by bringing in light. No other method will work. You cannot shout darkness away, you cannot curse darkness away, and you cannot drive darkness away by drum beating.

In Bharatavarsha the highest value has been given to knowledge. The highest praise you can give to a person is: “O you wise one! You possessor of knowledge! Jai Hanuman Jnana Guna Saagar—You are an ocean of virtue and Jnana.”

And this wisdom, this Jnana has always been equated with Light. Ajnana is darkness. In Ajnana you are blind, you cannot see. You cannot go ahead because you are not sure about the right direction. Only when you see, can you go in a definite direction. And you can see only when there is light. Light is an indispensable,

invaluable commodity in human life. And the Supreme Being is addressed as Supreme Light – the light of lights beyond all darkness:

*Jyotishaamapi Tat Jyoti Tamasa Param Uccyate
Jnaana Jneyam Jnaana Gamyam Hridi Sarvasya
Vishthitam*

“That light of lights beyond all darkness dwells within you. It is in the heart of all things”. Krishna in the Gita did not say ‘Hridi Sarveshaam’, He says: ”Hridi Sarvasya”.

Therefore, become filled with knowledge. Know the reality. ‘Arise! Awake! Become illumined with knowledge’.

Uttishthata Jagrata Praapya Varannibhodata

Attaining the great ones—Nibodhata—fill yourself with knowledge; awaken from the slumber of ignorance. From the blindness of ignorance come into the light of wisdom! To say this, they used the words:

Tamaso Maa Jyotir Gamaya

‘From darkness, take us to the light’. Take us to the light of knowledge that liberates, so that there is no more coming into this life of suffering and sorrow. In another place, addressing Hanuman they say, “Jnaaninam Agraganyam” . Hanuman is regarded as the foremost of the wise, ‘Araganya’.

Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya also emphasised upon Jnana Yoga more than other Yogas. Not that he did not admit the validity of the other Yogas: Karma, Bhakti, Dhyana. Selfless

actions: Karma Yoga, devotion: Bhakti Yoga, meditation: Dhyana Yoga, wisdom: Jnana Yoga. These are the four great paths. But the greatest importance was given to wisdom. We all belong to the Dashanaami order of Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya. We are monastics, Sannyasins in that line. And therefore, let us ever strive to attain wisdom and knowledge.

One of the important Sadhanas, spiritual disciplines and practices is therefore to study: study of the scriptures, Upanishads, Bhagavatam, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Brahma Sutras and Bhagavad Gita. *Svadhyaya Na Pramaditavyam*—do not neglect the study even for a single day!

Among the indispensable ingredients that go to make up spiritual life, they mentioned among other things penance and austerity, daily unfailing study and an attitude of surrender to the Supreme: Tapas, Svadhyaya, Ishvara Pranidhaana. The daily disciplines that Patanjali Maharishi expounds in his Ashtanga Yoga are: YAMA: Ahimsa, Satyam, Brahmacharya, Asteya, Aparigraha, and NIYAMA: Shaucha, Santosha, Tapas, Svadhyaya, Ishvara Pranidhaana. Yama and Niyama are the entry points among the eight foundation or stages. The stages through which you have to enter into the realm of Yoga, are the vows you have to take of truthfulness, self-control, purity, non-covetousness and leading a simple life. And among the daily disciplines that you must practice without fail are

inner and outer cleanliness, contentment, cheerfulness within, penance or austerity, daily study and an attitude of placing yourself at the feet of God in surrender. And such daily study leads progressively to knowledge, from knowledge to wisdom, from wisdom to enlightenment and through enlightenment to liberation. ‘*Na punaravartate*.’ That is the ultimate word. He does not come again into this wheel of birth and death. And this stage of knowledge—experience has always been equated with light.

In this universe of ours, the supreme source of light is Surya Narayana Bhagawan. Therefore, they called him Bhagawan and dedicated one entire Mantra to this aspect of Divinity which floods our solar universe with light. That Mantra is the 24 lettered Brahma Gayatri Mantra. They also addressed God as Savita, and in this Mantra the sun god Surya Narayana Bhagawan is addressed as Savita, and therefore they sometimes call Gayatri the Savitri Mantra:

*Om Bhur Bhuwah Svah
Tat Savitur Varenyam
Bhargodevasya Dheemahi
Dhiyoyonah Prachodayata*

We take shelter; we adore that worshipful light of lights, ‘*Savitur Varenyam*’. May He illumine our intellects with the light of wisdom.

Out of the seven days one day has been set apart specially for directing our worshipful thoughts towards the sun. It is the sun-day,

Sunday. Tomorrow is dedicated to the moon, moon-day or Monday.

These ideas have arisen in this heart and have been offered at your feet, for what it is worth. Our culture is light oriented. Our scriptures exist to bestow knowledge and remove the darkness of ignorance and grant us enlightenment so that we may once and for all become free from all pains, sufferings and sorrows. To that Supreme Being, we pay our worshipful homage, who is in the form of the great light of lights beyond all darkness.

And while paying worshipful homage to that Supreme Being, we also offer our salutations and prostrations to beloved holy master Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, whose one mission in life was to share and to bestow spiritual knowledge so that the darkness within us may be banished and we may be filled with light. His one great mission was Jnana Daana, bestowing knowledge. Serve, love, meditate, realise! Realisation was the one thing he insisted upon. To him, our worshipful adorations and prostrations; may his blessings be upon you all.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

(Morning Talk given by Param Pujya H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, on 13th September, 1984, at the Sadhana Shibir Musoorie Retreat)

Om Sri Ganeshaya Namaha

Om Sri Vyasaya Namaha

Om Namo Bhagawate Sivanandaya

Radiant Immortal Atman! Beloved and blessed children of the Divine! Retreat participants, seekers and Sadhaks gathered here for this little spiritual fellowship, offered to us by the Supreme Universal Being, out of sheer infinite compassion, love and grace and by which offering He wishes to come closer to us or wishes us to draw closer to Him. Is such a thing possible? Because in this entire universe there is no closer relationship than the one between you and God! I can put it impersonally and say: ‘There is no closer relationship than that which exists between the individual soul and the Universal Soul’. Or I can put it in Sri Sankaracharya’s language: ‘There is no closer relationship than that which exists between Jivatma and Paramatma’. He affirms this relationship as a relationship of identity, non-differentiation. “Jivo Brahmaiva na parah!”—the individual is no other than the Cosmic, the Universal.

So, this being the simple, irrefutable, experienced and established fact about the

situation that exists between you and the Reality that is within you and without and everywhere—to speak in terms of coming closer would be an error.

And it is an error, but an error that has to be condoned because to many of us it appears as though “God is far away, we are very remote from Him, so we have to do a great deal of journeying in order to reach Him.” Because such ideas exist, and such feelings prevail within the individual, we have to condone this error and say, “All right! Take it easy! Yes, granted that you are very far from God, from the peace and bliss that you are seeking, granted that He is a very remote Reality—all right! We will show you the way of getting closer and coming nearer to Him.”—“Nearer my God to Thee, nearer to Thee” that is what I desire, that is what I want. Even the greatest of teachers have accepted this situation which the seeking soul confronts them with, and they describe ways and means of getting closer. Just as you approach the sea, a cool breeze will be felt. In the same way, as you draw nearer to God, slowly there will be calmness of mind, you will be more serene, you will be less affected by little things which used to upset you, loss will be no loss and gain will not be regarded as gain; sorrow is equal to nothing. These are the signs that you are drawing nearer to the ocean of Satchidananda. And they say: “You must draw nearer to God and be close to Him. Upanishad

means staying close to God, Upasana means sitting close to God.

We say, God is all-pervading. He is an ocean of Satchidananda. All-pervading means Omnipresent, and yet we search, we run from pillar to post, knock at all doors. Therefore, what is that way to draw nearer to Him and closer to Him?

One way is such a spiritual retreat; one way is Satsanga. And so, we look upon this period of getting together in His name, for the love of Him, we regard this as being created by Him out of His infinite grace, to give us a chance to draw nearer to Him. At least we get far away from all those things which make us forget Him, which distracts our attention from Him, at least, we get far away. What is the value of this getting away from all the maddening crowd and the din and the bustle and the rat race? What is the use? Precisely that you suddenly become aware that He is very near! It makes possible for you to become aware that God is HERE, God is NOW—He abides in you; you abide in Him. His peace and joy is all-pervasive. It is to be had for the mere asking! He is always present—this is the use.

And therefore, with a sense of infinite gratitude for the Supreme Being for giving us this opportunity to become aware of His immediacy, of His Beingness, and then going back to the normal state of consciousness of human individuals, what is required to keep on drawing near to Him and moving towards Him, what is required is to

keep ourselves constantly in the light of knowledge?

One of the salient forms that ignorance takes is forgetfulness; forgetfulness of Truth, of Reality, forgetfulness of our eternal oneness with the Divine—that has to be replaced by the conviction that we abide in Him and He abides in us, that we are ever in a state of peace and bliss, ever in a state of perennial joy, ever in a state of light.

You try many things, Satsanga, Svadhyaya and chanting and meditation and prayer, and suddenly it comes to a stop! Why? Unfortunately, the human nature is so constituted that God has made not only day, but also night. When night comes, Sadhana comes to an end, Japa, meditation, Kirtan, Mantra-writing—everything comes to an end, and you go into a deep lethargy, deep Tamas—complete forgetfulness! So, the special activity that you have generated comes to an abrupt halt! Evidently you have to once again restart.

And sometimes restarting becomes quite a difficult thing! Once a number of us went to Badrinath in several cars, had Darshan and early morning of the third day we started. And suddenly, I saw that one of our cars ahead of us got stuck. The driver was making a fire underneath the said vehicle. I enquired, “What is he doing?”—“Swamiji! No worry! No worry! It is not a petrol car; it is a Diesel car; and because of the high altitude, that Diesel is frozen. So the driver has to warm it up, and then the car will start.” It

was the first time I saw a fire being made under a car!

If our inside is like this Diesel, then every morning we have to once again restart the process of spiritual activity, create a fresh awareness, shake off this forgetfulness and enter into a state of knowledge and light.

*Uddharetaatmaaatmaanam naatmaanam
avasaadayet,
Atmaiva hyaatmano bandhuh aatmaiva
ripuraatmanah.”*
(Gita Ch 6/5).

One should raise oneself by one's Self alone: let not one lower oneself; for the Self is the friend of oneself, and the Self is the enemy of oneself.

You are yourself your best friend, but you can yourself become your foe also, if you think negatively and become pessimistic and dejected and fatalistic. God has made the cycle that day is followed by night, and all the activities are put an end to. But when you emerge from slumber, you must emerge with a great, positive, keen, enthusiastic feeling: “Now, again the day has come, this is my opportunity; light has come, I must be up and doing, I must be active.” That is what the dawn should mean for you.

So, how to set about it? A great storehouse of knowledge has been created for our sake, and we are heirs to this great treasury. We have inherited this because we are not born as a cat or dog or donkey. No! We are born as beings with thinking, reasoning, logic, understanding, grasping. The

treasure that has been garnered and accumulated of this great science of the Self, Brahma Vidya, Atma-Vidya, is the spiritual science, the divine science—that is meant for you. It has been created for you, preserved for you, and then, handed over to you.

The 20th century has held for us great deal of pains and sufferings and problems. But the 20th-century also has held for us great treasures, great good fortune and great blessedness! Unparalleled enrichment has been the characteristic of this century, and we are all the beneficiaries of it. That which was inaccessible, locked up in Greek, in Latin, in Russian, locked up in ancient Sanskrit—everything is now accessible. Thanks to translations, to modern media, communication, printing, etc. Incredible! Till recently we did not know about the book Philokalia of the Eastern Orthodox Church because it was in Russian. It contains the ‘Prayer of the Heart’ or ‘Jesus Prayer’ which is Japa within the ancient Christian tradition. I went to Gangotri this year, and I saw in a Sadhu’s Kutir the photostated copy of the entire Philokalia, sent from Australia to Gangotri by a man who had this rare book. For the Sadhu’s sake he had photocopied and sent it. Do you think it would have been possible in the last century—in your father’s and mother’s time? No! That is the blessedness of this Century, that all wisdom is within our reach.

Therefore, if you start the day and want to brush off the dark veil of sleep and again enter into an eager pursuit of the state of illumination, the first thing that you have to do is read the scriptures. First of all bring knowledge into your consciousness, remove the darkness and bring light: Upanishads, Bhagavad-Gita, the New Testament. It is always good to stick to the classical scriptures because they are the living words. They are not mere human writings—they are revelations. If you are already sufficiently advanced, you need not take a book and open and read it. If you have the Upanishads or the Gita by heart, sit and start mentally repeating and enter into the light of the wisdom teachings of the Gita or the Upanishads. You contemplate and meditate upon it; then you have started the day in the right way.

Swami Bhumananda, a spiritual brother of mine, who has crossed 70 years, his Sadhana is to get up and recite the Gita from start to finish at one sitting. He doesn't have to open his eyes or open a book, and he recites it four times in a day. Another Swami knows so many scriptures by heart: Vishnusahasranama, the Gita, some of the Upanishads, Sri Sukta, Purusha Sukta and Narayana Sukta, Lalitasahasranama and the Sata-Rudriya, Namakam-Chamakam. How can darkness remain in such an interior, when so much light is invoked through these wonderful scriptures?

These teachings propound a great truth and arouse within you a certain state of consciousness; they also give specific instructions for your thinking, acting and living, and any contrary state of thinking and acting will immediately rob you of whatever you have tried to start the day with. After reading the Upanishads, contemplating the Gita, you should be careful and not start being crooked in your daily life and cunning and tell lies, being impelled by lust and greed or anger and jealousy or pettiness and clinging and wanting and desiring and craving—these are all the things which surround a normal human being every day. They may not be exaggerated; they may be in a subtle measure, but the principle is the same. These things are like the pollution that is everywhere in the atmosphere. In the same way, we also have a certain etheric atmosphere where there is pettiness, selfishness, ego, attachment, craving, desire and what the great enlightened Buddha calls ‘grasping’! You want to possess, you want to keep. This grasping may be in a dozen different forms, but it is the normal tendency of the human nature, until and unless we have transcended it and become established in a different plane of consciousness.

The next important point is, not to be beguiled and taken away from the right beginning when we have to enter into this etheric environment and atmosphere. We have to fill the waking consciousness with that same state of awareness, knowledge, light and correct direction.

To this end, they have also included certain guidelines in their wisdom teachings. It is very important to observe these guidelines and live in accordance with the instructions, and thus keep this direction with which you have started the day. Have that goal always shining before you, and keep on moving towards it.

So, spiritual teachings and scriptures are here enriching our life. They have the dual purpose of awakening and illuminating, of guiding and directing, and to see that we go along the path that leads us to an ever-progressive, enhanced God-awareness.

And by that same light, you have also to actively exert and struggle; you have to be active in resisting temptations and putting aside any contrary pull, anything that is unspiritual, anything that is contrary to the goal which you are seeking to attain. You must be enthusiastically and actively directing your energies and efforts—you shall non-violently resist! You are wrong if you think that non-violence is non-activity.

Spirituality is not passivity. It is putting forth effort, not only to do what is to be done, but also to remove from your path anything that pulls you into a situation where you may be doing something which ought not to be done. That is why Gurudev summed up Sadhana and said, “Detach-attach”. Detaching also is an act. You must go on detaching as many times as the mind

goes there by habit—detach, and then attach. Cultivate Satsanga. Mind you, this is a process that has to be initiated and kept up each day! It is necessary to reactivate and reinstitute this process. This is an aspect of practical spiritual life which Gurudev wishes that we should always keep in mind. It is necessary because of the very nature of human life.

Prabhate mani Rama chintita java.

Samartha Ramdas, the great Guru of Shivaji, says: “Every morning O mind, you must evoke within yourself God-thought, and start going in that direction of God-thought.” So, ‘Uttishthata Jagrata’ does not have reference only to your ultimate condition in life; ‘Uttishthata Jagrata’ has a relevance for each day.

This is my little offering for this fourth day of our spiritual retreat, and it is being offered to you by all the great Gurus. They all call us to the life of wakefulness, to the life of alertness and awareness within, they all call us from darkness into light and from a contrary direction towards a Godward direction: ‘Bhagavaton-mukha jeevana.’

Today being Thursday, in the name of all the great Masters of ancient and mediaeval times and the teachers of recent times, the knowers of Brahman of past and today, in their name and on their behalf, I offer to you this very important view of your own spiritual life, this very important

glimpse of your own spiritual life, in the light of which you have to evaluate your living of it.

Are you doing what has been put before us to be done, day by day? Does your spiritual life contain all these things that have now been brought to your attention? This is the question you have to ask yourself. Then you will understand whether you are having that joy and serenity and peace or you are missing it. If you are missing it, it is not because it is not there; it is because you are not fulfilling the conditions. The remedy is to fulfil them. God bless you. Grace be upon you as it has always been and also the blessings of Holy Master Swami Sivananda and all the saints and sages.

That which has been listened to with attention has to be reflected upon with concentration; that which has been reflected upon and understood, has now to be implemented and acted upon; and that which has become your way of life, that has to be consummated by entering into deep, sustained meditation upon that which is heard, earnestly reflected upon and determinedly acted upon. Through such meditation life is transformed, darkness gives place to light, peace takes the place of restlessness, and a sustained joy now comes to occupy your heart and mind. Peace and joy, a state of light, serenity, all these are ultimately attained through such listening, careful reflection

and determined application and serious, sustained meditation. That is the gain we get and experience and enjoy in this very existence. So be it! May thus be the grace and blessings of God and Gurudev.

*Lokaah samastaah sukhino bhavantu!
Asato ma sat gamaya
Tamaso ma jyotir gamaya
Mrityor ma amritam gamaya*

*Om purnamadah purnamidam
purnat purnamudacyate
purnasya purnamadaya
purnameva'vasishyate*

*Om shanti, shanti shantih
Hari Om Tat Sat.*

Worshipful homage unto the eternal, all pervading and indwelling Reality, the one unchanging and ever-present Truth behind these ever-changing transitory names and forms that go to make up your universe. May grace ever shower upon you all from that Eternal Reality!

Loving adorations to beloved and worshipful Gurudev into whose presence you have come in spiritual fellowship at this morning hour. May his Kripa Kataksha (glance of grace) and Ashirvad (blessings) ever be with you, granting you all the four Purusharthas.

*Gukarascha andhakarascha rukaara
tannirodhakrit
Andhakaar vinashitvad gururityabhidhiyate.*

That being is known as the Guru who removes the darkness and brings about enlightenment. The first syllable ‘Gu’ stands for darkness and ‘ru’ stands for the removal of darkness. Therefore, one who removes darkness is a Guru.

The darkness of the night is removed by the sun when it rises with all its splendour in the eastern horizon. He is the world awakener, the world Guru. Therefore one of the greatest and most sacred of all Mantras is addressed to this

universal Guru, the Gayatri Mantra. They also call it the Savitra Mantra because Savitra is one of the names for the Sun God, Surya Narayan Bhagavan—Tat Savitur Varenyam. (Ishwara's glory)

In this way, we offer homage and adorations to the world awakener, to the world Guru, and he is a manifestation of the Supreme world preserver, world protector, world supporter, world nourisher: Lord Narayana or Vishnu. They call him 'Surya Narayana Bhagavan'. One day is set apart in each week for His special worship and adoration, and that day is today because today is Sunday, the day of the sun: Adityavara, Ravivara, Bhaskaravara.

The Guru awakens and ends the darkness. The world awakening Surya Narayana helps us, enables us to do this. For in this world only that part of our life is gainful when we are engaged in activity: in Sadhana, in Japa, in meditation, in worship, in the service of the Guru, in the service of the poor, in the service of the suffering, in acts of kindness, compassion, goodness, when we are engaged in adoration, worship, and in the practice of Yoga. When we can thus be engaged in action, that will ultimately bring us purification of the heart, increase of devotion, concentration, meditation, illumination, that is from the moment we wake up in the morning until once again we go to bed.

That part of our life which goes away in sleep is unfertile, unfruitful because no action is

possible. Life is only there biologically. In this state of Tamas, in this state of forgetting the world and inactivity, evolution comes to a standstill. No spiritual Sadhana or Abhyasa is possible, no activity that elevates and uplifts us like Seva, Paropakara, Dana-Punya, Karma Yoga. Therefore it is almost like a life held in suspension.

When we wake up, everything becomes possible, dynamism sets in; we begin by praying:

*Namostvanantaya sahasra moortaye
Sahasra padakshi shiroru behave
Sahasra namne purushaya shashvate
Sahasra koti yuga dharine namaha.*

Salutations to the eternal Purusha who has a thousand names and forms, a thousand feet, eyes, heads, hands, who is the Eternal Person and who holds thousands of crores of ages. Salutations again to that infinite divine Reality!

*Utha jaaga musafir bhor bhayi,
Aba raina kahan jo sovata hai,
Jo sovata hai so khovata hai,
Jo jagata hai so pavata hai.*

O traveller, come, come, arise and awake! The night has passed, day is about to dawn. Why are you still sleeping? Now is the time for awakening. Now is the time for fresh action, recommencing your onward journey towards the great goal of life. Come and engage in activity. For he who continues in sleep and slumber, verily he is losing. And only he who is awake and active is the gainer.

Thus, wishing us our own highest welfare, the great ones have issued the call for us to wake up: “Uttishthata jagrata prapya varannibodhata. Uttishthata jagrata”. This is the clue for us in what state we should always be, in which state we can justify God’s great gift of life by making use of it.

Therefore, let us ever be in a state of wakefulness. This is the one thing needful. This is the hallmark of a Sadhaka, of a true Yogi. “Wakeful among the slumbering, diligent among the slothful, aware among the heedless, such a one verily attains to the great peace, attains Nirvana”—that is what the great Lord Buddha has to say. May we all strive at every moment, ‘heart within and God overhead’, with sincerity in our heart and faith in God, that our life be one of extreme wakefulness, constant alertness and activity upon the path that leads to blessedness. This is true Sadhana. This is the sign of one who has heard the call, responded and is upon the path that leads to supreme blessedness.

God bless you all.

May all beings in this Universe attain happiness! O Lord, lead us from the unreal unto the eternal Reality. Lead us from the darkness of ignorance unto the light of supreme wisdom. Lead us from mortality and death to immortality and everlasting life in Thee. Peace! Peace! Peace unto all beings!

Radiant Immortal Souls! Beloved children of the Divine! May God bless you! May His Divine grace shower upon you all! May it fill and enrich all the days of your life with the gift of grace, with the gift of faith, of devotion and aspiration, and may it lead you along the path of light and joy towards the eternal shrine of divine consciousness.

Let us chant Om: the sound symbol of the supreme divine Reality, which is pure Existence, absolute Bliss, fullness and perfection. This 'Om' also symbolises your essential nature, your own true Self, not the perishable physical form, not the restless mind, not this limited intellect. Distinct and beyond these three factors, you abide as a radiant ray of the great Light of lights whom the religions call God. 'Om' symbolises your true Self and the great infinite Cosmic Being that is the origin and the source, the eternal support and the substratum of this spiritual Self. 'Om! Om! Om!'

Blessed child of the Divine! Recognise and affirm your Divinity and make this life a glorious process of unfolding and manifesting this divine nature through all thoughts, feelings and deeds. Live in the awareness of this essential Divinity which you are. Live in the awareness of the great goal of God-experience through the union with the Cosmic Infinite Divine. All the defects and limitations of this earth life are transcended in this magnanimous experience, and you become forever established in a state of absolute freedom, absolute fearlessness and total perfection. Come now! Live for this great ideal. You are a passing pilgrim here. This is not your true abode... a brief while you pass through life and then you are no more, and a while ago you did not belong to this universe or this humanity.

Have you ever asked yourself these vital questions: “‘What am I?’, ‘What is my true nature?’, ‘Where do I come from?’, ‘What means this life around me?’ and ‘What is my connection, my relationship with this life?’” Have you ever considered what the purpose of this brief sojourn here on this earth plane means? O pilgrim, O traveller on this highway of life moving towards an unknown goal, know your goal! Then alone can you live meaningfully and significantly. Otherwise it will lack direction, and it will be filled with dissatisfaction and a lot of disillusionment and frustration. Sorrow and pain will be the ultimate result of an aimless life. It will be at the mercy of

every pull and push of the forces of this objective universe.

But when you have a definite goal, it gives a direction to your life, there is stability, there is firmness. You are able to bear and overcome the passing events with the strength of this inner purposefulness. Life is meant for Divine Realisation—know this—and make life the process of attaining God-consciousness.

Purify your lower nature by selflessness and service. Control your senses. Conquer the desires of your mind. Become established in virtue. Develop a noble character. Take the vow of truthfulness, purity in thought, word and deed and compassion and kindness towards all creatures. And thus, living a life based upon such good conduct, move towards God who is the ultimate perfection of all that is good, auspicious and beautiful.

You have to awaken your essential Divinity from within, and that is possible only in the framework of a purified life. Lay the foundation of this ethical and moral life with all enthusiasm. That is the needed preparation. You must do this task here, now—not in an uncertain future. Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivananda used to say, “D. I. N” which means, “Do It Now”. This is the time. Yesterdays are gone; they are no more available to you. Tomorrows are uncertain; when the tomorrow dawns, it is already today for you. You must act in the living present. Be aware that there is a noble mission. Life is not merely eating,

drinking and sleeping. Come, come therefore!
Allow no more time to pass away!

Each dawn when the sun rises and you salute the new day, feel, "The Lord has given me a wonderful new day to be filled with sincere and earnest effort at self-culture and to move towards the grand destination, God-consciousness." Make that day a day of ideal living. Fill it with kind words, good deeds, selfless activities, service unto others, activities that bring benefit and joy into the lives of those amongst whom God has put you. Within your own family radiate goodness, love and a spirit of brotherhood. Make people happy. Benefit others. Let your life be a grand self-giving. Fill each day with such ideal activities.

Throughout the day keep an undercurrent of God-remembrance. Wherever your body might move about and act, in whatever things your mind may be engaged in, yet in your innermost being abide in God. Live, move and have your being in God. He is the immanent Presence pervading and permeating everything in this universe of His. Not even for the briefest moment is He absent. He is the ever present Cosmic Reality—invisible and subtle, but nonetheless real and true. And to this Cosmic Presence let all of us pour the love of our heart and soul. Live in the awareness of this Cosmic Presence. Let reverence fill your heart at all times; and with reverence and the spirit of worship engage in activity, remembering God at all times. Dedicate all your activities at the feet of the Divine. This is an easy, simple way to unfold

the essential spiritual consciousness within you and of moving towards God in the midst of your normal life. But it is an effective, a sure and unfailing way to a higher awareness and God-consciousness.

It is not necessary to renounce the external environment and go into a cave to practice this kind of Sadhana, this kind of spiritual life. Here and now, right in the midst of your own environment and activities move towards the Divine, and inwardly be rooted in the awareness that you belong to Him—not to this world. You have your root and source in Him, and in Him you inwardly abide and towards Him you are bound. You come from the Divine, and you are headed towards the Divine. And while you are engaged in this conscious effort and movement, you are even now sustained by the Divine, supported and rooted in the Divine, and you abide in the Divine. Be aware, beloved Selves! Thus spiritualise life into Divine life.

Seek the Eternal. Ascend into the immortal spirit. God bless you all. Every moment of your life let this quest be dynamic, and each moment ascend higher and higher towards this grand culmination.

This is my brief message for the Satsang today. It is given in the name of my spiritual Master Swami Sivananda as a humble and devoted offering. It is offered at the feet of the Lord—the Divine who is enshrined in your heart, who envelops you as immanent presence

everywhere, and who is present here and now as the silent witness of all that goes on in this wonderful universe of His. Peace! Peace unto all beings in this universe. May peace divine fill your heart, permeate your entire being and abide with you always as you go about your daily duties. May this peace ever abide with you!

Om! Shantih! Shantih! Shantih!

Hari Om Tat Sat.

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

24th September 2016 marks the auspicious occasion of Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out one hundred booklets comprising illuminating talks of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

To propagate Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's gospel of Divine Life, Worshipful Sri Swamiji Maharaj travelled extensively in India and abroad and showed the path of divine life to countless seekers through his spontaneous and highly inspiring lectures. His lectures, in Sadgurudev's words, are the outpourings of his saintly heart, the revelations of intuitive wisdom.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of his hitherto unpublished lectures in booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary. The present booklet 'Knowing The Value Of Freedom' is a compilation of his five inspiring talks at the sacred Samadhi Shrine during the year 1991.

We express our heartfelt gratitude towards Shri Mukund Jere, Mrs. Moo Briddell, Mrs. Mary

Dean and the inmates of the Headquarters Ashram for their loving service in transcribing, editing and compiling these talks.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—The Divine Life Society

Radiant Immortal Atman! Beloved Sadhaks assembled in the spiritual presence of worshipful and beloved Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in this sacred Samadhi Hall of his holy Ashram on the banks of Divine Mother Ganga in Uttarakhand, assembled together here for your morning hour of prayer and meditation and chanting Guru Stotra, Shanti Path, Nama Sankirtan, Prarthana, Dhyana.

Yesterday we had shared with you all some thoughts about the 15th of August, some thoughts about this day in 1947 when Bharatvarsha became 'Bharatam', independent India. It completed 40 years of its independence in 1987. Now it is in its 44th year, and it is full of problems, full of complications in its national life. People may attribute economic reasons, communal reasons, religious reasons, linguistic reasons, cultural reasons and worst still, interference by other nations, external political parties. That is the worst reason.

But all these are only superficial excuses. The real reason is misuse of the freedom granted by the life-long self-sacrifice of Mahatma Gandhi, not knowing the value of that freedom, not having love

and great reverence for that freedom, for free India, Bharata! We should be prepared to live for it, work for it, die for it. That spirit sadly receded into the background. That spirit which once dominated the entire nation, from Himalayas to Cape Comorin, from Assam to Punjab, that great sublime feeling of patriotism, love for the mother country, love for freedom, and being prepared to make any sacrifice for freedom, to die or to be life-long in jail—that love has faded away, receded into the background. It was replaced by selfishness, self-seeking, and the value of that freedom was not realised. That freedom was misused and we have brought ourselves to this present condition. This is it!

If there was the fervent love for this freedom, then no other factor, either communal, religious, economic or external interference would prove strong enough to overcome this great passion, this great dominating emotion. It would be too strong. When that love is not there, there is essential weakness in the ethics of the nation, and every influence can bring us down.

Even so is the life of the individual Jivatma. Life is like a field that is given to someone. All right, here is this piece of land; make use of it, cultivate it, plough it, sow seeds, look after it and reap a harvest. Here is a new book, a pen. Write what you want. All the pages are clean and blank. They invite you to fill them. How will you fill them? In what way you will fill them is left to you. In what

way you will use the land is left to you. Whether you will sow, wheat, rice or barley or grow vegetables, make a fruit orchard, a flower garden or a wilderness of thorns, brambles, poisonous fruits, it is left in your hands.

This body is the field. Through your actions what will you produce in this body? What type of actions? Here you have freedom. We have no freedom for experience. We already have sown the seeds through previous Karmas, so the experiences are inevitable, but not the actions. The actions are a matter of choice. Your actions are an exercise of your freedom, of your intelligence, of your spirit of enquiry, your discernment, your observation, your wisdom or folly, your discrimination. It is entirely left to you what type of action seeds you produce in this body field, mentally, verbally, physically. No one is after you 'You must do this, you must do that'. God is not urging you. Devil is not urging you. No angels are urging you. There is no external factor, man or God, devil or demon. It is your interior, it is your Antahkarana, it is your own sentiment, emotion, craving, imagination, desire. If it is of the right sort, then you produce for yourself a golden harvest, a blessed future. If it is of a wrong sort, you produce what you have worked for.

After a mighty renunciation, after intense penance, great austerity, fasting, practice of Yoga, meditation and with the determination to do or die, Buddha, Prince Siddhartha, attained

illumination. Out of it he discovered the truth that the cause for all suffering is Trishna, craving, yearning, grasping, thirst for life. That gives rise to desire, leading to attachment, leading to bondage, leading to confusion.

He gave this as the second of the four noble truths: the presence of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering and the way to the cessation of suffering. Four noble truths he proclaimed and the second was the cause of suffering, Trishna. One who has renounced craving is free, he has attained freedom.

But then, how will he use this great freedom—for foolishness, for indifference or for alertness, for meditation, keen yearning, great determination? Therefore, what you write in the book of life is left to each Jivatma. How you make use of this Kshetra or field, is again left to each Jivatma. God does not want to interfere in your independence. He has given you intelligence, perception, power to observe. And therefore one is expected to observe. The least that one could expect of any being who has been endowed with tools, is to make use of these tools in a wise way. Thought, speech, action, body, life, time, energy, talent, intelligence, these are the tools with which we are endowed. It is up to us to be wise and to make use of them in a right way as they go to comprise our entire human personality. If they are put to proper use, you create your supreme good fortune, your highest welfare. You have got the

power to create. You have got the ability. You are given the great opportunity. This is life, this great opportunity, this golden chance! This is life!

Therefore it behooves each one of the Sadhakas, Yogis, seekers, aspirants who are present here at this moment to ponder well this fact of your situation, this simple truth of your present place in this universe, to ponder well your role in life. Then great good may come out of it. This is the truth and this is the thing needful, with which one can bless oneself. God bless you.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage unto the divine all-pervading Almighty Spirit, the Eternal without beginning and end, the supreme Absolute! To that Being that exists in all the three periods of time, who is the very form of luminous consciousness, radiantly aware, whose absolute existence is the form of knowledge, wisdom consciousness, Kevalam Jnanamurtim, to that Being who is absolute bliss, Kevalam Ananda Svarupa—to that Being my worshipful homage.

That Being whom all the religions worship and adore, that Being who existed when there was no creation, no prophet, messiah, messenger of God, no Avatara, when there was no world, no sun, moon, stars; nothing existed, and therefore there was neither temple nor synagogue, nor fire temple, nor church, nor mosque, Gurudwara, Buddhist Vihara, no place of worship. There was no earth to exist upon. There was no scripture, no religion, theology, dogma or philosophy, to that Being who then existed beyond name—there was no one to give Him a name, no language in which to call Him by a name—to that Supreme Being who indwells your heart, who pervades

everywhere, who is present in every speck of space, every atom of matter, every creature, to that Being who like a thread passing through all the beads of a necklace, who is the indwelling universal Consciousness, i.e. the Sutrata, in whom all creatures find their oneness, in whom all existence finds unity—to that Being my worshipful homage! May that Being grace you with the awakening of this awareness of the fundamental, essential unity that is the basis of all philosophy, of all faiths, all religions.

Loving adorations to Gurudev, in whose presence we have gathered together today, on the second day after his 105th birthday, and on the third day of the Srimad Bhagavatam Maha Purana Saptah. May his benign spiritual presence inspire all to live an ideal life through which you may attain divine consciousness, Brahma Jnana, God-realisation. May his benedictions enable you to adhere to the path that he has put before us for attaining God-realisation in and through our normal day-to-day life and activities.

There is a wonderful redeeming feature. That redeeming feature is that in spite of birth, death, disease, old age, decay and dissolution and sorrow, in this world of love and hate, conflict and strife, fights and quarrels, there is that great goal that beckons us. The world will be what it is, but do not take this life merely to be this petty experience of pain and suffering, discord and disharmony! This earth life is a golden chance, a

wonderful, invaluable opportunity. Look at it that way, understand it that way, and with both hands eagerly grasp this opportunity and become blessed. That is Gurudev's great message to modern mankind.

You cannot change the whole world, you can change yourself. Do not look at this world as an obstacle, but as an opportunity. Do not look at this world as a closed door, because a closed door can become an open door if you turn the key in the right direction and if you push or pull in the right manner. If the door opens outward, if you try to push it, thinking you will open the door and enter the mansion, it will never open. You have to pull it and open it outward. And if a door opens inward, if you try to pull it, thinking you will pull this door open and enter, you will never enter. Only if you push, it opens inward and you can enter the mansion.

Even so, you must know exactly where the door is, how it opens and how it shuts and then do the needful, with wisdom, with understanding. Live your life with wisdom and understanding. Know what it is that will throw open the portals to blessedness and what action on your part will close it and exclude you. This is something God has allowed us to do by our observation, our enquiry, our discovery, our discrimination. So enquire, discriminate, discover.

You do not have to do it all by yourself, helplessly. There is the great treasure or wisdom

teaching of saints and sages, seers, mystics, illumined perfected masters of all traditions, of all religions in the Orient as well as Occident, ancient as well as modern. It has sprung from the texts of the Vedic religion, the Judaic tradition, Christianity, Islam, the Zoroastrian religion, the Sufi tradition, the Sikh tradition, and of every shade of the Taoist philosophy and Zen tradition. From all these sources of revelation, we have plenty of wisdom teachings to make our task simple, make our path clear and our struggle very easy and effective. We are not thrown upon our own resources. Light is there in plenty from these great sources of wisdom, and we must devotedly imbibe them by studying the scriptures, by listening to their expounding. That is the wise way. Equip yourself with knowledge by study, by devotedly questioning:

Taddvidhi pranipatena pariprasnena sevaya
(Gita 4:34)

*Know that by long prostration, by questioning
and by service.*

Equipped with this knowledge, with firm determination to adhere to this path, attain the goal and crown yourself with supreme blessedness. That is the one thing needed.

This world is an obstacle or an opportunity according to how your mentality is, how you look at it. If you are a negative person, it will be an obstacle. If you are a positive person, it will be a grand, glorious opportunity. The world is the

same to all people, whether optimist or pessimist or lethargic. But it is different according to the way in which you look at it, understand it and approach it. The world is a Kamadhenu (wish-fulfilling cow), it is a Kalpataru (wish-fulfilling tree). It yields whatever you wish, in the manner of your approach and the living of your life.

Therefore be wise, discriminate, enquire and learn from life, learn from the great teachers, from the scriptures, from your own observation and reflection. This will teach you that the essence of all practical spirituality, the essence of all religion, of Yoga and of prayer is growing in the nature of God. If we are children of God, we have the light of God within us. It has to be brought out and increased. So you fill yourself with that light.

We must prove by our life and by our actions that we are related to God, we are His children. He is our father, our mother. We are therefore like Him in our nature. We should not allow ourselves to forget this fundamental fact—that He is our Creator, and we are His creation. He has made us in his likeness, and therefore we have within us the God-nature. We have to grow into that God-nature. If your Sadhana succeeds in doing this, your Sadhana is being carried out correctly. If it fails to do this, then there is something wrong. If you are not growing day by day into a God-like nature, then there is something seriously wrong in your understanding or in the practice of your

Sadhana. You have not fulfilled all the conditions. It is only when the self dies that Sadhana becomes fruitful in divine experience. This is the truth.

Growing into the likeness of God—Divyatva (divinity) is the essence of spiritual life and Sadhana. That is Gurudev's teaching. That is why he wanted your life to be a divine life. That is the long and short of it. That is the essence of his teachings. Be divine, because you are divine.

With these words I offer my homage and worship at the feet of beloved and adorable Holy Master in his spiritual presence. With these words I offer and pay my homage to the Universal Spirit who pervades all existence, who indwells you, making your body a sacred temple of God, who indwells you as the light within. With these words I conclude my little Seva in this early morning spiritual fellowship.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

May the blessings and loving benedictions of worshipful and beloved Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji enable all of us assembled here to be true to ourselves, true to the world around us and true to God. If thus we fulfil the principle which upholds the entire universe and makes all life possible, namely Truth, our success is assured. If we uphold this principle, the power of Truth will uphold us and grant us success and fulfillment in our life and in strife. Therefore to be true to oneself, true to this world around us, true to God, who has sent us here amidst His creatures, is an important part of the life spiritual. It is an ideal in itself for any human individual. It is part of a many-sided ideal for the spiritual seeker who seeks to go beyond relative truth and enter into an experience of Absolute Truth and to merge with It.

The Upanishads and the Vedas say that this is the essence of Dharma. The Truth, along with a certain moral order that the Supreme Being has brought into existence, sustains all creation. Principles and ideals are the secret strength of the spiritual seeker. They are the secret of his being able to stick to a certain path without deviation. They are the secret of his ultimately overcoming

all obstacles and making all factors favorable and helpful.

Principles and ideals to live by are provided by all the great scriptures of the world, like Zen, Talmud, Torah, Koran, New Testament, sermons of the Buddha, the Upanishads and Srimad Bhagavad Gita. While many of these scriptures are simple in their language, easy to understand, the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads are not so easy to understand, not so simple in their language. To better explain them to us we have various commentaries by Sri Sankaracharya, by Sri Ramanujacharya, by Sri Madhwacharya and others. They have brought out the inner meaning, the exact significance of these scriptures through the commentaries they have written.

Again and again the seeker must go to these constant well-wishers, namely all the key scriptures of the world, as well as the Bhagavad Gita and Upanishads. They are a constant source of blessedness and support of the life spiritual. This does not mean that we need to learn all the languages and read all these scriptures. It is meant that the followers of a particular faith should take recourse to the wisdom teachings contained in their scriptures. The essence, the central message of all the scriptures are available to us today. Because many international scholars and many philosophers have written in the English language the essence of all the world religions. There are many books by different

writers, such as *The World's Religions*, *The Principal Religions of the World*, etc. Even Gurudev has written about all the main religions. Thus you can study and understand the central message of these scriptures by reading the essence of their teachings in English. *Perennial Philosophy* by Aldous Huxley is one such book. But, though we may try to get inspiration and information on the various religions by reading these books, we must consistently go to two or three scriptures for guidance, that they may act as light upon our path and help in sustaining our efforts to adhere to certain noble principles and lofty ideals. The teachings in these scriptures are our permanent wealth. They will never fail us. Again and again one should take recourse in them.

Thus ever remain in the light, ever tread the path of righteousness and idealism that takes you ultimately to the source of all Dharma, to the source of all truth. That Source is God, attaining Whom one's life becomes totally fulfilled.

Therefore, we have in these sources of wisdom a great repository of strength, of light, of spiritual force. Their study should not be underestimated or neglected. They are ever available to us. Through them God speaks to man.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage unto the adorable presence or the great eternal Reality, the one supreme, non-dual universal Being! Existence absolute, Consciousness absolute and Bliss absolute, that is the unchanging Reality behind ever changing names and forms that constitute the universe in which we live.

All things here are subject to change, decay, ultimate dissolution, including this body-house with which I have identified myself to such an extent that I know of no other identity than this mortal cage of flesh and bones; it has been a source of constant trouble and botheration, of aches and pains from head to foot. Every cell in this body is capable of being a nuisance, capable or giving inconvenience, discomfort, pain. If there is a little extra heat, it suffers; if there is a little extra cold, it suffers. If you do not get sufficient food, you suffer; if you take more than sufficient food, you suffer; if you take just the required amount and it disagrees with you, you suffer. Everything in this world is so constituted, that contact with it brings about sufferings. But the mind, which is the seat of Maya, deludes the

individual pilgrim soul that has come here in order to achieve a grand goal, so deludes it that it is engaged in the pursuit of everything else except that one goal of life. That is forgotten. Everything else becomes the object of our pursuit, our quest, our desire. The whole life is a series of struggling and exerting in order to attain a thousand petty goals, which very effectively succeed in turning our attention away from the ultimate goal of life. And time passes in the meanwhile.

Every second that ticks in the clock shortens the time available; every second, every minute, every hour. That is why the great injunction: "Arise awake and hurry, quickly attain illumination, attain enlightenment!" For that alone can ultimately liberate you from all that you think and feel to be unpleasant, undesirable, but willy-nilly you are obliged to undergo and experience it in a hundred different ways, day after day. Arise, awake and attain illumination which alone can liberate you from the darkness of spiritual ignorance and from this vexing limitation of time and space, of birth, growth, old age, disease, decay, dissolution; it will liberate you from the fretful, imperfect earth life with like and dislike, love and hate, attraction and repulsion, attachment and aversion, battering the soul in this ocean of existence, now full of noble sublime thoughts, now caught in the net of thoughts and longings. This is the dual throng like waves that

batter a person struggling to reach some haven in a stormy ocean. That is the plight of the Jivatma.

Illumination alone can liberate you, make you Dvandvatita, make you transcend duality; not only in the metaphysical sense, but even in the pragmatic sense of our life. “I am what I am”, I am Satchidananda—nothing can alter this, nothing can affect this. I am ever established in Satchidananda consciousness. Deep down within me flows a nectarine stream, an unbroken stream of Satchidananda.

I exist, I am luminously aware that I exist, that I am. I am conscious existence and in this sublime unqualified pristine state of existence consciousness, none of the experiences that pertain to this petty phenomenal plane of existence can ever approach; they have no access to it. The dual throng, the entire range of so called human experience have no access into that most sacred, sublime inner centre where you are what you are, where you are as the Supreme Being fashioned you in His own image. The shining, radiant light of lights beyond all darkness abides within you as your real nature, as your true, unchanging eternal identity.

That innermost centre or your cosmic nature is uncreated. It is eternal, for it is the God-essence within you. It is the Brahmatva of the Jiva (considering itself as individual soul). It is the Svarupa, your own self, your true being. It is your real Svarupa, Sat-Svarupa. It is your essential,

unchanging nature, Nija Svarupa. You are That. And in that depth nothing that is manifest, nothing that has come later, dare enter. In that state of pristine existence-consciousness there is no dual throng, there is no change, there is no happiness or misery. There is only bliss, bliss, bliss, always bliss. It is that supreme Cosmic Reality which is the infinite ocean of Satchidananda consciousness. You are That. You are made in the image of God—so the Bible says. The light of God thus shines within you as your true identity. This truth is to be heard again and again, and yet again. This truth is to be reflected upon again and again. That is life and Sadhana. That is true meditation. This truth has to be deeply meditated upon. Thus the ancients have said for your highest good.

Everything pertaining to this outer universe did not exist. It came into being at a point in time. It is only a dream into which a part of a unity has entered into, thinking itself to be separate from the whole. The wave is never separate from the ocean. It is nothing but ocean water. The ocean itself assumes the form of a wave, appears like this for a while and regains its eternal vastness. That alone is. The Supreme alone abides. All other things are only temporary appearances upon its vastness.

The play or Shakti dances upon the unchanging, ever stable substance of the Siva Tattva (principle, truth of Siva). It is only a play of

energy. Countless, millions and billions and trillions of universes arise. They have a brief existence of a few million years and sink back into oblivion. But the fullness of Satchidananda consciousness ever abides. It is that Reality within you, is what you really are.

Be That and let your life shine with consciousness and bliss. Let your life be a glorious manifestation of your real identity. Let every thought, every sentiment and emotion be filled with sublime divinity. Let every word that you utter be full of divine joy and peace, so that it will fill the hearts of all with peace, with joy. Let all your actions convey this divinity in the lives of others. This is your Sahaja Jivana (natural life), your Satya Jivana (true life).

Anything contrary to this is a living lie, is false. It is not authentic. It is not real. It is something that denies your divinity, denies that you are from God. Let your life be thus a radiant manifestation of the divinity that you are and a journey to the infinite Satchidananda state which is your commencement and also your conclusion.

*Ahamatma gudakesa sarvabhuṭaśayasthitah
Aham adischa madhyam cha bhutanam anta eva cha*

I am the Self, O Arjuna, seated in the hearts of all beings; I am the beginning, the middle and also the end of all beings.

We live, move and have our being in this Satchidananda consciousness. May the supreme Cosmic Being, who is our source bestow to us the inner strength to overcome all contrary imaginations and steadily move towards the Goal each day. Let each dawn find you fully equipped to convert that day into a day filled with divine thoughts, sublime, divine emotions, divine words and divine actions, and let each sunset find you so much better for having passed through that day.

Towards that Goal let each one strive. May the glance of grace of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji, our eternal companion, our never failing mentor, whose wisdom teachings constitute the light that illumines our path, be gracious. He is ever with us. Let us walk in the light of His divine life teachings. Then all will be well. Our journey will be crowned with success of our regained Satchidananda consciousness, attaining which you will ever rejoice and rejoice. So be it. God bless you.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Radiant Immortal Atman! Sadhana is the process of the alteration of both the nature and movement of your mind, as well as of all your senses. Both your mind and senses by their very nature are outgoing, moving towards many external attractions, towards the ever-changing appearances of this phenomenal process; moving towards things with name and form, things limited in time and space. Therefore the mind and senses are necessarily moving towards temporary, perishable things, towards the unreal, the evanescent and the transitory. However, these transitory, created things are incapable of giving you either true satisfaction or true happiness, let alone peace.

When the senses force your consciousness outwards towards temporary, perishable unrealities and the mind follows suit, ever insisting upon dwelling upon these temporary objects, we cannot hope to reach the goal. For the goal is beyond time and space, beyond mind and senses. It is absolute and supremely transcendental. The knowledge and comprehension of this goal has been termed in the Upanishadic literature as Para Vidya, the science of the transcendental Reality.

Our scriptures say that dwelling upon temporary, perishable things that are contrary to the absolute, imperishable Reality, always ends in sorrow and greater bondage. The Bhagavatam says:

*Asadhananuchintanam bandhaya bharatavat
(Dwelling upon anything other than your Sadhana leads to bondage as in the case of Bharata).*

O man, beware! Be aware that dwelling upon things that have no direct relevance or connection to your spiritual life and Sadhana, to attaining the goal of the Eternal Reality, will lead to terrible bondage.

There is a reference from the Puranas. A forest-dwelling Rishi, a recluse, got caught even as he was engaged in earnest Sadhana. Due to his mind dwelling upon an earthly object, it had attachment to it and soon became overwhelmed by that attachment until it became impossible for the mind to be taken away from it. Even when he sat for meditation, instead of the mind going towards the Divine Reality, it started going towards that earthly thing upon which all his affections had now become centred. He became caught in the bondage of attachment. He lost concentration and the balance of his mind. This became the cause for terrible bondage, even to such a spiritual personality as a forest-dwelling hermit.

Therefore, this timely warning: “Dwelling upon things that do not pertain to Sadhana, that have no relevance to your spiritual life and practices will lead to bondage. Be aware of this O man, O Sadhaka!” We therefore pray, “O Lord, from unrealities lead us unto the Eternal Reality”. All things in this ever-changing physical universe are part of an unreal temporary show, a temporary appearance.

Therefore, Sadhana means diligently engaging in necessary and suitable practices in order to turn the senses away from the objects of the world appearance and directing them inward towards the Reality. Sadhana means engaging in disciplines that will oblige the mind to gradually change its nature of constantly moving towards this objective universe and make it go towards the inner centre of your being where the great Reality is ever present as the Antaratma, as inner Self, as Satchidanandatma.

This is the quintessence of Sadhana: detaching your senses and your mind from attachment to this passing appearance and attaching your senses and mind to your concept of the Supreme Being. You must constantly engage yourself in this practice of detaching from the many and attaching your mind and senses to the one non-dual Reality which is imperishable, eternal and indestructible. All the processes and techniques of Sadhana have as their objective this transformation of the behaviour and movement of

your Antahkarana or psyche, the inner four-fold instrument of thinking, reasoning, contemplating and recollecting.

The ego should not dwell upon unrealities. The Sadhaka's 'I' should be fixed in that of which it is a part, upon that great Reality—Tat Sat. It is an ingathering of the entire personality, sensual and mental, and directing it towards the Eternal Reality. "Enough have I dwelt upon this passing show. Life after life, in many incarnations, I have been overcome by delusion and have mistaken the unrealities for the Reality. I have mistaken sources of pain and distraction for sources of happiness. I have committed this blunder because I have been unwise".

*Ye hi samsparshaja bhoga duhkhayonaya eva te
Adyantavantah kaunteya na teshu ramate budhah (BG V/22)*

The enjoyments that are born of contacts are only generators of pain, for they have a beginning and an end. O Arjuna, the wise man does not rejoice in them.

The wise person never runs after that which is pleasant in the beginning but painful in the end. He says: "No. For the sake of a little momentary pleasurable sensation, I shall not foolishly make myself prey to later sorrow and suffering. I would much rather seek something which is happiness in the beginning, happiness in the middle and happiness in the end. I would rather seek something that culminates in happiness, even if it may be seemingly painful and

difficult in the beginning, and then laugh unto eternity, rather than have a little rejoicing now and then regret for all times”.

So it is the Sadhaka’s choice to reject the temporary, the transitory and to seek the Eternal, the Immortal. Engaging in necessary and suitable disciplines and practices to this end constitutes Sadhana. Among these necessary disciplines is the shedding of one’s erroneous notion that one is this perishable cage of flesh and bones, that one is this psychological personality made up of mind, intellect, ego and memory, with all its content. It is the giving up of this deluded notion, this error, and of identifying oneself with one’s real essential nature.

If we are to move in the right direction, we must also rid ourselves of the various unspiritual and undivine tendencies in our limited human nature that drive us towards external appearances, which make us engage in activities and thoughts contrary to the spiritual ideal. In the sixteenth chapter of Srimad Bhagavad Gita Lord Krishna says, “In the human nature there are two tendencies. One is helpful to spiritual life, Sadhana and the attainment of the Goal, and the other one is a hindrance, taking us towards greater bondage”. Therefore, these helpful divine qualities are to be cultivated and actively practiced, and the contrary is to be eradicated and taken out of our life.

You are all divine. You must know that you are not different from the ideal which you are

seeking. The deluded idea that we are something different from the source and origin of our nature should be uprooted and ousted from our consciousness. And with equal determination, we must establish the truth, the simple truth that we belong to It. We are It! We are essentially ever divine and never anything else. With this firm conviction start thinking divinely, feeling divinely, acting divinely and living divinely. That is the quintessence of Sadhana.

May God bless us and grant us success in our spiritual life, in this process of moving towards that ever-present state of divine perfection that is inherent in each and every one of us, even as a tree is already inherent in the seed and a beautiful bird already inherent within an egg. Even so, man is potentially divine. Divinity is ever-present within us as our very own nature. Recognising this, being what we are, and refusing to be anything contrary to what we are, is Sadhana.

God grant you success in this spiritual adventure, God grant you success in this sublime quest, which is the central meaning, significance and purpose of the human birth. May Gurudev's grace and his wisdom teachings grant you success in this great endeavour!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

24th September 2016 marks the auspicious occasion of Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out one hundred booklets comprising illuminating talks of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

To propagate Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's gospel of Divine Life, Worshipful Sri Swamiji Maharaj travelled extensively in India and abroad and showed the path of divine life to countless seekers through his spontaneous and highly inspiring lectures. His lectures, in Sadgurudev's words, are the outpourings of his saintly heart, the revelations of intuitive wisdom.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of his hitherto unpublished lectures in a booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary. The present booklet 'FEELING OF UNITY AMONG THE MEMBERS OF THE

DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY' is an inspiring talk given at the sacred Samadhi Shrine on 1st August 1995.

We express our heartfelt gratitude towards the inmates of the Headquarters Ashram for their loving service in transcribing and editing this talk.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—The Divine Life Society

Swami Chidananda

Worship and homage at the feet of the supreme, all-pervading Presence Divine! Our adorations to that Great Reality, that is at once beginningless and endless as also boundless and limitless! Infinite and eternal, it is the ever-present Reality that is the source and the origin, the support and the strength, the goal and the fulfillment of all existence. To that great Reality, to that Cosmic Spirit, to that Divine Being, our reverential homage and worship. May Its grace grant you all the four Purusharthas. May its grace guide you on your path to perfection. May its grace grant you illumination and liberation, bless you with success in your earthly life.

Loving adorations to revered and beloved Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji in whose spiritual presence we are all assembled here in our early morning spiritual fellowship. May his glance of grace awaken the dormant divinity within you. May his hands of benediction enable your awakened divinity to unfold and to grow and manifest through your thoughts, words and actions, thus flooding your entire life and all its

movements with a divine quality. You become a centre of divine living, you become an embodiment of divine life.

In the religious and spiritual field of India, and specially Hinduism, the number 108 is regarded as a complete number. One hundred being the complete number, and eight is added to it in case of any deficiencies and discrepancies. It makes up for all deficiencies and discrepancies so that the number 100 is full and complete.

Today is the first of August. Next month the Divine Life Society, which Holy Master brought into being in the year 1936, observes His 108th Birthday Anniversary. He was born in 1887 and 1987 became His centenary. And 8 years later the Society observes it in a special way by having not a single day celebration on the 8th of September, but enhancing it by having a three days Birthday Celebration, on the 6th, the 7th and the 8th of September.

Who is celebrating Gurudev's sacred Birthday Anniversary? Is it some impersonal entity? Is it just an organisation? Is it just a set-up called an Ashram? Or is it something more? Is it something more vital, vibrant and living? Is it a group of living beings that is observing and celebrating this event? Is it a group of living people, who have some emotions, some sentiments, some living impulses? Are you celebrating it? Are you observing it?

. . .

What exactly is your sentimental and emotional attitude regarding this event?

This is what this servant of the Master would like each one of you to ponder. “With what am I concerned in this Ashram? Its provision for hot water in winter? Its provision for fan in summer? Its provision for other facilities and comforts? Or am I equally concerned with its problems, its difficulties and with its special occasions? There are equally mine because I have benefited from Swami Sivananda, I have been helped by Swami Sivananda’s teachings. I have read his books and they have been an inspiration to me. Therefore, such landmarks, such special celebrations and events directly connected with the Holy Master are as much a concern of mine as a person, as a resident inmate of the Ashram and as a member of the Divine Life Society.”

Everyone who resides in Sivananda Ashram, by virtue of his or her residence, is automatically a member of the Divine Life Society, promising to adhere by the principles of truth, non-injury and chastity. The duty of all members is to adhere to truthfulness, to non-injury, kindness and compassion and chastity, purity of thought, word and deed, noble character and righteous conduct. It is the sacred duty, the spiritual privilege and special blessedness of each and every inmate of Sivananda Ashram to live by these principles and to

make themselves personifications and embodiments of these principles, because they are also regarded as members and their life is entwined with the headquarters of the organisation, which is encouraging this noble pattern of living. They are a part of it, they are inseparable from the headquarters of the institution that is propagating this ideal, preaching this ideal.

And so, this servant would like each one of you to take a look at yourself from this angle, to see yourself in this light and ponder what it implies, what it means. This is number one in connection with the forthcoming 108th Birth Anniversary of Holy Master Swami Sivanandaji.

And number two, being part of the organisation, if the organisation is observing it, is celebrating it, it would be the most natural thing for each and everyone to sit up and think, "Now that this date is approaching, in what way should I observe it, celebrate it? In what way should I assist the Ashram people, the executives on whose shoulders this responsibility is, in what way can I assist them in observing this special Birthday Anniversary?

Perhaps both these considerations are the essence of the matter in relation to the forthcoming 108th Birthday Anniversary of Guru Maharaj. For then it would be a token of our feeling of oneness in this Ashram of Gurudev. We are part of it. If the Ashram is

. . .

celebrating, it is not the buildings that are celebrating Sivananda's Birthday; it is not the stationery and the furniture, the machinery, the vessels and the land that is celebrating Sivananda's Birthday. It is we who are celebrating, who are to observe, if we have reason to be grateful.

"Yes I shall celebrate it by doing more Japa in my room." Well, you could do that if you wish. But, when you ponder that whatever knowledge he put down in black and white, has reached your hands in and through his Society, in and through the workers of the Sivananda Ashram Headquarters, the Press, the Publication Department - it is thus that Sivananda came into your life. He did not appear and say, "Here my beloved seeker, I give you this inspiration, I give you this illuminating teaching, I give you enlightening Upadesha". He did not come and give a book in its manuscript form. We have to be grateful to the baker because he is the connection between the farmer who produces wheat and you who eat the bread. That is the special position of the baker.

Even so, God comes to us through his saints. These saints come to us and produce a living human organism in the form of their immediate disciples.

Jesus did not reach out to the world and proclaim the Kingdom, the joyful news of the Kingdom. No. The apostles made Jesus to reach the entire then known

world. It is they who did it – twelve apostles, at the cost of their lives. So they have a vital place of significance, importance, value. They were the liaison between the Teacher of Galilee and the source whom He was able to touch. Even after his physical disappearance from the gaze of men, His work went on. How? He did not appear in 100 places and gave His teachings directly. He did it through a vital organism that He had created in the form of His apostles.

Even so it is with all the great teachers. Buddha left behind him Bhikhus. Great philosophers and Zen masters handed down their great way through their chosen disciples. Some did it through their books, some did it through their chosen disciples. Those who printed no books left behind living books in the form of their chosen disciples. And thus we should respond to the reality in the form that it merits to be responded to. And thus you must ponder well your position as ex-officio members of the Divine Life Society by virtue of your residence in this holy Ashram and begin to say, “How shall we celebrate, how shall we help to celebrate, how shall we contribute in celebrating this special Birthday Anniversary of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj on the 8th of September 1995, the 108th birthday?”

Soon another event is to follow. In January 1936 the Divine Life Society came into being, and in January 1996

...

the Society completes 60 years of its existence, carrying on its work as envisaged by its founder, Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji. From the 1st of January to the 31st of December 1996 there will be a Diamond Jubilee year of the Divine Life Society. This is not my subject or the point of today. I am just putting this thought into your mind, so that in the same way as I have suggested that you should relate yourself to the special 108th Birthday Anniversary of Master, you may also reflect upon the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations later.

I would like each and every one of you to respond to this call by being actively involved, by setting the example of yourselves following the principles Swami Sivananda set before us. Being responded in this living manner, with noble sentiments of piety, devotion, and gratitude to Gurudev, these events are going to be wondrous events, inspiring everyone who participates in them and may be transforming many lives. Because it is the human factor that contributes to the living quality of any event. Inert objects are just there, but they contribute nothing; they can assist, but only when the human factor becomes associated with them. A printing machine is a dead thing until the machine man goes behind it and starts working. The human factor is the vital thing. Nowadays, they are trying to make everything automatic. They can set the hour when the

electric current will be put on and the machine will start its automatic work. But the brain that invented this automatic function ultimately is a human factor; that is the very essence of all things. And, therefore, you constitute the human factor in everything that this Society is doing now and will do in the future.

This is how I look at you, and this is how I would have you look at yourself. And may God's grace and Gurudev's benedictions provide you with a clear vision of what you are and what you are capable of doing and what you must do. May God and Gurudev grace you and bless you and grant you to see things with perfect clarity and in the right perspective. God bless you all!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

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We are immensely happy to bring out some of his hitherto unpublished lectures in a booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary. The present booklet 'The Call of the Scriptures' is a compilation of his four inspiring talks at the sacred Samadhi Shrine during the year 1991 and 2003.

We express our heartfelt gratitude towards the inmates of the Headquarters Ashram for their

loving service in transcribing, editing and compiling these talks.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—The Divine Life Society

Prostrations to the Presence of the great Reality, the eternal Cosmic Being pervading all existence, all space, the Omnipresent Reality who has drawn us together at this early morning hour into the presence of Holy Master Gurudev. Loving adorations to the spiritual presence of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji, before whose sacred Samadhi we are gathered in this hall, in this holy Ashram on the banks of divine Mother Ganga.

Radiant Atman, devotees of the Lord, lovers of righteousness, Sadhaks and seekers! May you ever live in the light of this Truth, namely, that the essential life of each and every individual soul is a spiritual life. All of you being immortal spirits, your life cannot be anything other than spiritual. This is the simple truth. This is the actuality of your being. This is the central declaration of the Upanishads, the central affirmation in the Srimad Bhagavad Gita. It is the central teaching of all the Gitas - Avadhuta Gita, Ashtavakra Gita, Ribhu Gita, Rama Gita—that you are not this cage of flesh and bones, you are not this body. The central truth is that you are not this fickle mind, filled with anger and passion, envy and jealousy, love

and hatred, deluded attachment, greed and avarice, intolerance; you're not this mind characterised by these negative qualities. You're not this mind which is imperfect and subject to selfishness, superiority complex, inferiority complex, that afflicts you with fear, anxiety, fantasy, imagination, plagues you with memories, makes you depressed or makes you unnaturally elated, swinging high and low. Vedanta declares, the Upanishads declare, Srimad Bhagavad Gita declares, all the Gitas declare that you are quite different and distinct from this petty mind. You are also beyond the intellect and its insufficient reasoning. It has logic and reasoning, but it has also perverted logic and irrational reasoning, reasoning that is contrary to facts, contrary to real intelligence and contrary to right thinking and right discrimination. It can lead you; it can mislead you. It can help you; it can hinder you. It can rescue you; it can leave you in the lurch; it can fail you when you need it the most. This is the story of man's intellect. It requires very little to be confused and thrown out of normal functioning, very little. "*Mano buddhyahamkara chittani na aham*"—"mind, intellect, ego, memory, I am not." Jagatguru Adi Sankaracharya tells us in his famous composition.

Now therefore, if you are a principle, if you are the essence and a principle beyond this physical instrument, beyond this instrumental mind and this insufficient intellect that is prone and subject to both rationality as well as irrationality, if you

are beyond and different from the physical, mental, intellectual factors then whatever you are, That constitutes your real existence. The ego principle, the little 'I', this empirical ephemeral, ever-changing 'I' ceases to exist once in every 24 hours. When you enter into deep sleep, this 'I' does not exist, it is not experienced. It is a temporary phenomenon. You are conscious that the waking 'I' does not function when you are asleep and dreaming; the waking 'I' does not function.

Therefore, that which you think you are, in terms of your relationship and your place in this relative world of names and forms, this concept, this awareness of yourself, Vedanta conclusively establishes and proves, is not the truth of your central being. It is as temporary and an appearance as the mind and the intellect and has no greater validity or greater substance. It is insubstantial. It is very difficult to realise this, because this has to be grasped by the mind and intellect, which as we have just now seen, are characterised by a false notion. They are in a state of error. An inveterate habit has made your mind think in a particular way. To disillusion it and change its way of thinking takes time. But in moments of clarity the intellect can grasp this truth,—this central Vedanta.

This fact therefore has to be grasped and fully recognised that your true life, your authentic life is the life in that awareness, and awareness is your true being. That genuine life, the authentic

life is the spiritual life. Everything that comes in the way of your recognising it and keeping this recognition alive is your problem and your obstacle. It has to be overcome, it has to be removed and ultimately eradicated, uprooted, so that it does not exist. Otherwise, it is always an intruding factor, complicating the inner state with error, with forgetfulness, with delusion. If you want the inner state to be clear, bright, effulgent, authentic, true, genuine, this thing which interferes with it, has to be gradually eased out. This is the requirement of Vedanta, a patient process of Sadhana.

But let us now go back to the central fact. Your life is the life spiritual. That is the truth. Therefore with every breath, at every moment, strive to live in this Truth, strive always to base your life upon this inner fact: "I may have physical functions, I may have mental processes, I may have intellectual activity, but they do not constitute an expression of what I am. On the contrary, whether I'm going to make the activities of these levels helpful to my inner spiritual unfoldment, or whether I'm allowing these activities to come in the way of my spiritual unfoldment, this is something which is my choice. It will be as I allow it to be."

So what is going to be the choice? This each seeker has to decide for himself or herself. "The activities and functioning of my physical self, my mental and intellectual self, how am I going to regard them? What place am I going to give them

in the truth of my being? What are they with reference to the truth of my being? Am I going to be overwhelmed by them and taken away from the truth? Am I going to allow them to take me away from my centre, or in spite of them am I going to remain unshaken, centred in my Reality? That I am going to practice. I am going to make forth continuous endeavour to be firmly established in the consciousness of my real and higher being, in spite of them. I am not going to be deprived of this inner consciousness by my playing into the hands of these levels and these functions.” This is something each seeker, Sadhaka, Yogi has to work out. You have to address yourself with this all-important question of how you stand within the complex of your physical, mental and intellectual nature and your physical, mental and intellectual activities; how do you stand in this situation?

This is a consideration central to your day to day living. It is a consideration of the very essence and vital to your true life, the inner life. One day or the other you have to face it. You have to become 100% aware of this situation within yourself in your subjectivity, and how situations are within yourself, in your subjectivity, and how you are going to address these situations and what are you going to make of them? That will decide the reality of your spiritual life. That will decide the power and the strength of your spiritual life.

Reflect upon this well, and deeply start working upon it. Adjust yourself to this crucial

question of your inner being, because your spiritual life, your authentic life will depend upon it. Well, that is the truth for you to reflect upon, it is food for your thoughts.

Now we may digress a little, but it would not be a digression indeed. We are uttering collective prayers, morning and evening, for the welfare of all mankind, for improvement of things in India, and for the relief and for the sake of the victims of the earthquake. We are doing it. But then, in addition to these collective prayers during Satsanga, nothing prevents you to also set apart some time, maybe 5 minutes daily, to recite the Mrityunjaya Mantra and dedicate it to the welfare and recovery of the earthquake victims. Nothing prevents you. It would not at all be a bad idea if you said, "Why not I, as a Sadhaka, as a devotee of God, as one with universal love, as a kind and compassionate devotee of God, lover of my fellowmen, why not I think of them once in 24 hours, why not I try to help them with some Mantra Shakti?" If thus you think and set aside 5 minutes every day for reciting the Mrityunjaya Mantra, that would indeed be in line with the principles and ideals of Divine Life.

*(Early morning Meditation Talk at the sacred
Samadhi Mandir on 5th October 2003)*

Worshipful homage to the supreme infinite, eternal, all-transcending, non-dual, cosmic divine Reality! Loving adorations and prostrations to revered and beloved holy Master Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj!

It is a happy coincidence that the inauguration of the unbroken chanting in the Bhajan Hall of the sacred Mahamantra “Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare, Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare” sixty years ago and the celebration of the Diamond Jubilee for which a special sixty days of group chanting has been organised, happens to be a Sunday. Coincidence lies in this fact that Sunday is the day specially kept apart for offering our salutations and adorations to the Sun god Surya Narayana Bhagavan.

We offer special reverence to the Sun god, because without Him our world would be in darkness. Imagine a day when the sun does not rise—don’t think that somehow there is already a light, and we can walk and go about. This ‘pre-sunrise light’ also is there because the sun is approaching; even this light is due to the Sun. The

pre-sunrise light is called dawn, and in the Vedas even this dawn has been hymned. There are hymns in the Vedas saluting the dawn by the name Usha-kaal. The skies turn pink, and as the sun approaches, pink rays shoot out, which they called the fingers of dawn. “The pink hand of dawn has appeared in the East! Lo behold, soon will come a brilliant bright Being whose chariot is drawn by a charioteer who has no legs!” For some reason, they picture the Sun God, the bright Surya Narayana Bhagavan, coming in a chariot drawn by seven horses, and the charioteer has no legs up to the knees—even the knees he does not have. Therefore he is known as ‘Anurusarathi’.

And the coincidence is this: Surya Narayana Bhagavan brings us from darkness to light, and the Divine Name of God does precisely the same thing. From the darkness of ignorance we come to the divine light of illumination because the Name is one of those Tattvas of Bhagavan that takes us beyond. If chanted with devotion, with persistence, the Divine Name takes us beyond the darkness of Ajnana and bestows upon us the light of Brahma-Jnana, Atma-Jnana, and liberates us forever from this wheel of birth and death and rebirth.

We are all bound in this wheel of birth and death because of Ajnana. If we attain Brahma-Jnana, we go beyond birth and death; we attain Kaivalya Moksha. Our beloved and most worshipful Gurudev has specially written a book on this path of attaining enlightenment and

liberation through the practice of the Divine Name; it is called ‘Japa Yoga’. “Kali Yuga Kevala Naama Aadhaara” – In Kaliyuga the Divine Name is the only support.

As one normally talks about centuries and millennia, our orthodox tradition calls the passage of time Krita, Treta, Dvapara and Kali. In Krita Yuga He came as Narasimha Bhagavan in order to give His Darshan to His child-devotee Prahlada. In Treta Yuga, He came as Sri Ramachandra.

And, it is very interesting! Rama was born in the line of kings whose Kuladevata was Surya Narayana, the Sun God. Dasaratha and his ancestors belonged to the ‘Ravi-Kula’, the royal dynasty whose special form of worship was Ravi or Surya. Lord Rama invokes the grace of the Sun God at a time when He is confronted by Ravana in Lanka. He had heard about the strength and the valour and the martial power of Ravana. But when He actually confronted Ravana, for a moment Rama’s heart looked like failing Him; He trembled, He was in trepidation. At that moment, the gods realised: “Rama has come on a mission, He is to destroy Ravana, and if trepidation takes place, what will happen?” They invoke Bhagavan who sends Sage Agastya.

Sage Agastya arrives at the spot, draws near to Rama and says: “Prince Rama, Dasaratha-Putra! Don’t fear! Offer worship to Surya Narayana Bhagavan!” Sage Agastya, initiates Him into this special Stotra, ‘Adityahridaya’, and after

having chanted this, all Rama's faint-heartedness leaves Him, once again He becomes courageous, brave, strong of heart; He continues the battle and destroys Ravana. Rama Himself, Bhagavan Narayana incarnate, worshipped the Sun through this hymn! So you can imagine the greatness of this aspect of Divinity! It liberates us from the darkness of night and gives us the light of day.

In the same way, the Name—the chanting of which for sixty days you are going to inaugurate just now in the Bhajan Hall—liberates us from the darkness of spiritual ignorance by bestowing upon us the light of spiritual wisdom, That is the coincidence between these two Tattvas: the Sun God and Divine Name. The Sun God liberates the whole world from the darkness of night and brings us into the light of day where alone all Purushartha is possible. As the Sun God does this, the Divine Name liberates us from the darkness of Ajnana and bestows upon us the illumined condition of Brahma-Jnana, Atma-Jnana, and liberates us forever from the wheel of birth and death. It is a coincidence, as it happens to be on a Sunday.

*Sriman Narayana, Narayana, Narayana.
Hari Om Tat Sat!*

Worshipful homage unto Thee, O Thou supreme, timeless and spaceless, eternal and infinite, Supra-Cosmic Spirit Divine! Worshipful homage unto Thee! Thou who art the beginning and the end of all things. Worshipful homage unto Thee in whom all things come into being, in whom all things exist and in whom all things ultimately subside. Worshipful homage unto Thee, O Thou absolute, all pervading and non-dual transcendental Reality who art the support of all things, without whom nothing exists by itself. Worshipful homage unto Thee who art the creator of everything, who art the alpha and the omega. Worshipful homage unto Thee in whom we have our being, from whom we derive our very existence. Worshipful homage unto Thee who art our goal supreme by attaining and experiencing whom alone our life becomes truly fulfilled. May Thy Divine grace be upon all who have assembled here.

Reverential prostrations and loving adorations to beloved and worshipful holy Master, Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, for what he has been to each one of us we have to thank the Supreme Reality. Beloved and worshipful Gurudev is a bestowal to 20th century humanity. He is a gift of That Being to mankind of the 20th century, for He is a giver of all things.

When He is the giver of all things, what can you and I and all of us here give Him? We are the receivers in every way, what can we give him? The human world builds huge temples—specially in India, hundreds and thousands of temples are there—and in the temples people offer worship, they offer Tulsi, Bael leaves, flowers, fruits, ghee-lamp, cotton wicks, camphor, saffron, sandal paste, Kumkum and Vibhuti. But from where did they get all these things? They did not invent them; they did not create them.

He has created the five elements—earth, water, fire, ether or space, and the wind; He has bestowed these things upon us, these things without which we cannot live. God created the flowers, the fruit, the saffron, and He created the ghee, the cotton of the wick, the brass of the lamp and the Arati; God created the sandal and the Kumkum, the fire that makes Vibhuti or ash possible; God created the marble to build the temple and the Lingam which is found in the river Narmada and many other places. God created the black rock for Murli Manohar Krishna of Sri Vishwanatha Mandir, He created the marble for Parvati, Ganesha, Rama, Sita, Laksmana and Hanuman. Everything in Viswanatha Mandir was created by God, and God created the fruits and flowers and Bael and Tulsi and all things. And what He created, we take and offer to Him.

This brings us to the saying: “*Tvadiyam vastu Govinda tubhyam eva samarpayet:*” “O Lord! O Govinda, O Krishna, what belongs to You, that I

offer to you.” We repeat in one of the Arati—“Tera tujhako arpana, kya laage mera”—whatever is Yours, I offer it to you; nothing is mine.

What to say! He created you; therefore offer yourself to Him. He gave you this life. Let your life be dedicated to His feet as an offering. He is everything, it is His own outer form, Virat Swarupa. He is all humanity, all the animals, all the birds, all the fishes, all the flowers of the year, all the reptiles, the ant, fly, mosquito, bed-bug, blade of grass—everything. Therefore, whatever He has given to you, your talents, your strength of the limbs, offer it up as Aahuti (oblation) in this great Yajna (sacrifice) of self-giving. Life ought to be lived as Yajna, because you don’t belong to yourself, your limbs don’t belong to you, the strength that is enlivening you, the ‘Prana-Shakti’ does not belong to you, it is all His creation. And He is before you as this world and all things and beings in it. Therefore, make yourself an offering by being useful and a source of benefit to the whole of this Cosmic Form which this world represents.

I am Thine, O Lord! All is Thine, and through the offering of my time, my energy, my talents—thought, word, and deed—through the offering of myself I worship You. I also worship You with flowers, fruits, fragrant water in which sandal paste is mixed, and when they make the sandal paste, they put a little bit of Bhimseni-Kapur, a little bit of Kesar and the sandal paste becomes the saffron colour and

fragrant and is dissolved in the Abhishek-water. The whole of the ‘Shodashopachara Pooja’ is the offering of various ingredients to Bhagavan. Make yourself, your life, your thoughts, words, and deeds, all your actions also an ingredient of this worship called life. In this lies your highest welfare. Such life is indeed blessed.

Why do we take the name of Hanuman? Why do we laud Him in such a way? Precisely because whatever he was endowed with, whatever Bhagavan had given him – indomitable strength, bright intellect etc. - he placed it all at the feet of Bhagavan Rama, in the service of Bhagavan Rama. He is a unique example of Sarvasamarpan bhagawad charan mein (offering himself completely at the feet of the Lord). Wherever Lord Rama is, there Hanuman is present. Treta Yuga has passed, Dwapara Yuga has passed – but Hanuman is immortal; still temples are built for him and worship is offered!

Jai bolo Hanuman ki! Jai bolo Hanuman ki!
Jai bolo Hanuman ki! Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai
Ram, Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram. Rama
Laxmana Janaki, Jai bolo Hanuman ki. Rama
Laxmana Janaki, Jai bolo Hanuman ki.”

Om Namo Narayanaya. Om Namo
Narayanaya.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

*(Early Morning Talk at Sri Samadhi Mandir on
18th October 1991)*

Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya
Om Namo Bhagavate Sivanandaya

Prostrations unto the Divine Presence, that is the All-pervading Reality in this universe of vanishing names and forms, that is the Permanent in the midst of the impermanent, the Imperishable in the midst of the perishable, the Eternal in the midst of the non-eternal, the never-changing amidst the ever-changing, the one fact in the midst of mere appearances that come into being and vanish, to that Great Reality which is of the nature of supreme fullness, that gives satisfaction forever, which is of the nature of absolute Bliss, which is of the nature of profound peace, which is of the nature of Light of lights beyond all darkness, attaining which one becomes blessed forever, one becomes enlightened, one becomes illumined. Salutations and worshipful homage to that Great Reality, the all-pervading, Nitya, Shashvat, Avinashi, Paripoorna, Anandamaya, Param Shanti Swaroop—the Sat amidst the Asat! May grace supreme shower upon you and bless your beginnings and all your endeavours with progress and success.

This is the day of Vijayadashami, when Vidyarambha is done. Yesterday, after the

worship of Mahanavami, today's programme was announced, and they spoke of Vidyarambha, they spoke of the auspicious nature of this day that crowns our efforts with success, bestows unhampered progress to our new undertakings. This is the supremely blessed morning when we should commence afresh our great ascent of the Spirit from the unreal unto the Eternal Reality, our ascent from darkness unto the everlasting divine light of wisdom-consciousness, our ascent from earthbound mortality of mere human consciousness into the divine consciousness of God-experience.

All knowledge here is an accumulation of facts, so-much-so we are fast approaching an age when the modern materialistic scientists assure us that soon everything would be accomplished by computers created by them. It will hold all the answers. It will be able to provide whatsoever information on whatsoever subject by pressing a button or working in front of a computer. They said it will provide everything, and with this data it will be able to accomplish wonders, do everything for you. Thus, we are moving towards an age when man's hitherto superior intelligent faculties would become not so very important, for the computer would replace effectively man's innate intelligence. The unique faculties that make man a man, above all other living beings, all other forms of created life, would become dispensable, and the brain would become secondary before the master computer.

But our ancients said that it is the lesser knowledge, for it cannot give you freedom. It

cannot liberate you from fear and sorrow, and it cannot liberate you from the hellish pain of envy, jealousy, hatred, anxiety, conflict, and the computer cannot give you joy either. All the knowledge accumulated in a computer cannot free you from birth, death, old age, disease, sorrow, disharmony and confusion.

Therefore they said that it is the lesser knowledge. It cannot replace hatred by love; it cannot bring about harmony where there is clash and conflict between human beings. The Gulf War proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that computer technology can bring about unimaginable destruction. It can rain death from the skies without anyone having to move from his seat. With just pressing a button it can send death and devastation and cause terror and sorrow in hundreds and thousands of hearts and minds. It has unlimited potential for havoc! Computers can also scan a brain. They can detect cancer, but they cannot prevent or heal cancer or tell you why cancer is caused. It can diagnose an entire case: give your blood pressure, heart condition, ECG, check your entire blood picture: RBC, WBC. They said it is the lesser knowledge. It cannot provide you with the know-how of how to look after your physical body. It cannot provide you with the know-how of how to deal with your emotions and sentiments. It can supply vast accumulated information to feed your intellect, but it cannot prevent insanity, it cannot prevent psychosis, it cannot prevent hatred, vengefulness. It cannot bring out from within you compassion, kindness, generosity, sympathy, tolerance, magnanimity,

consideration for others. It cannot make you a St. Francis or a Jnaneshwar. It can make you a Hitler, a Mussolini and a great commander. It can make you an Admiral.

Therefore, they said that the supreme value is not secular knowledge, lesser knowledge, for it has its limitations in terms of the deepest human yearnings. It has limitations in terms of the fundamental human quest all over the world since the dawn of creation. It can provide you with everything that it has within itself, but it cannot provide you what you want, what you are striving to attain.

The supreme value in the vision of the ancient seers and sages of the Upanishad is the value that makes you totally perfect and full, that liberates you from all sorrow, fear and anxiety, disease, death and rebirth. Liberation is the supreme value. And therefore today, let us adjust our sights and make That our target.

*"Pranavo dhanuh sharo hyatma Brahma tan
lakshyamuchyate
Appramattena veddhavyam sharavat tanmayo
bhavet." (Mundakopanishad II/II/4)*

Pranava (Om) is the bow, the Atman is the arrow and Brahman is called its aim. It is to be hit by a man who is self-collected and then as the arrow becomes one with the target, he will become one with Brahman.

Brahman is the target. The golden opportunity of the human status has been granted to the individual soul for the attainment of Brahma Jnana. This must be clearly known, grasped and utilised for this highest supreme

attainment. That is wisdom. The Upanishads have voiced forth the great call: "Come, come, seek the Eternal, the Great Atman. That is the one goal worth striving after; It is supreme, unparalleled, without a second." They said, Vidyarambha commences with the study of the Vedas, Upanishads, Yoga-Vashishta, Mahabharata, Ramayana, Bhagavata Mahapurana—all the great awakening scriptures of light of wisdom.

This is the day, the morning for new commencement, where we set as our goal that which is of permanent value, the unchanging reality, the truth supreme. Yajnavalkya declared, "That is to be heard about, that is to be reflected upon, that is to be deeply dwelt upon in inner contemplation or meditation—"Tat srotavyo, mantavyo, nidhidhyasatavyo," O that is the Atman that liberates. That is the Para Vidya, the supreme transcendental Knowledge.

What will provide you with clothes to wear, bread to eat and a place to dwell—they have their value. But you have not taken birth in order merely to eat and drink and sleep. The ultimate goal of life is a million times greater than this which is done by every creature that crawls, swims, flies or ranges the wilds. The uniqueness of man is that he can go beyond the mere biological quest, beyond satisfying sense-appetites and fulfilling desires of the mind. Recognise and realise the wondrous value of your human status, claim your birthright and crown yourself with glory. Towards this end live your life and commence it today!

And providing the successful attainment of this supreme goal, Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji has brought into being an environment, an atmosphere, a certain field, helping the seeker to attain the goal, providing all the facilities, everything that is positive and plus. Therefore, wise is the person, who, recognising the value of what he has got, puts it to the highest and best use and makes a success of his life. May you live and prove yourself an Uttam Adhikari. May the grace of the Divine Mother and the choicest benedictions of Gurudev grant you unhampered progress, ultimate fulfilment and supreme success in this wonderful adventure of the spirit which we call Divine Life.

That is the humble prayer of Swami Chidananda at the feet of Master's spiritual presence in the sacred Samadhi Hall of his holy Ashram situated on the banks of Divine Mother Ganga in Uttarakhand, this sanctified northern-most area of holy Bharatavarsha.

May this sharing be acceptable to you all who are fortunate Jijnasus and Mumukshus, who are privileged seekers and spiritual aspirants, who are thrice blessed!

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

24th September 2016 marks the auspicious occasion of Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out one hundred booklets comprising illuminating talks of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

To propagate Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's gospel of Divine Life, Worshipful Sri Swamiji Maharaj travelled extensively in India and abroad and showed the path of divine life to countless seekers through his spontaneous and highly inspiring lectures. His lectures, in Sadgurudev's words, are the outpourings of his saintly heart, the revelations of intuitive wisdom.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of his hitherto unpublished lectures in booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary. The present booklet '***Sadhana—The Keynote of Gurudev's Teachings***' is a compilation of his five inspiring talks at the sacred Samadhi Shrine during the year 1991 and 1995.

We express our heartfelt gratitude towards Shri Mukund Jere, Mrs. Moo Briddell, Mrs. Mary Dean and the inmates of the Headquarters Ashram for their loving service in transcribing, editing and compiling these talks.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—*The Divine Life Society*

Radiant Atman! Sadhaks and seekers, gathered together in the spiritual presence of revered and beloved Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji. May the grace of the Divine Mother and the choicest benediction of Holy Master be upon you all in your quest after an ideal life, in your quest after divine perfection, liberation and eternal blessedness on this 7th day of the annual worship of the Divine Mother. This is my special prayer at the feet of the Divine Mother and holy Master that they may bless you with the gift of awareness of your divine mission, bless you with the gift of constant awareness of the central purpose for which you have been sent to this earth plane. In the physical sense it is a plane of birth, old age, disease, death and sorrow. Yet in the spiritual sense it is a plane of evolution unto perfection, a plane for practising Dharma and attaining enlightenment. Physically, it may be a plane of sorrow and suffering, but spiritually it is a plane for completing the ascent of the Spirit towards its divine destiny. And all of you being immortal souls, being parts of the Supreme Being, for you it is not the physical aspect that counts much, but rather your spiritual nature, that being your real element. Not so much the brief physical sojourn, but rather that life really and truly means to you this sublime and glorious spiritual process of ascending into a state of divine illumination and God-consciousness. May this awareness of

¹ Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 1/10/95

the central purpose of your presence here be given to you by Divine Mother and Holy Master, so that you may live upon the basis of this awareness. For to forget this truth becomes the source of all sorrow and confusion. But to live in awareness becomes the fulfillment of your divine mission. Therefore I am praying to Holy Master and to the Divine Mother that this great spiritual awareness may be bestowed and your life may be lived in this awareness. Here is the prayer to them thus earnestly and sincerely on behalf of each and every one of you.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Radiant Immortal Atman! Beloved and blessed children of the Divine, Jijnasus and Mumukshus! A Jijnasu is one who is in quest of knowledge, Jnana. A Mumukshu is one who is desirous of liberation or Moksha. It is with a quest, a desire for knowledge—to know the purpose of life, how to live it effectively, what is Dharma, what is Adhyatma (spirituality)—that you have come here. Through Sravana (listening), through Satsanga, you wish to imbibe knowledge that may help you to live in a more effective manner. Therefore, you are a Jijnasu.

You want this knowledge because you have been told and you believe that such knowledge may help you to attain liberation from pain, sorrow, suffering, fear, anxiety, all the unpleasant, negative experiences a person is subjected to on this earth plane. During this life span, one is subjected to sorrow as well as joy, pain as well as pleasure, misery as well as happiness. And whereas the latter is desirable, no one wants the former. So the human quest is for liberation from these undesirable, painful experiences, which make one suffer.

Simultaneously, the human quest is also for the attainment of all the positive, pleasurable experiences, Sukha, Ananda, Shanti, Tripti, Santosha comfort, convenience, joy, happiness, pleasure. And due to the belief that knowledge

² Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 18/9/91

gained here may help you in fulfilling this central quest, you have come for instruction, guidance, inspiration, study and reflection. Therefore, you are Mumukshus. You are Sadhakas actively engaged in spiritual Sadhana.

With the intention of meeting the needs of Sadhakas, Jijnasus, Mumukshus, Satsangis such as you, Gurudev long ago decided to provide a handy manual giving all the necessary information about spiritual life, Yoga and Sadhana. One who is keenly desirous of a life of Sadhana will find all the material to immediately launch into the life of Sadhana and commence a practical spiritual life of daily practices.

To this end, he did not want to leave anything untouched. He wanted to include everything. Therefore this compact volume gives the essence of all the Yoga paths—Hatha Yoga, Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Japa Yoga, Laya Yoga. It gives invaluable practical instructions on how to successfully carry on such Sadhana, how to arrange your day from morning till night, what time to allot for what Sadhana and then how to keep watch upon it, so that at a glance you will be able to know how well you are proceeding. You will be in a position to key yourself up periodically, to take specific resolves, and to keep the intensity of the Sadhana at a desired pitch and not let it slacken. Thus beloved Gurudev provided for us in this compact manual everything that is necessary and useful to a Sadhaka.

This manual is given to every person upon enrolling as a member of the Divine Life Society as part of the package with

the significant name ‘Sadhana Set’, and the name of the manual is ‘Essence of Yoga’.

The very purpose of membership in the Divine Life Society is to commence an active and progressive spiritual life. It is to know everything about spiritual Sadhana and to know about the very essence of the different types of Yoga. Therefore, if you want to know about Sadhana, obtain a copy of this book and study it diligently. You will understand yourself, your mind, and you will understand the finer points of spiritual life and the secret of Yoga Sadhana. It is given in a very concise way, yet not leaving any essential point out. Thus equip yourself with the knowledge of right Sadhana, and proceed upon the path.

Sadhana is directing all your activities towards the ultimate experience of the great Reality, Sad-Darshana. For this we always pray ‘asato ma sadgamaya’. From our birth we have lived only amidst passing unrealities, amidst this changing phenomenal appearance. That is our only knowledge, our only experience. But we have been told that there is something higher than this, something that does not pass, which is Nitya, permanent. Because it is Nitya, it is Satya. Therefore, we want Darshan of the Sat, and the ancient prayer is: ‘Lead us from unrealities to the great Eternal Reality, the Cosmic Reality’.

It is very difficult to believe that what we perceive, what we live right in the middle of, what we experience day after day, is not the reality. Whereas, that which you have never perceived, about which you have no knowledge, that which you have never experienced—neither the nose has smelt it,

nor the eye has seen it, nor the hands have touched it, nor the ear has heard it, nor the tongue has tasted it—that is the reality.

Therefore, Sraddha (faith) is required in the Apta Vakya (words of a trustworthy person), in the Shruti Vakya (words of the Vedas), in the Guru Vakya (words of the Guru). The Shrutis, the saints, sages, mystics and world teachers and your own Guru have no axe to grind. They have no ulterior motives, nothing to gain by misleading you, telling you something which is not true. They have no self-interest. Therefore you must believe.

The Shrutis proclaim that which is conducive to your highest welfare. They proclaim it without any motivation, without any purpose except to benefit you. Therefore, believe in the Apta Vakya, believe in the Shruti Vakya, believe in the Guru Vakya! For, if in this universe there is anything totally unselfish, it is Shrutis, it is the great immortal teachers who have attained everything. Their hearts are full; they have no more desires. Such ones cannot misguide you. Therefore, believe, have faith, have Sraddha.

You should not think that a logical and rational approach in any way excludes faith, that they are incompatible; “Faith is blind, whereas we want to know. We want everything to be proved before we believe, because we are rational people”. Our ancients discovered a super-rational approach to the great Reality. They were people of keen intellect, they were incisive, sharp, probing, analytical. They were a hundred times more logical, rational and scientific than any of us. But these Jnanis, practicing the Vichara Marga,

Jnana Yoga, Vedanta, said, “sraddhavan labhate jnanam” (The man who is full of faith obtains knowledge). They also declared that if you wish to listen to the exposition of Vedantic truths, one of the virtues you must equip yourself with is Sraddha, faith, belief.

Go through the ‘Essence of Yoga’ devoutly. The great heart of Swami Sivanandaji had only one desire, and that is your highest welfare, your highest good. It was you he was thinking about when he produced all his great literature. He was not thinking of himself. He was thinking firstly of you, secondly of you and thirdly also only of you. He wanted to benefit you. He was thinking of your success in life. He was thinking of your highest good and welfare, of your happiness. Therefore, with faith and devotion, sincerely make an attempt to earnestly study the wisdom teachings of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji. That is the greatest investment. You could not do a wiser thing than this.

But, you must have earnestness and sincerity. You must not have only curiosity in Yoga and spiritual life. There should be deep earnestness to imbibe the knowledge and to start living the life, to plunge into practice. This is one thing needed.

Sadhana was the keynote of worshipful Gurudev’s teachings. Sadhana was the central theme of all his writings. Sadhana was the thing that he wanted you to actively live in your daily life; he wanted you to give it a central place.

How to do Sadhana? In what manner to set about doing it? What are all the helpful practices to further it? To impart this knowledge to you, he carefully wrote “Twenty Important

“Spiritual Instructions” which has been translated into all the Indian languages and has spread everywhere throughout the world. He also compiled and produced “Sadhana Tattva”, the Science of Seven Cultures, which contains a carefully graded series of thirty-two instructions covering Health Culture, Energy Culture, Ethical Culture, Will Culture, Heart culture, Psychic Culture and Spiritual Culture. He compiled, “Twenty Hints on Meditation”, the Resolve Form, Daily Routine Timetable and the Spiritual Diary. He put the essence of all of them into the Universal Prayer. And almost everything that I have just now mentioned, you will find in the Essence of Yoga, which you cannot purchase because it is not for sale. It is given only to genuine Sadhakas who want to commence serious spiritual practice in their daily life.

Therefore, if you wish to know how to lead a life of spiritual Sadhana, you could do no better than to obtain this book by becoming a member of the Divine Life Society. Then commence living a spiritual life in a systematic way. That is how Gurudev lived. That is why he left behind him a Sivananda Ashram. That is why he left behind him a Divine Life Society—in order that you may do spiritual Sadhana, you may move towards God. You must seek the Immortal and become blessed.

Who is a member of the Divine Life Society? A member is a Sadhaka engaged in spiritual practices with an earnest desire, earnest aspiration, to improve one’s life, to spiritualise one’s activities, to live in a Yogic way, so that life becomes a process of gradually ascending towards the supreme Goal.

Ponder well this aspect of your personality, and see whether you are well established in this great aspiration, this great ideal of being a Sadhaka. Ponder well and see whether you have acquired all the qualifications of a Sadhaka, whether day by day you are improving these qualifications and becoming a true Mumukshu, a true Jijnasu, becoming established in Yama and Niyama, becoming established in Viveka, in Vairagya, in the Shat-Sampada, in Mumukshutva, becoming well established in all these important aspects or the preparatory Sadhanas.

Constantly keep analysing your life. Be so much absorbed in it that you have no time for miscellaneous thinking and activities, because you are earnest, you are sincere, you are focused upon your most important vocation, your spiritual Sadhana. Ultimately it will take you to supreme blessedness, crown your life with peace, bliss, fearlessness and freedom. That is the objective of Sadhana. Therefore, be a sincere, practical Sadhaka.

May Gurudev's choicest blessings be with you in this great adventure! May the divine grace of God grant you steady, unhampered progress and grant you fulfillment in your Sadhana!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Radiant Immortal Atman, beloved and blessed children of the Divine, devotees of the Lord, Sadhakas who are gathered here under the auspices of the Divine Life Society's 'Divine Decade' programs and projects, by which we seek to serve all fellow beings in this world. We seek to serve them ethically and spiritually in particular and in all ways in general, in and through this Society established by our worshipful and beloved Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji more than a half century ago, on the banks of Divine Mother Ganga, in this hallowed Uttarakhand.

Under the auspices of the Divine Decade, we have been prompted to undertake certain specific projects and numerous programs all over India as well as overseas, so that during the closing years of this twentieth century the Divine Life Society may be instrumental in playing its part in helping humanity move towards the next century in a manner that might be wiser and better than in this century.

With wisdom, from sweet and bitter lessons learned during the past nine decades may we strive to make the remaining years of this century better years. May they be years of discipline, of purification, of giving a right direction to our thoughts, words and actions. May they be years during

which we equip ourselves with more divine qualities, so that we may play an effective part in bringing about peace, harmony, brotherly love, mutual goodwill, and in cooperation with all people of goodwill the all-round welfare of human society in this world of ours.

To this end we are trying to imbibe right ideas, to give a right direction to our thought, for thought is the key to human life, both present and future. It is thought and the quality of thought that leaves its imprint upon human actions, what a human individual is and does, what he makes of his life. Does his life affect all beings around him positively, or does it have a negative influence? Does it constitute a helpful contribution towards the happiness and welfare of those with whom God has put him, or is it contrary?

That which decides the outcome and the ultimate effect of our life upon other lives is our thought, our motivations, the overt as well as the covert motives that are behind our mental, verbal and physical actions. And it is not only that we become what our thoughts, sentiments and motivations make us, but our thoughts govern our actions which are felt by all life around us. Our thought becomes a factor affecting others, causing within them happiness or misery, peace or restlessness. We have to be careful of our thought, not only for its effect upon us and our lives, but also because of its effect upon other people and their lives.

We can pollute the atmosphere around us by our thoughts. We can purify a polluted atmosphere and make it clean, make it holy, make it sacred, by our thoughts. Thoughts do not merely make our interior either sublime or

base, they pervade the whole world and enter into other people's minds and hearts, affecting their lives.

We live in a human situation. We live in constant mutual exchange with other human beings. It is a vital, dynamic relationship, not a passive one. By our thoughts we affect and influence the very pattern and quality of life around us. We move about playing this role, shouldering a sacred responsibility until our last breath.

A mother has a sacred responsibility towards her children. What she is, the vibrations that emanate from her through her thoughts and emotions, whether they are Sattvic, Tamasic or Rajasic, spiritual or unspiritual, gross or elevating and subtle, is her responsibility. It has to be her lookout; it has to be her concern.

There is a book called 'No Man Is an Island' by Thomas Merton. A mother in a family cannot think of herself as being an isolated being: "I can live my own life, go my own way. I can harbour any thoughts I like, good, bad or indifferent, put myself in any mental mood, even throw temper tantrums, I can make my personality the playground for all types of thoughts or emotions." A mother cannot think like that. She is not an island. She is part of a family. Her inner states and the manifestation of these states affect her children, her husband, her in-laws, her servants, her friends and her neighbours.

A father cannot think that he is an isolated being and can thus indulge in any thoughts. He would be doing the greatest service if he were to realise the sacred, ethical and psychological duty and responsibility he owes to the home

...

and family atmosphere, to his wife and children, and to his brothers and their families, if they are a joint family.

Children are not isolated beings. They cannot throw their responsibility to their parents to the winds and say: "We are young people, we are a privileged, distinct class by ourselves. We can have our way; we can make our day." It would be the height of ingratitude and folly for children to feel that they owe nothing to their parents who have toiled for them, suffered for them and exerted themselves for their upbringing. It would be the height of ingratitude.

In this way, starting from the most basic unit of human society, a single family, we are constantly a centre of influence. Will that influence be elevating and uplifting or degrading and demeaning? What is to be your contribution to your home, to your place of work, to your immediate environment? This needs to be pondered. This needs to be considered each day.

In the twentieth century we have so far witnessed a steady overall downgrading of the human ethos. The standards of human behaviour both inside and outside the home have fallen. The result is confusion in society with chaotic conditions prevailing in all countries, causing great concern to those who feel for the human condition. Everywhere is a cry that moral standards have broken down, have been rejected, thrown to the winds, and humanity is reaping the bitter results of this breakdown in the form of various diseases, uncertainties due to the increase in crime. The results are conflicts, violence, loss of peace, fear, anxiety and unhappiness, leading to high blood pressure, heart

disease, neuroses, insomnia, nervous breakdown, psychotic conditions and downright insanity. People go berserk and do things which cause widespread harm and destruction to others.

It is in the context of this present situation that the Divine Decade acquires relevance, however humble it may be. They say that little drops of water make the mighty ocean, and that little stars make up the Milky Way. Nothing is wasted. If you generate within yourself one single good thought, one sublime, noble emotion, one pure Bhav, one great purposeful Sankalpa, or one thought filled with great goodwill, with universal love, towards all existence—if you generate one such thought and project it outwards, then that thought will go around the whole globe; it can influence the whole of humanity, people living in the remotest regions in far-away jungles and hills or people living in the din and bustle of crowded cities.

Such thoughts have the capacity to bring about a lasting impact, in keeping with the nature of that particular thought. Positive thoughts can elevate, while negative thoughts can depress. That is why your ancient forefathers in this holy land of India established a tradition of the human individual waking up in the morning and visualising the entire globe—all living beings on this plane, on the planes below and on the planes above—and directing thoughts of peace, thoughts of love, thoughts of goodwill, harmony and brotherhood.

This ancient tradition established by your ancestors was done with the full knowledge that each human individual

affects all human individuals. And if you are not careful, if you do not keep an ever alert, watchful doorkeeper on the door of your personality, allowing only kind thoughts and dismissing anything of the contrary, then you can also be on the receiving end of negative thought trends.

Therefore, they say you should always keep your mind occupied with noble, sublime thinking. Then there will be no scope for anything else to have its impact upon you. On the contrary, you should be an active, positive contributor to human thought, activity and life in the right direction, giving thinking and feeling an upward dimension.

In this context devotees of God, spiritual people, Sadhakas like you who have adopted the Divine Life ideal as your pattern of living, have a special duty, a special responsibility. Or we can also say that you have a special privilege, a great good fortune, of making use of your life to contribute to the overall welfare of human society today, especially during these last few years of the present century.

You are supremely blessed; you are most fortunate. God has showered grace upon you. Saints, sages and mystics of the present and recent past have bestowed upon you untold benedictions by coming to you in the form of their wisdom teachings and lifting your life to a more elevated plane.

Therefore you can do much for yourself and for present day human society by living a life of aspiration, by your universal love, your sense of renunciation, your sense of goodwill towards all beings, your spirit of service and selflessness. A Sadhaka is the salt of the earth, a blessing, a precious asset of mankind.

Therefore introspect, look at your life, the state of your interior, the feelings that you harbour, the thoughts that you allow to be actively present in your mind. Do they make you a positive, elevating, enabling factor in human society? Are you a boon and a blessing to mankind? What is your place, your role, what is the effect of your life upon your fellow human beings?

You are a Sadhaka, a devotee of God, one who is trying to lead a sublime, divine life of selflessness, service, devotion, worship, spiritual discipline, control of the senses, conquest of the mind, meditation and aspiration. This constitutes your personality. You are the embodiment of purity and truthfulness. You shine with noble character. You are following the path of Sadachara, good conduct. Your whole life is guided by Dharma.

Being such a Sadhaka, how much good can and should you do to humanity of today! Day by day improve. Let everything that constitutes your personality improve day after day. Thus let your individuality, your capacity as a Sadhaka and your life of Sadhana be your contribution to the ‘Divine Decade’!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Glorious Immortal Atman! Great is your good fortune this morning to be in close proximity to the presence of the Adi Guru, the Trimurti Avatar, Lord Dattatreya. His miraculous advent was the outcome of Pativrata Dharma (the virtue of single minded devotion to the husband) of the great Sati Anasuya and the power of Tapasya of the great Maharshi Atri. On this hill Lord Dattatreya is Aranyavasi Dattatreya (living in a forest), not Nagaravasi (living in a city) or Gramavasi (living in a village). In this Tapo Bhumi the Lord is in Tapasya Ki Mudra (in a posture of penance). He is in seclusion. He is in the forest, gazing at the Ganga.

Lord Dattatreya was the outcome of two of the greatest life-transforming forces that the ideal of the Vedic way of life has held out before all sincere seekers, all genuine aspirants. Indeed, the culture of spiritual India was the outcome of these two great forces.

One is the force of penance, of prayer, of austerity, of Tapasya. Through Tapasya Vishvamitra was able to create a second Svarga for Trishanku. What cannot be done? Through Tapasya Brahma understood Himself. He became Veda, and out of Him this knowledge came forth. Through Tapasya He created this world. Through Tapasya is this world sustained.

Tapasya is controlling oneself and shining like fire. Tapasya imparts to the Tapsavvi this quality of fire. Due to

Sattvic Tapas created by overcoming oneself, using the power of Samyama (self-control), one shines with this inner fire. The power of Tapasya of Maharshi Atri obliged the Trimurtis to incarnate in his home.

The second power is the power of chastity, purity of thought, word and action, purity of motives, inner motivation. What is behind your actions, behind your behaviour? Are you aware of it? If not, you better become aware through introspection, self-analysis, self-examination.

This Sadhana is the key to improvement. There is no other way. This is the only way to progress. Progress in the spiritual life, in the path of Sadhana is only possible if you are earnestly introspective, if you sincerely analyse yourself; if you don't allow self-love or a subtle partiality to creep in, if you are not inclined one way or the other. If you are sincere in your self-examination, earnest in your introspection, then no one can stop your progress, provided you do it in a spiritual way, not in any other way.

If your self-examination and analysis is not spiritual, you will only end up by finding everything wonderful inside yourself, everything admirable, praiseworthy; you want to justify it, and you are greatly satisfied with everything. It will be like blowing air into a balloon. This is a very subtle trick of the mind which only true Sadhakas are able to perceive. You will look within, you will seemingly analyse, but if it is not done in the correct manner, with ruthless impartiality, then the analysis will not reveal what you do not want to see. It will only reveal what you don't mind seeing. And so it takes you nowhere.

However, if there is a genuine earnestness and sincerity to improve, to move towards Divinity and to shine, then this process will be carried on always. Just like Vichara and Viveka, they are not meditation room Sadhanas. Vichara and Viveka are not Sadhanas that you engage in at certain times, sitting on a particular Asana. That is alright for Vedantic Vichara. But spiritual Vichara and Viveka, Dharmic Vichara and Viveka, Yogic Vichara and Viveka are to be done from the moment you wake up in the morning until you go to sleep at night. They are dynamic processes of Sadhana that have to be continuously kept going, that are to be with you always, entering into every one of your activities. You must keep on analysing, correcting your direction, removing veils and discovering truths. This has to be kept up.

In the same way, analysis and scrutiny of one's inner motivations is an ongoing Sadhana. It has to go along with you in Vyavahara. In this way one can grow in purity. The power of purity of thought, word and deed is acquired by constant self-introspection, self-examination, the scrutiny and analysis of one's inner motives. Gurudev was never tired of reiterating this important point. Scrutinise your inner motives. Introspect. Daily set aside some time with a view to discovering hidden things, so that you can strengthen that which is desirable and eradicate that which has no place within you.

So, both these processes should be kept going—on the one hand, eradication, and on the other hand, improvement, development and cultivation. And this can be done only if

you introspect, analyse and know yourself—know yourself mentally, intellectually, psychologically and ethically.

This is not the Vedantic enquiry of “Who am I?” This is not the enquiry of the Sat as distinct from the Asat, of the Nitya as distinct from the Anitya, or of the Svarupa as distinct from the Upadhis. This is a different enquiry, at a lesser level, but at a very important level. It is a very important part of Sadhana.

Know yourself first upon this lesser level of consciousness, which is where you have to constantly live your Vyavaharic life. If that life is not of the proper quality, the very setting for your higher, inner, subtler Sadhana will be unsuitable. How can Sadhana progress unless the soil is of the right kind? No seed will sprout; no fruit will be produced. The frame in which you do your inner, subtler Sadhana of Japa, meditation, prayer, worship etc. is provided by your daily life, by your interchange and association with people, by your normal activities. Therefore, analyse, introspect, scrutinise your inner motives. Let everything be first rate, pure, Sattvic, godly, divine, spiritual. This is Sadhana.

If you are deliberately acting with some concealed motive, that is bad enough. But not to know with what motive you are acting is still worse. The first is hypocrisy. The second is ignorance. Ignorance is ten times worse than hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is a very terrible thing but ignorance is still worse. It is ignorance that prevents you from realizing what great harm you are doing to yourself, by trying to deceive God and trying to deceive man. And in that process you are deceiving yourself also.

Sri Ramakrishna used to tell his disciples, “Human beings are going about deluded, not knowing what is their own good, their own welfare, yet they think themselves to be very clever and shrewd. They think they can fool everyone and get away with it. They are like a crow. You can catch other birds, but the crow is always alert and it immediately flies away if it is approached. So it thinks that it is the most clever among birds and more clever than man. But then, what does it do? It lives on filth, on the dirtiest of things. It thinks itself to be very clever, but at the same time it does not know what a dirty life it is living.”

So, one who is very clever and wants to subtly maneuver and conceal, does not know what a very despicable life he is leading. He thinks himself to be very intelligent, that he can deceive everyone, that he can put himself across as a wonderful person. But you cannot deceive the indwelling God. O fool! You do not know that He knows you inside out. Everything that you think you have concealed is already known to Him.

Therefore, do not fool yourself, do not deceive yourself. Be sincere. Be earnest. Be without guile. Be without this subtle crookedness inside. Be like a real child before God, innocent and pure at heart. This is a great desideratum. Anasuya was like that, and the Trimurtis had to accept their defeat, confess who they were and become her children.

And so Dattatreya is the very embodiment of chastity and purity, of two great cornerstones of Sadhana, which should come automatically and naturally to you, because you are the ever-pure Atman. You are Divinity. In you there is no

impurity. And Tapasya should come to you naturally also. If awareness is there, keen discrimination, if you identify yourself with the higher aspect of your being, you will always be established on the spiritual level and never allow the lesser aspects of your being to overcome you. Because it is only when you forget yourself and identify with the lesser aspects of your being that you yield to their impulses.

Sadhana is this inner process of growing in divinity, minus ego. If the ego accompanies this growth into Godliness, then it is not complete; it is not genuine. Ego has no place in it. That means it is still binding you, keeping you down, because ego belongs to the other nature, to the delusion, not to the Svarupa. Therefore, Sadhana is growing in Godliness minus ego. It is growing in Godliness with Brahmatva and Atma-Bhava, not Jívatva. Ponder deeply this point. This is the truth.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

1.

Radiant Immortal Atman! During the early morning prayer and meditation fellowship in the presence of Gurudev in the Samadhisthan the standard practice is to come out of silent meditation with three long drawn Pranavas: OM, OM, OM. Thus one gradually comes from a state of inwardness into Bahirmukhatva (outwardness), from a state of inner silence, of deep inversion of the mind, to active sense-perception of your environment. And it is noteworthy that at the end of the three Pranava Ucharanas, when you open your eyes, it is the practice to chant:

*Namostvanantaya sahasramurtaye
Sahasrapadakshi shirorubahave
Sahasranamne purushaya shashvate
Sahasrakoti yugadharine namah*

(Salutations to the Infinite, the One with a thousand forms, with a thousand feet, thousand eyes, thousand heads, thousand thighs and thousand arms. Salutations to the One who has a thousand names, who is the Eternal Person, who supports the thousands of crores of ages).

Thus, when the meditator, who has been meditating upon the one great Reality, the supreme, imponderable eternal Truth, the ultimate Divine Being who alone exists, when he comes out of the contemplation of this *Ekameva advitiyam Brahma* (Brahman, the One without a second), the Antaratma (inner Self), what does he do? He makes the

5 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 20/9/91

necessary provision so that this inner contemplation of the supreme Divine Reality is not lost. This deep meditation, the inner dwelling on the Divine, is meant to smoothly continue in the waking state also, even when one is aware of all the multifarious names and forms in the outer environment.

Whatever one sees, hears, tastes, touches, smells, whatever one becomes aware of and dwells upon, is to be brought within the stream of the meditative consciousness. These factors are not meant to bring about a break and draw you away from that inner dwelling upon the Divine, but on the contrary, emerging into the waking state should be a continuation of the contemplation of the Divine, Atma Chintana, Tattva Chintana, Bhagavat Dhyana. Hence, this glorification of the Cosmic Form, “*Namostvanantaya sahasramurtaye sahasrapadakshishirorubahave*. I salute that Being, the infinite, the endless Being, Who has innumerable heads and hands and feet”. This means that I behold all forms as His forms. Everywhere He is. He alone has taken this Cosmic Form. Sahasra is a symbol of the innumerable, of the uncountable.

Thus inner meditation is smoothly made to prevail in the waking state. It is to continue. Nothing is to change. God is beheld in and through the world. This vision of the world is then succeeded by:

*Tvameva mata cha pita tvameva
Tvameva bandhuscha sakha tvameva
Tvameva vidya dravinam tvameva
Tvameva sarvam mama deva deva*

(You are my mother, You are my father. You are my relative and friend. You are my knowledge and my wealth. You are my all in all.)

In sleep you are, as it were, in a temporary state of non-being, a temporary state of death. The body is inactive, the senses are inoperative, the mind is hushed into silence, and the intellect does not function. There is only a mysterious state of non-being where the very awareness of your own self is lost. That is the mysterious state of Nidra, ever recurring, but never fathomed, never comprehended. Its importance is very great for the Vedantin, but we bypass it; it misses our attention. This is Maya.

However, at least in the one effective state, the waking state, we must not allow Maya to prevail upon our consciousness. We must not be in a state of self-forgetfulness, having opened our eyes and recognised the indwelling presence of God in the environment, in all things, through the first hymn of *namostvanantaya sahasramurtaye*. The next logical step is—"Now that I have come into this waking state, into an awareness of Your created universe and the things in it, grant O Lord that there may be no doubt, not the least shadow of a doubt about what I am seeking, what is my true quest. Grant, O Lord, that I may not be deluded by these passing appearances of things created by You, that I may not be deluded by their power of attraction, by the Akarshana Sakti of Maya. May I not lose my direction and forget my goal. May I not turn away from You and place value upon these

passing petty things and thus lose contact with You. May it not be so, O Lord.

“Grant that in this new day my only value may be you. May I live in the fullest knowledge, awareness and Bhava, that You are my all in all. I have none in my life greater or more precious than You. You are the only value, the supreme value. You are my mother, You are my father, You are my relative and friend. You are my wisdom, You are my wealth, You are my all in all. Bless me that I may go through this day firmly based upon this conviction, this Bhava, that God is the highest value to me—God first!”

Next comes the ideal of Paropakara (doing good to others), selflessness. Because the self is the obstacle between man and God. The self is the obstacle between the Sadhaka and the Sadhyavastu (thing to be attained). The self is the obstacle between the devotee and the Divine. Therefore, this self has to be set aside. What is the first word in the Divine Life crest? Serve! It implies service without a selfish motive, with absolute selflessness. This selflessness is the very essence of Karma Yoga. Selflessness is the quintessence of Vedanta. “Then shall I be free, when I shall cease to be. For it is in dying to the little self that one attains to everlasting life.”

All mystics, all saints and sages, all masters of wisdom have tried to bring home to us the truth that we constitute the barrier to our attaining the Divine. “Thus help me, O Lord, to move through this new day, that you have gifted to me, in the

firm awareness that You are my all in all—*tvameva sarvam mama deva deva*. Let me not be attracted by anything lesser than You. May I keep You as the only, whole and sole goal of my existence. May I live to dwell upon You. May I live to attain You. May I live to ever become established in You.”

This is the significance of the sequence of three recitations of Pranava followed by beholding the whole universe as veritable manifestations of the Divine in innumerable ways. We behold the Divine in whatever we may see or hear.

Yat cha kinchid jagat sarvam drishyate api va

Antarbahish cha tatsarvam vyapya Narayanah sthitah

Whatever in the world is seen or heard, pervading all that internally and externally, Lord Narayana is present).

Purusha evedam sarvam yad bhutam yat cha bhavyam

All this is verily the Supreme Person, that which has manifested and that which will manifest.

Yo mam pashyati sarvatra sarvam cha mayi pashyati

Tasyaham na pranashyami sa cha me na pranashyati

He who sees me everywhere, and sees everything in Me, he never becomes separated from Me, nor do I become separated from him.

Again and again the indispensable necessity of adopting this view and vision and each day dwelling in this view and vision has been brought home to us by the scriptures.

Tasya ko mohah, ka shokah, ekatvam anupashyatah

Where is delusion, where is grief for the one who sees oneness?

Thus Sadhana becomes sustained. There is no break in the stream of divine contemplation. Inner meditation and outer perception blend into a process of God-awareness, of dwelling upon the Divine. This spirit must be kept up.

“Within and without, I behold only Thee”.

The very revered and beloved Swami Omkar Maharaj of the Mission of Peace once gave expression to this vision by posing a question in one of his birthday messages. “I wish to behold Him, to dwell upon Him. Therefore, let me close my eyes in order to see Him, for He dwells within me ever. But as I close my eyes and go into meditation, the thought arises, ‘why should I close my eyes in order to perceive Him within when He is everywhere present in all things in this universe?’ This is the way I feel nowadays. There is neither special meditation, nor is there Vyavahara. All is dwelling upon the Divine.”

In this spirit the provision is made, that when you come out of morning meditation and emerge into the waking state, the dwelling upon the Divine will continue and prevail. It is to be kept up. “Start the day with the Lord. End the day with the Lord. Fill the day with the Lord. This is the way to the Lord.” This is the quintessence of Sadhana, dwelling in the Divine always.

In the eleventh Skanda of the Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana, the parting advice of Bhagavan Sri Krishna to His most beloved friend and companion Uddhava is: “O

...

Uddhava, where am I not? Contemplate Me and bow down to Me and adore Me in all things and beings”. Thus He brings home to us the same truth.

This is the link and the unbroken connection between inner contemplation and outer Vyavahara. Ever we are in God and God alone. Thus may He bestow upon you this vision of His Omnipresence. Thus may He fill your entire life. May not Sadhana just be some part or portion of your life. May this spirit of Sadhana and the divine vision of Sadhana be your total life. May God thus grace you! May Gurudev thus bless you!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

24th September 2016 marks the auspicious occasion of Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out one hundred booklets comprising illuminating talks of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

To propagate Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's gospel of Divine Life, Worshipful Sri Swamiji Maharaj travelled extensively in India and abroad and showed the path of divine life to countless seekers through his spontaneous and highly inspiring lectures. His lectures, in Sadgurudev's words, are the outpourings of his saintly heart, the revelations of intuitive wisdom.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of his hitherto unpublished lectures in booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary. The present booklet '**Be What You Are**' is a compilation of his five inspiring talks at the sacred Samadhi Shrine during the year 1991, 1995 and 1998.

We express our heartfelt gratitude towards Shri Mukund Jere, Mrs. Moo Briddell and the inmates of the Headquarters Ashram for their loving service in transcribing, editing and compiling these talks.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—*The Divine Life Society*

Worshipful homage to the eternal, infinite, all transcending, absolute nondual Reality, the Great Universal Spirit! May its divine grace be upon you all.

Loving adorations to revered Holy Master, Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in whose spiritual presence we are gathered as a fraternity of seeking souls, a fraternity of Sadhaks, a fraternity of those who are dedicated to the spiritual life. May His benedictions be upon you all in this quest after the permanent and the eternal, the imperishable and the immortal.

Prompted by the Indweller within, we refer to the arduous task of going beyond the beyond, of transcending the little self in order to get Self-realisation.

This attainment is so precious that those who have been fired with an earnest longing and yearning for it have given up everything, dedicated themselves to this quest one hundred percent and attained supreme heights of realisation. When such beings have done it, why is it that the vast majority does not do it, even though there is desire for happiness, joy, and desire for cessation of sorrow, pain and suffering, and desire for happiness always? They say this is

1 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 28/11/98

what they want, but they do not move towards that supreme state which can give them what they want. Why they do not go after it?

The various glittering things of the world cater to the insatiable desire of the senses, satisfying sights and sounds, tastes and smells, and thus they become important. The individual consciousness is riveted to these things, because it considers that they are sources of enjoyment. The prime cause is because one's consciousness is riveted to this body; and the senses are part and parcel of this physical body with which you are riveted in a state of identification and oneness. Thus riveted to the body, the senses have an insatiable urge for the enjoyment of objects and therefore, the mind is riveted to the sense objects. This is the great obstacle.

In spite of hearing many Satsangas and many talks and discourses, why does the individual's consciousness have so much attachment and affection to this physical sheath? Why it is? Do not one's spiritual studies, Satsanga, hearing of discourses have any effect in changing this situation? Long, long ago they have said, "Anything that is heard, anything that is studied can become yours only if you keep on contemplating it again and again; if you go on reflecting upon these truths again and again." So you have the answer!

You do not reflect upon the nature of this body to which you are so attached, with which you are identified. You do not deeply, seriously reflect upon what it is and towards what it is headed. Its fate is either to become one with the earth and to

be eaten by worms, or attain a watery grave, if you belong to the maritime profession, or become a handful of ashes that are scattered in the wind.

There is a song as a part of the Granth Sahib, the sacred book of the Sikhs, enshrined in all Gurudwaras. In addition to the teachings of the ten Gurus starting from Guru Nanak, it contains many compositions of different mystics and saints and naturally also many by the great mystic Kabirdas. They have become part of the Gurubani and are included in the Granth Sahib. In that song Kabirdas calls upon man:

“O man, remember God, otherwise you will repent. If you don’t do it, and you have to give up your body and go before Yamadharmaraja and he asks you, ‘O you individual soul, how have you used this precious gift given to you by your Maker?’ What is your account of the days and weeks and months and years of your life? What have you done with them? Render your account! If you have flittered away your time and energy in sense indulgence, what face will you have? How can you look him in the face and answer?

“When Yamadharmaraja asks you, what face will you have? Look at Him and answer. O you sinner, out of avarice and covetousness you gather useless babbles here. What will you take with you when you depart?

“Why are you proud about your wealth, about your youth and strength? One day this so called youth and strength and body will be converted into ashes. This is the fate of the body.”

If you contemplate these things regarding your body and your earth life, then some sense will dawn within you. “What am I doing? What is all this accumulation of things and running after enjoyment? Why all this folly? What can I take with me when I go? Why don’t I keep clearly in view that one day this body will become a handful of ashes?” If you contemplate these things as part of your daily Sadhana, then alone can you transcend this net of delusion in which you find yourself caught. But you think you are free, you are independent to do whatever you want. Your independence is imagined! Your self-assertiveness and arrogance are stupid!

Thus Kabir admonishes in this Bhajan. These admonitions are very, very important and valuable for people in the spiritual life and on the path of Sadhana. “What am I doing? Why don’t I pay attention to Kabir’s call? Why should I carelessly flitter away the God given gift of this life’s span, for I have to account for it one day? And when I am asked to render account, what face will I have if I have misused it? What is the use of greed and accumulating things? What will come with me? Nothing. What is the use of being proud about wealth and youth and strength? For, one day I will be reduced to a handful of ashes.”

Thus a Sadhaka with the power of enquiry and discrimination ever exercises his mind in such a spiritual process and manages to free himself from stupid greed, from deluded attachment and from false identification with this perishable body. In this way he is able to transcend the little

self in order to attain the great Self, the experience of which liberates one forever.

May we all be engaged in the right manner of utilising this God given gift of life. May the supreme Universal Soul help us. May the benedictions of Holy Master help in this sublime task. God bless us all.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage unto the Divine, the all-pervading indwelling Reality, the one eternal Truth behind and beyond innumerable ever-changing and vanishing names and forms that constitute this universe around you. Loving adorations to the spiritual presence of beloved and worshipful Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji. He has drawn you into his presence by his infinite grace and out of his infinite love for all sincere seeking souls, bestowing upon them his glance of grace and quickening their spiritual longings, so that they may start each day in a perfect way and it becomes another stepping stone to the fullest state of illumination, which is the ultimate goal of life.

Radiant Atman, the secret of living each day fully and perfectly is that it prepares you for the day, and it becomes another step upon this evolutionary plane. For this earth life is verily a process of moving forward, a process of rising upwards unto perfection—*Paripurnata or Brahmatva*.

No day should be devoid of this purposeful movement towards the goal supreme. For then, that day would be counted as not having been lived, not having been properly put to the highest and the best use. The secret of living each day perfectly and fully is to isolate it from eternity and regard it as the one and only day we have. A mystic says; “I live each

² Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 24/9/91

day thinking that it is the last day. I regard it in this manner. This is my last chance. This is the day that is going to make my life. It is all that I have”.

Regarding it thus, fill it with the highest and the best within you. Let not a single minute slip away unutilised or in forgetfulness of your real nature and your central purpose of life, or in a state of negativity or inactivity. Make it positive. Make it dynamic. Make it active. Fill it with meaningful content. Let it be gainful and rich. Do it with great enthusiasm. Do it with much wisdom. But do it without forgetting to do so and not allowing it to pass away. Fill it with awareness of the living Reality. Thus, let it be rich in spiritual content, then no moment, no day would be wasted. It should all be an acquisition, a wealth, a treasure you have put by forever. This is wisdom.

They used to say: “Live as though you have already ascended unto heaven, and you are before the throne of the Most High.” Regarding yourself as in the presence of the Most High, acquit yourself creditably in His eyes. Let all your thoughts, words and actions be of the highest quality, worthy of that Presence Divine.

But keep your feet firmly planted upon solid earth, so that you do not spend your time in day dreaming, vain imagination or futile memories. Do not do that. Be practical. Respond to the call of the moment, and fill each moment with rich content.

It is a question of Bhava. Within yourself let the Bhava be, “I am not of this earth, I am not of this world. I belong to none. Nothing belongs to me. I belong to that Supreme Being.

I am in His presence. I should shine with the same light. In the presence of that great light, darkness cannot exist. Therefore I should be a centre of shining light.” Thinking in this way about yourself, shine with inner spiritual light.

But in as much as the relative reality, the relative truth is concerned, it is a fact that you live amidst the creatures of God. Respond to this dimension in the manner it requires you to respond. Keep up the consciousness of the *Vyavaharic Satya* (relative reality) every moment. To each situation respond in the highest and the best manner, so that out of you comes much good to God’s Creation.

Let not the inner spiritual Bhava come in the way of making you a perfect Karma Yogi, perfect instrument of God’s goodness to His creation. Should there not be a beautiful and balanced harmony between the inner and the outer, Yoga and Karma? Move amongst God’s creatures while at the same time you are living in God, in the highest state of spiritual awareness of the presence of God. It is this harmony, it is this balance that constitutes the secret of living each day in a perfect and supremely divine manner.

Thus may you endeavor and be strengthened to make each day a shining gem, a diamond full of the Divine. God bless you all!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage to that one great transcendental Reality, the supreme Universal Spirit, eternal and infinite! May that supreme Universal Spirit that is all pervading, immanent and indwelling be gracious to us all!

Loving adorations to revered and beloved Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj whose wisdom teachings caused that the great experiential truth, what exists in reality, is part of our thinking, feeling and reasoning. The one non-dual divine essence, that alone is. All other things are passing appearances, momentary sense perceptions, with no enduring quality. They are ever changing. While you perceive them for a fleeting moment, you may take them for reality, but they are a fleeting reality. And senses sometimes deceive. In various ways His wisdom teachings made our true situation clear to us; upon what you must focus and what you must dismiss through your higher reasoning as mere passing appearance. He was never tired of reiterating this teaching. Do not necessarily create problems for yourself by focussing upon that which is a temporary, phenomenal experience. Always focus upon that which is permanent. Know this temporary experience for what it is and reject it. Do not be enslaved by it. Wake up! That was His call.

3 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 24/10/98

Within each of us is an aspect that has distinct faculties for performing distinct actions or for a distinct functioning. This inner being is called fourfold: thought function, reasoning function and the function for storing, recollecting and remembering. The fourth, our neutral ego principle—I think, I reason, I remember - is connected with the other three and co-ordinates them. It is connected and related to all three and makes use of the past by extracting through the power of logic and reasoning that which may be useful for the present. It gives the mind the thinking faculty, so that it may become of practical applicability and utility to us in the present. So the neutral ego principle performs a very useful and very important function. If it is properly recognised as such, the ego principle can become our greatest asset and helper. This is what a wise aspirant, an awake, alert seeker should do.

We shall at this moment keep this reasoning faculty aside. We shall try to bestow a few thoughts upon the thinking and feeling part; because the thought function manifests in action in two different ways. One is thought function, the other is feeling function. The lighter side of the feeling function is referred to as sentiment and the deeper side is referred to as emotion. Just as we are setting aside the reasoning function for our purpose, we shall also set aside the deeper emotional function. We shall concern ourselves with the thought function and the sentiment function; because when they act in combination, they have a unique effect, a unique force. When thought and sentiment are combined,

they bring into being a third state, a third principle, which is referred to in Yoga, in Vedanta, as Bhava.

In no other system of psychology has this been so clearly defined and so very correctly understood and applied as in Vedanta, in Bhakti and Karma Yoga. The uniqueness of Bhava is that the combination of sentiment and thought emerge as a distinctive force in us. Its uniqueness lies in the fact that it has the ability to bring about experience.

If directed in a very intelligent and purposeful manner, it has the ability to bring about or transform itself into experience. What your Bhava is that you become. What your Bhava is that is what you experience in the outer world. If you hold the Bhava that the world is real, it becomes a reality. If you hold the Bhava that this is only a fleeting, changeful, temporary appearance, then it becomes a fleeting, changeful, temporary appearance and loses its power to hold you enslaved. It cannot do anything to you. It is what it is. Whatever it is, we are not bothered about that now. Not that it changes, but to you it changes. It becomes either a solid reality or just a temporary appearance. Whatever your Bhava is, that is what you are. Think yourself as a physical being, then you begin to function as a physical being. Think yourself as a worldly being, you begin to function as a worldly being. If you have the Bhava that you are spiritual, everything about you becomes spiritual. If you have the Bhava that you are divine, everything about you will slowly and gradually begin to be divine. This is the truth. As is the Bhava, so is the Anubhava (direct experience). Sentiment and thought combined become a certain outlook and attitude within you and is

known as Bhava. It is your unfailing asset. You must cultivate the right Bhava. The world, you yourself and everything becomes according to the Bhava with which you view it.

Adi Shankaracharya said, “Let me live with the Bhava that everything within me is nothing but an adoration of God, an adoration of the Divine. All that is taking place inside the physical the physiological and the psychological aspect, all that is happening upon these three dimensions of my being, all this is adoration. My whole life is adoration. Every function of any one of my three aspects here is adoration.” No wonder he is known all over the world as an Anubhava Jnani, a man who did not merely mouth words, but he always stated the truth, always gave expression to the Reality. This Bhava is expressed as follows:

*Atma tvam girija matih sahacharah pranah
shareeram griham*

*Puja te vishayopabhograchana nidra samadhisthitih
Sancharah padayoh pradakshinavidhiih stotrani
sarva giro*

*Yad-yat karma karomi tad-tad akhilam shambho
tavaradhanam.*

Thou art Atma, Buddhi is thy consort, the Pranas are
thy attendants,

This body is thy house, action of sensual enjoyments is
thy worship, Deep sleep is Samadhi,
Walking by my feet is the perambulation around thee,
All my words are hymns to thee,

Whatever actions I perform, all are thy worship,

O Shambho!

We may ask a question, “Did this experience of reality bring about the Bhava in him or this Bhava that he carefully cultivated bring about this experience within him?” Is it a paradoxical query? No. For this question can be answered. Did experience bring Bhava or Bhava bring experience? The answer is both. This is a point that you must ponder. The answer is both, it is a mutual interaction. One led to the other. One brought about the other, and in this way, it is a combination of both. You can reflect over this.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

1.

Worshipful homage to the supreme, eternal, beginningless and endless all-pervading and infinite Cosmic Spirit, the Paramatman, the source, support and fulfillment of universes and worlds without end, imponderable, immeasurable, incomprehensible! Knowable only to whom It reveals Itself by Its own inscrutable divine will; It is transcendental, without name and form, without birth and death, beyond time and space; the one, the unique, non-dual without a second, may Its grace be upon each and every one of you sincere seeking souls who have assembled together here in this early morning spiritual fellowship.

With divine grace and the choicest benedictions of God and Guru what can you not achieve? Is there anything that is not possible for you? There is nothing impossible for you! This is the simple truth if you augment these two graces, these two supreme good fortunes, these two tremendous plus factors in your life, divine grace and the grace of the Guru. If you augment and enhance this with your sincere Purushartha, with your sincere self-effort, nothing in this universe can stand between you and the supreme fulfillment of your life in enlightenment and Aparoksha Anubhuti. And all this is as it ought to be, as it is meant to be, for this great attainment which is your birthright. This is why you have been sent here, endowed with the human status. The unique abilities to think, feel, reason, enquire, discriminate, analyse,

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4 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 17/10/95

pursue, investigate, to serve and to love and to discipline yourself, control your senses, conquer your mind and direct the faculties of the ingathered mind towards the Great Reality. All these abilities are unique to you.

They constitute the quintessence of the supreme human status. Whatever your little problems or drawbacks are, whatever your deficiencies, whatever your handicaps, the very fact of your human birth makes you supremely endowed. In this one fact all human beings are equally fortunate. The great ones and the living scriptures say that this status is fashioned in the likeness of the Maker, of the bestower of this status. He not only brought us into being in His likeness, but He entered into us and indwells us in His perfection.

This is our Reality and this is the central fact. Therefore, you have within you the full potential for expressing in and through your life the God-nature. When you have this supreme good fortune, this wonderful ability and capacity for expressing the God-nature, why not avail of it, why not? Be an asset to God's world. Be like a rare fragrant flower in this garden of His which you call the world. Add beauty to it by your being in it. Be always creative, be always positive. Move through life with a radiant light. Be in life enriching it by your being. Think of ways and means of doing it and think also of ways and means of not doing the contrary, how to avoid the contrary. Be always something that may be even as the leaven which makes the bread rise, the factor that enhances the value of a thing. Be all this through your thought and word and action. Be all that contributes to harmony, to beauty, to unity,

to happiness. In short, be what God means you to be here and now. This is the true value of life. It is an opportunity and a possibility of being all this and more if only you make up your mind.

That such is the fact, that you have been sent to be this, comes from a simple statement, "Ye are the salt of the earth." Without salt everything becomes insipid. Because of salt everything becomes tasty. "Ye are the salt of the earth." In this very simple, yet very deeply meaningful utterance, is what you are supposed to be to this world. Be such a factor that without you the world will become insipid. Because you are here, everything will become enjoyable, delicious, relishing. This is your supreme privilege. Avail of it and make everything beautiful, and add light and glory to God's handy-work. This indeed is making use of life, not bypassing life, not allowing life to just pass away. Therefore, they say take time by the forelock; make use of every opportunity to shine with divinity. Take hold of every occasion to express your divine perfection, your God-nature. Every moment comes to you as a golden occasion, offering itself before you, calling you now.

Be what you are. Express your divinity, manifest your divinity. Every moment is an occasion to be a witness to the glory and the perfection of God by your own being. Despite the fact that God is supremely transcendental, incomprehensible, immeasurable, beyond time and space, beyond name and form, nevertheless, there is an inseparable, relationship between you and Him; this relationship is one of the essential identity in nature. You are part of God, and God

is an inseparable part of you. This is the mystical fact, paradoxical fact. Here you are at this moment limited in time and space, bound in name and form, but you are closely related to that transcendental Being. It is beyond the ability of mind and intellect to grasp and comprehend that Being; yet you are closely related. Because within you dwells another essence, another principle, unlimited, unbound, ever free, infinite and eternal, and that principle and essence is you, that is what you are. Be fully aware, be fully awake to this truth, to this fact which is central to your being. God's grace and Guru's benedictions enable you to do it and be it.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage to the absolute and transcendental eternal Spirit Divine, the origin, the support and the fulfillment of all things! May its divine grace be upon you all! Loving adorations to revered and beloved Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in whose spiritual presence we are assembled here at this moment. May his glance of grace and hand of benediction be with you throughout your life as you strive earnestly and sincerely to lead a divine life.

Earnestness and sincerity in one's life through daily conduct and behavior and earnestness and sincerity in one's spiritual Sadhana to attain the supreme goal of human existence, it is this earnestness and sincerity that unfailingly draws down the blessings and benedictions of your master and the divine grace of the Supreme. It is the grace of God and the benedictions of the Holy Master that make one's efforts fruitful and successful in fulfillment.

There seems to be some mystical connection between the earnestness and sincerity of one's outer and inner life and the divine grace and benedictions of the Holy Master. It may not be a cause and effect relationship but rather some mystical relationship. Definitely there does exist a relationship. And it may be that one's sincerity and

5 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 25/9/98

earnestness acts as a catalyst to one's aspirations, one's spiritual life and one's Sadhana and Yoga Abhyasa. Sincerity and earnestness act as a catalyst helping to bring the desired consummation of this process of spiritual life and spiritual Sadhana.

When it is there, everything seems to start; when it is not there, no matter how much one strives, it seems as though one is getting nowhere. That is why Masters always urged their followers to be sincere, to be earnest to the core.

Let us therefore, pray to the Almighty Supreme Being and to Holy Master that this gift of sincerity and earnestness coming from the innermost core of our heart may be given to us. Let us pray for this divine gift. May this be our prayer to the Holy Master, to the Supreme Being, and may this be our prayer also to the Divine Mother whom we adore during these nine days of Navaratra Durga Puja. And may the supreme Almighty Being, may the cosmic Divine Mother and may beloved and worshipful Holy Master grant us this prayer and crown our lives with liberation and divine perfection and make us blessed forever.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

24th September 2016 marks the auspicious occasion of Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out one hundred booklets comprising illuminating talks of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

To propagate Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's gospel of Divine Life, Worshipful Sri Swamiji Maharaj travelled extensively in India and abroad and showed the path of divine life to countless seekers through his spontaneous and highly inspiring lectures. His lectures, in Sadgurudev's words, are the outpourings of his saintly heart, the revelations of intuitive wisdom.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of his hitherto unpublished lectures in booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary. The present booklet '*Ever Be Rooted in the Divine*' is a compilation of his five inspiring talks at the sacred Samadhi Shrine during the year 1991.

We express our heartfelt gratitude towards Shri Mukund Jere, Mrs. Moo Briddell and the inmates of the Headquarters Ashram for their

loving service in transcribing, editing and compiling these talks.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—The Divine Life Society

*(Early morning Talk given at the Samadhi Mandir
on 17th August 1991)*

O Satsangis assembled together here in the spiritual presence of Gurudev, in the sacred Samadhisthan of his holy Ashram on beloved Divine Mother Ganga's bank! With the grace of the Divine, with the blessings of Mother Ganga and by the glance of compassion of Guru Bhagavan, may you have success and fulfillment in your spiritual life.

We are now moving towards the 105th birthday anniversary of Gurudev Sri Swami Sivananda. At this time we recollect a favourite chant which he used to sing very, very forcefully, taking great delight and putting life into the words of the verses. This chant was not only his favourite, but it was also a very great favourite of his numerous disciples, followers, devotees and admirers. They always requested him to sing it. When he was not in the mood, they would press him and persuade him. "Please, please Swamiji, we want to hear you chant the Song of Chidananda!"

"I am consciousness and bliss in all conditions, I am existence, consciousness and bliss; without old age, without worry, without

motion. In all conditions, I am existence, consciousness and bliss.”

The significant words to be noted in these lines are “in all conditions”. Conditions may be this, conditions may be that, and conditions keep changing. But no matter what the conditions are, I am what I am. I am always what I am. The words in the original version are in Hindi:

*Chidanand, Chidanand, Chidananda Hoon
Hara Hala mein Ala masta Satchidananda Hoon.*

Chidanand, Chidanand, Chidananda I am
In all conditions I am carefree existence-
knowledge-bliss!

In every situation, in all conditions, I am consciousness, bliss. Gurudev used to sing “Hara hala mein” (‘what I am’) with great force and with great gusto. So the words filled one with that great gusto. “I am that!” he sang with great enthusiasm. “I get great delight in being what I am. I am filled, almost inebriated in it, taking great delight in it.”

This was his favorite song. People begged him to chant it, because it thrilled them. It was an instant elevator and energiser. It made their hearts vibrate to that great Vedantic truth: “You are not this body, not this mind; you are not this perishable human being. You are existence, consciousness, bliss absolute.” That Vedantic declaration made their hearts vibrate. It inspired them, lifted them up and banished all their negativity; all sorrow, worry and fear vanished,

and they became filled with a new spirit and a spiritual force. There was a sudden awakening, as it were. A sudden awareness was created. The words 'hara hala mein'—'in all conditions' are to be noted.

It contains a powerful message, an Upadesa also.

O man, no matter where you are, no matter what your religion is, always chant the Name of God! Do not forget God. Remember Him and chant His Name. This is your highest good. No matter in what condition you are, no matter in what company, in what clothes, in what mood you are, how you are living, none of this matters. Always chant His Name. Whether you are in ideal conditions, whether you are worshipping God, whether you are enjoying the world, or whether you are suffering with disease, no matter what the condition is, chant His Name. Remember Him, worship Him, adore Him. That is most important. That is the one thing that is meaningful and worthwhile.

*In whatever state, in whichever place, in
whichever form you are....*

*In whatever work, in whichever abode, in
whichever village you are....*

*In whatever company, in whatever condition or
mental state you are....*

*Whether in Yoga, in earthly enjoyment or
sickness,*

*Chant Radharamana, chant Sitarama,
Chant Hari Om Tat Sat, chant
existence-knowledge-bliss,*

Chant I am Brahman!

You have no other business than to be in God, to link up with Him, to dwell in Him, to be centered in Him. That is Life. When it is there, all is well. When it is not there, life is not life. Misfortune is not misfortune and good fortune is not good fortune, as we normally say in this world. Real misfortune is to forget God. Real good fortune is to remember God. Vismriti (forgetfulness) of Hari is true misfortune.

In this way, we are told to approach God with Bhakti; no matter what the outer conditions are. Do what you have come here for. If you are mindful of that, all things will be well, no matter how seemingly up and down and painful they are. Basically, at the core, everything is well. All is well, if you are intent on doing for what God has sent you; to be what you are, as God has created you in His own image, as His own Atma, as a center of divinity.

Therefore, the essential words in the Song of Chidananda are ‘har hala mein’. Always be what you are. This is Abhyasa, this is Sadhana, this is Bhajan.

Be always in God. Be always in divine consciousness. Because what you are, never changes. What changes is not you. The Upadhis and the mind constantly change, the body changes, conditions change—now this, now that, now something else. But you ever remain what you are, eternal, never changing.

Iron may be very clean, but it will rust and deteriorate. But pure gold will never rust and deteriorate. Bury very pure gold under the earth, keep it there for 10 years, and when you take it out, it will shine. Keep it there for 100 years; take it out, it will shine. Keep it there for 1000 years, take it out, and it will shine. Expose iron to dampness, and in a short time it will change, it will begin to rust.

Mind is like iron, and your true identity, your real Self, essential nature, is like pure gold; it never changes. Its worth is always the same. And if the philosopher’s stone touches iron or iron comes into contact with the philosopher’s stone, it also turns into pure gold.

The thing that can transform the mind and also make it purely divine, is your constant contact with God, with the source of your being. That which transforms the mind and makes it divine is Yoga. It is constant inner contact with the Supreme, through thought, intellect, through

emotion, through everything you do, through your very life. Do not lose this contact. Then gradually you will be on the way to transforming the mind from iron into gold.

Mind is Jada (insentient). You are Chinmaya (Conscious). Therefore constantly shine like gold. Do not identify yourself with the mind and body. Always be self-aware.

Don't imagine you are this base metal, this mind with its moods and modes and ever changing states. Don't make that mistake. Don't commit that blunder. Don't live in that error thinking, "I am this mind. I am non-self." Rather shine like gold. Always be in a state of spiritual awareness. That is the central Sadhana, no matter whether you are a Christian, whether you follow Islam or you are a Zoroastrian, a Buddhist, a Jain or a Sikh, or a follower of Judaism. This is the central Sadhana—to be rooted in the Divine. No matter what your faith is, the quintessential practice in the life spiritual is to be God-centered.

It is the one common, unifying process, which makes the mortal immortal, which makes the human divine. Ponder this subtle inner secret of spiritual life. Ponder it well. Reflect well. Look at it from all sides. Try to grasp the truth of this subtle secret of spiritual life and spiritual transformation.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

*(Early morning Talk given at the Samadhi Mandir
on 18th August 1991)*

Salutation to the all-pervading spiritual presence, the great Reality that is the one constant, unchanging Truth amidst temporary false appearances that go to make up this phenomenal process called the universe; they are ever in a state of flux, ever changing, conditioned in time and space, subject to decay and dissolution. The one thing that endures, beginningless, endless, timeless, never failing, is the Reality in whose presence you are gathered here before Gurudev morning after morning. May that great Reality bestow grace upon you. May the glance of compassion of Gurudev grant you aspiration to know that Reality, to strive to experience and be established in that Reality.

All things pass, but what you attain in the realm of the spiritual is forever yours. You are forever one with that great Reality. Your life becomes rich, abundant, full, forever perfect and lacking nothing. There is no return to imperfection, to this state of fluctuating between joy and sorrow, to this state of darkness and bondage. Once and for all you become liberated

from it. May that attainment be yours in this very life!

Spiritual endeavor should be unending. Spiritual endeavor, confirming of our vows, our resolution, our dedication, our determination to stick unto the very last, never to give up until fullest illumination is reached, our determination should again and again be reaffirmed, reconfirmed, expressed with emphasis, time after time, time after time! This is the secret. It should be continuous. And what you wish to attain should be constantly striven after by your entire being. There is no relaxing of alertness and vigilance, of enthusiasm and dynamism.

A swimmer against the river current and its forceful flow cannot afford to float. He has to keep on swimming. He has to keep on working in the direction he wants to go. Otherwise he will go in the opposite direction. The same repetitiveness is the very essence of the spiritual process.

You have all heard that 'little drops of water make the mighty ocean'. It is little drops. Atoms go to make this colossal universe. Subatomic particles, neutrons, electrons and protons which go to make up things around us are so tiny that you cannot see them. Yet they ultimately constitute vast, endless galaxies. They constitute sun, moon and stars, and they constitute this planet earth upon which you are living.

It is the continuous efforts that ultimately bring us Nirvikalpa Samadhi, illumination, Self-realisation, by whatever term you call it. It is

the ultimate cumulative fruit or the result of countless minutes and hours and days and weeks and years of patient, cheerful, enthusiastic effort, which is continuity of Sadhana.

In his expounding of the secret science of meditation and the principles of the science of Raja Yoga, Ashtanga Yoga, and dwelling upon the sixth of the eight limbs, Patanjali Maharshi (who formulated and gave us the Yoga Sutras) specifically mentions the need for continuous effort, with unflagging zeal, without letting go of your interest in it. He mentions the need for this continuity of effort. He uses the word Dharana.

There should be constancy in your Sadhana—a continuous constancy. If you want to attain absolute concentration, then the effort towards concentration should be unbroken. Of course he also goes on to say that it should be kept up for a long period of time. Then you become established in a state of concentration. Continuous and constant practice is his very brief mention of how one ultimately becomes a master of concentration. The Yogi becomes established in the sixth Anga of Ashtanga Yoga.

This continuity of practice does not apply only to mystical Sadhanas, metaphysical processes, that are quite unique to the spiritual seeker and aspirant. It is not confined to this type of specialised inner processes of Vedanta and Yoga. But it applies to everything. The constancy in endeavour, the continuity of practice is the secret of success. Try, try and try again. Even if

you fail a 100 times, do not give up; you will succeed ultimately.

It is even told about a king who is defeated and hotly pursued by the enemy, who takes his forces and flees into the forest and hides. Many times he gathers his forces and goes to battle again. Many times he is defeated. But at the end the King of Scotland loses heart, becomes dejected over not being able to do anything. While he is hiding in a cave in this mood of despair, his attention goes to a spider which was trying to climb up to the roof of the cave and drops down. So it is swaying in the breeze, hanging by a thin strand of web. As the king is looking at it, it starts climbing up, up, up, up and up, and when it almost reaches the ceiling, again it suddenly drops. Somehow or other it slips and drops precariously near to the floor. He is fascinated. "Now, what will this creature do?" Within a second, up it starts again. The king forgets everything. He is totally lost, thinking, "What tenacity this tiny creature has, what determination, what refusal to take defeat!" He is fascinated. He keeps on looking how eight times it drops and again starts going up. The king watches it, almost holding his breath, and the ninth time it starts, it goes up and up and up and it reaches the ceiling; the ninth time with the ninth effort it goes all the way and reaches the ceiling! Suddenly a strange thing happens to the king. A miracle happens. Something hits him. He says, "What! Am I less than this creature? I shall succeed, I

shall ultimately attain. When this little creature has this spirit, am I to give up? And am I not superior to it?" And so immediately a new light shines in his eyes. He casts aside despair, gets up filled with a new spirit, strong and determined. And then history says how once again he gathers his forces, battles the enemy and comes out victorious.

So, this is the formula for a Yogi. This should be the approach of the spiritual seeker. The Sadhaka should have this determination, this calm, firm determination, backed up by strength and resoluteness. And as I said, this tenacity is not confined only to Yoga or metaphysics, or politics or ruling a kingdom, but it applies to all efforts we make in any direction, in any dimension of our being, for total self-unfoldment. And more than all, in the building of our character, in the fashioning of our conduct, this holds good. Again and again we should make effort.

To put it in a poetic way, a story speaks about a little bird whose nest with eggs in it, which had been built amongst the weeds and bushes on the sandy seashore, was washed away by a high tide and vanished into the waters of the sea. When the bird comes back, it cannot find its nest. Everything is covered with water. Then and there arises the determination in the bird, "I shall get my nest and eggs back, even if I have to empty the sea!" Immediately the bird takes a blade of grass in its beak and flies towards the ocean, dips the blade of grass, comes on dry sand on the seashore

and shakes the water it has collected. It goes back again, dips the blade of grass into the waves, comes and shakes it on the shore again. The Upanishads say that this should be the determination of the Sadhaka, the Yogi, the Jijnasu and the Mumukshu to regain the lost kingdom—again and again, this should be the spirit!

If you want to become established in truth, it is of no use becoming merely a sentimental votary of truth, having great love for truth, but you should practice it again and again, even amidst the most difficult circumstances. Practice it all the 24 hours of the day and the night, again and again, and keep on practicing day after day. Become truth yourself. Become the embodiment of truth. Live truth. Become identified with truth, let there be no duality between you and truth. Then you shine like Harischandra, you shine with a light of truth within you, you become radiant as a person established in absolute truthfulness.

Thus we can apply this principle and make it act for us in all things—self-control, Brahmacharya, and Ahimsa, overcoming the impulse to hurt, harm, overcoming the impulse to do wrong. At all levels of the good life, at all levels of striving for idealism in thought, word and deed, in the business area, in your domestic area, in your own personal life, be honest with yourself, be true to yourself! It does not matter what people think. Do not cheat yourself!

Shakespeare lays great emphasis, great importance on this: "And this above all, to thine own self be true; then it follows as day follows night, you cannot be false to anyone." As the wheels follow the footsteps of oxen, you will be honest with all others. If you are honest and truthful with yourself, you will be honest and truthful to the whole world. This has to be affirmed again and again in everything that you think, feel, speak and do. Be truthful, be honest, be pure. Strive for self-control. In everything, whatever you wish to acquire, develop and become, do it to perfection. If we apply this principle, then fulfillment is inevitable, fulfillment is absolutely certain. This is what the great ones who have attained the supreme goal have to tell us. They speak of this little bird. They speak of people like Markandeya. This is what they tell us. God bless you all.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

*(Early morning Talk given at the Samadhi Mandir
on 12th April 1991)*

Radiant Atman, beloved and blessed children of the Divine!

The path towards God is sometimes said to be an inward path, a spiritual journey to Self-realisation. There are so many mystical texts and esoteric works talking about the hidden inner journey of the soul, the finite towards the Infinite. This is certainly true. It is alright to say so. But from another point of view, it would be equally true to say that your spiritual life is both an inner journey as well as very much an outer journey.

It is very usual and customary to speak of the inner life and the outer life, the inner plane and the outer plane of the human being's existence. By inner plane we mean that dimension of our being which is one's own secret subjectivity; what we think, what we feel, what are our hidden motivations when we speak, when we act. When we do something, or appear to do something, what is the motive behind it, deep within us, which others may or may not know, but which only we know.

Sometimes we ourselves also may not know. Perhaps only God knows. Many a time the study of

ourselves is superficial. We do not go deep within and try to find out, why am I acting in such a way? Why am I behaving in such a way? Why did I do such a thing? Why? What was the reason for this? No one probes. Studying oneself in depth is an unusual, unfamiliar matter and therefore, it does not come easy. Even the so-called attempt of self-analysis proves to be only a surface process of the active mind. It is introspection. It is self-analysis, but it does not go deep enough. Therefore we do not know ourselves.

However, the point is that spiritual life and spiritual growth are a matter of what we think and feel. What are the contents of our interior, what do we harbour in our mind? What occupies our mind and its movements, waking and dreaming? More so in the waking state, because dreaming is a self-release. It does not affect others and it does not come within the operation of the Law of Karma. Whereas in the waking state, whatever manifests, the same will be the ultimate fruit or effect, because it does affect others.

Therefore, that which is done in the secret subjectivity of our own being is called the inner. But nevertheless, spiritual life is also a manifestation of your personality on the outer plane. It also concerns how you relate yourself to God's creation – to men, women, children, young, old, near, far, strangers, known people, day after day.

How do you behave towards God's creation around you - animals, insects, birds, bees, plants;

with goodwill or ill-will, tolerant or intolerant; how easily do you swat a fly; how easily do you tread over an ant; do you become annoyed, angry and irritated if someone spoils something which is very dear to you or takes away something which you are about to enjoy? What is the reaction? The reaction of a really spiritual person will be quite different from the reaction of a non-spiritual person.

In the outer plane we live more, longer than in the inner. But we think spiritual life is only that which goes on within us, in our interior, in our thoughts, our remembrances, our prayers and our meditation, in our thoughts of God. But in as much as they have an inseparable connection and a two-way impact, the outer becomes as important as the inner. Therefore, the outer has to be lived as spiritually as the inner. It is not merely an interior journey, it is also a progressive spiritualisation of the outer life. It is as much an outer journey as it is an inner journey.

We have to progress in the outer field also if our inner efforts are not to become contradicted or nullified or held back. The outer and inner being are lived by the same person! The outer and inner doings are performed by the same mind, the same emotive force. Unless both are moving in an identical direction, there comes within the seeker an essential separation. That is why many a time even long labours in the field of so-called Yoga, Sadhana and Abhyasa do not bring forth the corresponding fruit.

So it is necessary to regard the spiritual journey as an outer journey also. Sadhana has to be carried on through our outer life as much as it is being carried on through the interior, in our meditation or in the privacy of our prayer.

Ponder this significant fact. Ponder the uncontroversial truth that your spiritual journey is an outer journey no less than it is an inner journey. Outer and inner journeys are not separate. The outer life is an extension of your inner life. They have to move in the same direction. They have to have the same quality. They both should be conducive to the attainment of the same goal. This is very necessary. Please ponder and reflect over this point sincerely and earnestly, and no doubt many things will be revealed to you about yourself which need to be adjusted and corrected, which need to be set right. God bless you!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

(Early Morning talk on 20th October, 1991)

Worshipful homage unto that great Light of lights beyond all darkness! Salutations and adorations to our lives' light and guide, beloved and worshipful Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji, who brought us the light of spiritual idealism, the knowledge light of our eternal divine identity which is without birth and death, without old age, disease and sorrow, which is beyond any form and time and space, which is of the very nature of supreme wisdom-consciousness. He brought into our life the light of Yoga and Vedanta, the light of spiritual Sadhana as being central to our existence. We have not come here to die and be forgotten. We have come here to attain liberation, to become immortal.

To the spiritual presence before whom we have gathered together, loving salutations and homage! May the grace of the Divine and the choicest blessings of Gurudev be upon us all to enable us to fulfil our divine destiny, to make use of the days, months and years that are ahead of us, to move towards the great goal of God-experience in this very life, "not in some post-mortem after life" as Gurudev used to say. May we make use of our life, our faculties, our

energies; may we make use of our time to this end. Thus, let us justify our birth in the spirit, as beings who are made in the image of the Divine Universal Being, God.

Gurudev always drew our attention to the necessity of the integrated development of our being in the spiritual direction. He said, "I do not like lopsided development. Head, heart and hands should be cultivated." Otherwise, if it is a lopsided development, one aspect of our being may become a problem for other aspects that are striving to take us to the goal. Unless there is total commitment and our entire being takes up the spiritual ideal, part of us may be striving for perfection while the other part may come in the way, for it has not been given the same direction.

If the intellect is filled with Vedanta and the heart filled with Bhakti, but if mind is not disciplined through Yoga, then the fickleness, the wild imaginations of the mind and the inveterate memories may all prove great hurdles in our effort at meditation, contemplation and prayer. If the mind is disciplined and Vedanta fills our intellect, but if the emotions and sentiments have not been chastened, they can play havoc with our Vedanta and Yoga. If we are established in Yogic discipline and have developed our emotions and sentiments, but if our will-power is weak and we have no proper Viveka and Vichara, then notwithstanding our devotion and our meditation, we shall be committing blunders! We will be foolish, and when an occasion arises and the developed intellect

should take charge, we will find that we are lacking in that dimension. We find ourselves committing follies due to lack of Vedantic Vichara, Vedantic Viveka. Such situations will be created even in a sincere Sadhaka, even in a true spiritual seeker and aspirant.

Therefore Gurudev said “all-round development, integrated development”. The totality of your personality should be infused with a spiritual quality. Such an integrated life would imply a spiritualisation upon the physical level, the psychological level as well as the spiritual level. It would not imply only such total spiritualisation, it should also constitute such a process. If it does not constitute such a process, our progress will always be plagued by problems created within ourselves. There will be no need for outer factors to come in our way. We ourselves become our obstacles and difficulties. But then, imparting the spiritual quality, imparting the spirit of Sadhana and the spiritual ideal will not, and naturally cannot take the same form upon all levels of our being.

Upon the level of our physical being with its senses, with its appetites and its urges spirituality, Sadhana, would necessarily mean Discipline, would take the form of control and moderation, of Dama, Samyama. It will not be manifested as meditation or prayer; it will be expressed and manifested as discipline. Because by their very nature undisciplined and unbridled, the senses are turbulent, the sense appetites are

demanding. Therefore, here your spirituality, your Yoga, your Sadhana, would take the form of discipline.

Upon the psychological level, your Sadhana will take the form of Purification, for the scriptures say, "The mind is the seat of Mala or impurities—Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada, Matsarya, Svartha, Ahamkar, Asha, Trishna (passion, anger, greed, delusion, pride, jealousy, selfishness, ego, expectation, desire)". Upon this level Sadhana will manifest, and it will be vigorously applied as a process of purification, of bringing about a new mind. Gurudev says, "Overhauling the vicious Tamasic and Rajasic unspiritual Samskaras". So, we have to set working upon the inner dimension of our psyche in the form of purifying and transforming it, bringing about a new psyche as it were, filled with Sattva, filled with spirituality. Here comes ethical discipline into our lives as an indispensable part of our spiritual striving.

Next, upon our essential spiritual level, the self-same ideal of Sadhana will take the form of an Awakening from the state of self-forgetfulness. It will take the form of 'Jagrat', awakening from the sleep of Avichara and Aviveka, of Avidya, Swaroop-Vismriti. We will work diligently through Svadhyaya, Satsanga, Sravana and Sadvichara. We shall bring about this awakening, banishing the darkness and the deep-sleep of non-awareness. It will take the form of a gradual enfoldment of this awakened consciousness.

Spirituality and spiritual life will become manifest as a progressive enfoldment of awareness until it becomes our permanent state. We constantly live in the awareness of the presence of the Reality and our being in It, God-awareness. "May I be always aware of Thy Divine Presence now and here,"—thus Swami Omkar says in his Peace Prayer. "O Lord, grant us the awareness of Thy presence now and here. This is all that we ask of Thee." That becomes our life. That is the key to divine life; that is the key to higher Yoga and Vedanta—to become established in this awareness. It is the solver of a hundred problems. It is the overcomer of a hundred difficulties and obstacles.

Thus, upon all your three levels, your physical being, your psychological being and in the innermost depths your Sadhana, your Yoga, your spiritual life and idealism will manifest in the form of discipline, purification and inner transformation and an awakening, an unfoldment and an establishment in awakened awareness.

For this ideal we should strive, not confine our spirituality and Sadhana to one or to two of the levels, but to all the levels, from the outermost to the innermost. An integrated spiritual life should constitute a total spirituality of our being, for that is implied by Divine Living. We should live upon all the levels of our being with a new light, a new quality and a new awareness.

God bless you to succeed in this sublime task. God bless you with success in fulfilling your divine destiny.

PEACE PRAYER OF SWAMI OMKAR

*Adorable Presence!
Thou who art within and without,
Above and below and all around;
Thou who art interpenetrating
The very cells of our being -
Thou who art the Eye of our eyes,
The Ear of our ears,
The Heart of our hearts,
The Mind of our minds,
The Breath of our breaths,
The Life of our lives,
And the Soul of our souls.*

*Bless us Dear God
To be aware of Thy Presence
Now and here.
This is all that we ask of Thee;
May all be aware of Thy Presence in
The East and the West,
And the North and the South.
May Peace and Goodwill abide
Among individuals as well as among
Communities and nations.
This is our earnest Prayer.
May Peace be unto All.
Om Shanti! Peace! Shalom!*

Hari Om Tat Sat!

(Early Morning talk on 6th February, 1991)

Immortal Atman! Spiritual seekers aspiring for a higher life, Jijnasus, Mumukshus, devotees of the Lord, Sadhakas engaged in spiritual Sadhana, lovers of righteousness, Satsanghis who are at this moment assembled in the spiritual presence of Sri Gurudev in the sacred Samadhi Hall of His Holy Ashram on the banks of Divine Mother Ganga in Uttarakhand.

Spiritual life is a reversal of the normal process of all the different levels of one's being: the physical level, biological level, the mental and intellectual level, one's moral and ethical level and the spiritual level; it is a reversal of the process. The spiritual level is in darkness in the vast majority of human individuals, and there is a forgetfulness of one's divinity, one's immortal, imperishable spiritual nature. There is total forgetfulness. One is aware only of one's temporary earth personality. The consciousness is bound down to the level of the name-form personality—Dehatma Buddhi, as Vedanta calls it. "I am this body, I am so many kilograms in weight, I am so many centimeters in height, I am so many years in age, I am lean, I am fat, I am tall, I am short, I am fair, I am dark." One knows of

oneself only in terms of the physical body. One always refers to oneself in terms of these conditions, that this is what I am.

It very clearly indicates a total sleep of our true identity. One is dead to oneself. One is totally unaware of oneself upon the spiritual level. The intellect is engaged in a constant process of reasoning and logic with things connected with the mundane material life, the physical life. The mind is outgoing, scattered among innumerable things, always vacillating, caught in the net of the many appearances. The senses are all objectively bound. They are turbulent and ever moving towards sense objects. The body is given to sleep, gluttony, involved in gross physical processes of eating, drinking, sleeping and indulging in sense appetites. All this is the lowest, gross, physical level. The body is made up of matter; we are firmly bound, consciousness is firmly bound.

The journey back towards the Infinite, back towards that Cosmic state of all-knowingness, of peace and bliss, is therefore the reversal of this situation. It is no longer outgoing. It is the ingathering of the mind, restraining of the senses from their turbulent rush towards sense objects and their indulgence. That is restraint, the turning inward of the mind, refusing to go into the many and resolving to rest in the One. So it is a going contrary to the normal inclinations and tendencies, and giving a new direction, making it no longer to descend, but to ascend. It is the ascent of the spirit. The intellect begins to

seriously ponder on super-mundane things. “Whence is this universe? Whence am I? Where am I going? What is this life? What is my source? What am I in reality?” Thus the intellect begins to operate on unfamiliar ground among the abstract, the unseen, the unknown. Nevertheless, it persists, it dares to venture and ponder things beyond the field in which the senses reign. What the eye cannot see, what the ear cannot hear, what the feeling sensation cannot touch, what the nose cannot smell, what the tongue cannot taste, what the speech cannot utter - that becomes now the subject of the quest. That becomes the subject upon which the intellect ponders, reflects, analyses and investigates, knowing full well that it is not an easy process. This very dimension and the things that present themselves for your reflection are unknown and unfamiliar.

But nevertheless, the intellect knows, “This is my real vocation, this is why I have been created; this is why the human individual is endowed with this faculty to not merely prostitute into analysis or investigation of perishable things, but the intellect was given to ponder the imponderable, to try to comprehend the incomprehensible, to go beyond the barrier of logic and reasoning, and to push the consciousness by sheer speculation, by constant investigation, discrimination, research - this is the quest.” One becomes alert and awake upon the spiritual dimension; one is no longer in a state of self-forgetfulness. The light of awareness is lit up.

And upon the moral and ethical level, one is no longer compromising, one lays down principles to abide by, takes up a great, shining, sublime example to follow, an ideal to live up to. One thus brings purposefulness in one's moral life, is no longer drifting, careless or lacking in firmness. All these were conspicuous with their absence when you were not a seeker, not a Sadhaka, not a Mumukshu, not a Jijnasu, when you were not spiritual. But now they come into being, they manifest idealism, an adherence to principles, a laying down of certain disciplines.

Thus upon all the dimensions of your being you take an unfamiliar direction, but you know it is the right direction. That is the total reverse. No doubt, in the beginning it is a struggle, it is difficult, it even seems impossible!

But one must realise that the seemingly impossible is the prime purpose for which you are born. You are made for it. You have come here to prove that there is nothing impossible for the spirit once it has been awakened and been actively applied towards this process of ascent towards the One, towards the transcendental. With this clear recognition one sets about: "Yes, I am now bringing about a total reversal of the process of life. That was Pravritti, now I have stepped into Nivritti."

The bound, ignorant human psyche knows only one reality: the world of names and forms, the apparent universe outside. An awakened spirit says, "No, the unseen is the Real. The

so-called reality is but a passing appearance, a kaleidoscope, a two days' carnival." Our ancients, our spiritual mystics said, "Do din ka mela". With this very clear perception you must take up this task and apply yourself to it diligently. "Yes, I am going contrary to my seeming nature, and yet it is not contrary, for now it is to assert my true nature. I am Immortal Soul; I am the Spirit Divine, the Imperishable." This is the truth, and so it is determined effort to live this truth.

With this clear perception one succeeds in this great ascent of the spirit to its original abode. One should know one's situation and one's present life in the spirit. Knowing this, one should in the highest and the best interest move in the right direction, refusing to be tempted into any other direction.

That is the hallmark of a seeker, an aspirant, a Sadhaka, a Yogi. May you live with awareness and with determination, with purposefulness and achieve the goal in this very life and body. God bless you!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

24th September 2016 marks the auspicious occasion of Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out one hundred booklets comprising illuminating talks of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

To propagate Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's gospel of Divine Life, Worshipful Sri Swamiji Maharaj travelled extensively in India and abroad and showed the path of divine life to countless seekers through his spontaneous and highly inspiring lectures. His lectures, in Sadgurudev's words, are the outpourings of his saintly heart, the revelations of intuitive wisdom.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of his hitherto unpublished lectures in booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary. The present booklet 'Worship of Karthikeya' is a compilation of his four inspiring talks at the sacred Samadhi Shrine during the year 1991.

We express our heartfelt gratitude towards Shri Mukund Jere, Mrs. Moo Briddell, Mrs. Mary

Dean and the inmates of the Headquarters Ashram for their loving service in transcribing, editing and compiling these talks.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—*The Divine Life Society*

Homage unto the supreme all-pervading Divine Presence, the immanent Presence of the eternal Reality! It is the one fact in the midst of innumerable names and forms, which are but the vanishing appearances that go to make up this ever-changing flux that we call the physical universe around us. Worshipful homage to that great Reality that indwells your innermost being as your eternal companion. The great Reality, the Antaryami Tattva, the radiant centre of divine consciousness, is the indweller of all beings. It is that selfsame Being who makes your body the moving temple of that living Reality. Worshipful homage to that Being who has brought us into His Presence at this early morning hour in the sacred Samadhi Hall of Gurudev's holy Ashram.

Loving adorations to Gurudev, who has blessed us with the gift of spiritual fellowship, thus giving the right direction to our thoughts and feelings for the entire day. Each day becomes a further progress towards the ultimate goal of our life. Each moment becomes a process of drawing near to that Reality. Each day becomes an Upanishad. For this gift, we offer our heartfelt

i Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 9/11/91

gratitude to the spiritual Presence of worshipful Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji.

We adore the great Reality as a benign spiritual force. It is the power of God's grace that leads the sincere seeking soul to victory over all that stands in the way of attaining its divine destiny—Self-realisation, God-experience and Cosmic Consciousness. The power of grace helps to overcome all the unspiritual forces that stand in our way of attaining that great goal. Know that special manifestation of the divine power as Shanmukha, Subrahmanya, Karthikeya, Saravanabhava, Muruga, Shadanana (the six-faced God). To that Being we offer worship and salutations.

Radiant Atman! You are here upon this earth plane not to make a mess of your life, not to aimlessly wander, stumble, fall and bemoan your lot or blame the heavens or providence. You are here to be what in the Kathopanishad episode Yamadharmaraja refers to as: *Kashchid-dhira pratyagatmanam aikshat avrattachakshuh amritatvamichhan* He who resolutely curbs his senses from going outside towards ephemeral names and forms, perishable things of this phenomenal world and resolutely turns them within, is referred to as Dhîra. You are here to be a Dhîra. You are here to be a being of resolution, determined to curb the senses, to turn the mind

within. There is no greater glory to human life than to be a seeker after that which is imperishable and everlasting, that which is all-full and perfect. There is no greater glory to human life than to utilise life for this supreme purpose, which is God's plan for each man. To that end, apply yourself with one-pointed dedication.

Thus Karthikeya Bhagavan, Subrahmanya or Shanmukha, silently admonishes us. In His hand He holds a spear. In South India, He is known as Velmuruga, the son of Shiva, who wields a spear. Unlike the trident, which is three-pronged, the spear has a single point, broadest at its base and gradually narrowing and tapering off into a sharp point. The spear represents a power that is able to cleave asunder everything by its thrust. Nothing can stand in its way. Such is the silent message of the weapon that the commander of the celestial forces wields in His hand. It shows the absolute one-pointedness in the quest after the great ideal, the total dedication and a determined thrust in one direction, the direction of Brahman. "I do not opt for anything less than the Supreme, the all-full Paramatman, the Cosmic Being." Making life such a determined thrust towards that Supreme Being, cleaving asunder all that stands in the way, renting asunder the veil of Avidya, of Ajnana, is the great task of the Jivatma.

Forgetfulness of that great Reality is the great disease of the Jivatma.

That indeed is the silent, symbolic admonition of the spear that Karthikeya holds in His hand: “Let your interior, your consciousness, be ever like the weapon that I wield. Be one-pointed. Be of single-minded dedication to the great ideal of Self-realisation. Falter not! Swerve not! Resolutely move forward in that one direction. Let there be unity of purpose. Let all the factors that go to make up your human personality be gathered together and be directed in this single direction; your heart, mind, intellect, your soul, your five senses—seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and touching—let them not distract you. Let them all be gathered and taken in this one direction.”

An inspiring Bhajan runs thus: “All these faculties have been given to you to seek the Eternal, to be directed towards the divine Atma. The sum totality of your personality is meant to be dedicated towards this single grand and glorious ideal. Let it be applied towards this.”

We spoke yesterday of the need not to fall, not to be overcome, but rather to be filled with the force of divine inspiration. Stand up and resolutely apply yourself to this great ideal. We spoke about standing up—Uttishthata. And the Upanishads follow this admonition ‘Uttishthata’

with ‘Jagrata’. If you are standing and yet become drowsy and fall asleep, you will fall again. You cannot afford to fall asleep when you are standing. Be ever alert and vigilant. One French writer has said: “Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty”. It is no less true upon the spiritual path as on the political field of the struggle for liberty by man.

The symbol for waking up all over the world is the crowing of the cock. Metropolitan, urban areas are not the real world; they are only a tiny fraction of the whole world. By far the largest part of planet earth is rural. But for the labour of rural people, urbanites would not get bread for their breakfast. Therefore, the universal symbol of awakening is the cock crowing in the predawn hour when the world is still slumbering. It wakes up the farmer, who dwells not in concrete jungles, but upon green earth. The crowing of the cock heralds the dawn and proclaims the new day and awakens sleeping man from his slumber.

Jagrata! Karthikeya or Shanmukha holds the banner of the cock. They say in Tamil Nadu ‘Velmuruga’. He is the one who has in his hand the spear and he has the banner of the crowing cock. Just as Arjuna is described as Kapi Dhvaja, even so Karthikeya ever proclaims to seeking souls: “Be ever awake, let there be Viveka and Vichara of inner spiritual consciousness!” Never fall asleep to your divine destiny, to the

attainment of this great goal. Never forget the deep significance of the supreme gift of God, for which this human life is given to you. Be ever wakeful to this great truth. Be ever wakeful to the depth of the sublime higher meaning, its central purpose and its great goal. Be ever awake. The fluttering banner is proclaiming wakefulness: “Uttishthata! Jagrata!” It is the great sign of Shanmukha, Saravanabhava, Karthikeya.

Let us respond to the silent indicators of this great incarnation, this manifestation of divine Grace, who is there to help you attain victory. Thus is this worship offered to the great Lord in this early morning spiritual fellowship.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Radiant Immortal Atman! Blessed Divinities in the form of Sadhakas and spiritual seekers gathered here in the spiritual presence of beloved and worshipful Holy Master, Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji! May the divine grace of the all-pervading Reality be upon you all! May He grant you success in your meditation. May the Gurukripa and the special benedictions of Holy Master be upon you all, and by His blessings may you attain steady and unhampered progress in your spiritual life and practices, day by day, until you attain the fruit of your meditations, namely Self-realisation and liberation!

Meditation is the means by which the individual soul seeks to attain experience of the supreme Universal Soul. It is the means by which one transcends the limitations of a confined individual human consciousness and enters into limitless experience of universal consciousness, where one is in union with the Universal Soul—that Reality beyond the ever changing appearances. That Reality is said to be

2 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 10/11/91

experienced in deep meditation—‘*Yogibhir-dhyanagamyam*’.

That which is known or cognised by the Yogis in states of deep meditation is to be meditated upon. It is That which is to be heard about, reflected and meditated upon. That is the instruction of your Upanishads. The great sage Yajnavalkya, while imparting Jnana Diksha and initiating the Adhikari (best qualifying person) Maitreyi, said: “This is what you must do. You must engage your mind in these three processes. Mind should take interest in listening to the exposition of the Ultimate Reality. If it is overly interested in perishable things, it cannot evince a keen eagerness to listen and know about that great Reality. This is the first step, the entry point into meditation later on.

“It is only when you cultivate in your Svabhava (own nature) a keen longing, an intense eagerness to hear about Brahman, about the great eternal Being, that the mind will be goaded to go to such places where Truth is expounded. It will be urged to go to Satsangas, go to places where one can find someone prepared to speak about the Atman, to explain the Atman. And it is this longing for Brahmavichar that is the first step in preparing yourself for meditation. It is an eagerness for spiritual subjects, spiritual truths, Tattva Vichara, that prepares the mind to dwell

upon eternal Realities, not upon petty, perishable things of these phenomenal appearances.

“Therefore, your feet must always take you to places where there is such exposition about the great Reality. Your body must be prepared to sit quietly, motionless and listen. Your ears must be longing to drink this nectarine truth, the admonitions about the Supreme Being. The eyes should be fixed upon the one who is expounding these things with keen attention. All the five senses should be observing silence.”

So observing silence, not talking, paying attention visually, listening intently with the ear, curbing the urge to get up and move here and there (Rajo Guna), not desiring any other thing except to listen, keeping the hands folded or resting upon your thighs or knees, one should be the very picture of absolute stillness, absolute attention, absolute one-pointedness, dwelling upon the Reality.

Thus the five senses, including the sixth, the mind, are all unified and engaged in one single process to the exclusion of all contrary processes and activities. This is silently conveyed to you by Lord Shanmukha. This should be your inner state when you meditate. All the six senses, the five senses and the mind, the sixth, should be unified and dwell upon one Reality.

This is conveyed silently and symbolically by Lord Shanmukha. He has six faces and He is leading the celestial hosts in the direction of overcoming all that opposes them in attaining victory, fulfilling their great task. Thus indeed the essence of the process of meditation is the unification of the entire being of the meditator, and thus unified, to move in one single direction, focusing upon the object of meditation, to the exclusion of everything else. That is that inner state, the serene state of Dhyana, or meditation. That is the one thing desirable. It is the aim and end of all Yogas, all spiritual practices and processes, this inner state of absolute unified consciousness.

May God grace you with that inner state. May the blessings of the Guru lead you gradually to that inner state and may it grant you illumination. Thus is the sharing of this morning's spiritual fellowship. This is the offering at the feet of the Guru and God in the form of this sharing. Blessings of the Guru and the divine grace of God take you to that ultimate state of enlightenment, full awakening and realisation and liberation! God bless you!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Radiant Immortal Atman! We are drawn together in early spiritual fellowship by the gracious will of the Supreme Being in this sacred Samadhi Hall in the holy spiritual presence of beloved and worshipful Master Gurudev Swami Sivananadaji. Yesterday we had the good fortune of dwelling upon the silent message of Shanmukha, that all-conquering manifestation of divine power; victorious over all undivine factors, victorious over all forces of darkness and negativity and conquering all factors that stand in the way of supreme blessedness, divine experience, realisation and liberation.

While considering this supreme manifestation of the all-conquering Divinity, the darkness-banishing-and-light-bringing Divinity, we received the silent message of His unique six-faced form as Shanmukha. We considered and dwelt upon the necessity of directing ourselves in toto—the totality of our being in one unified direction and of fulfilling the task for which we have come to this earth plane. The manifestation of Lord Karthikeya was to lead the celestial forces

3 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 11/11/91

in battle against the undivine powers and grant them victory. Therefore, He is also Deva Senapati, the Commander-in-Chief of the celestial forces.

It is necessary that the totality of your being, the five senses and the superior, the sixth, are all unified in this one task of moving towards the great goal of attaining the experience for which all Sadhana is meant. It is the goal, the end and the fruit of Sadhana. The five senses perform their activity only in the presence of the sixth sense, the mind. Otherwise they cannot function. When the mind is indrawn in the deep sleep state, the five senses are inoperative. When the mind is elsewhere, the senses do not effectively perform their duty. People say: "I was absent-minded, I did not hear what you said."—"My attention was elsewhere and I could not see."—"I did not notice." That means they were not here even though they were physically present, but the mind was elsewhere.

We have to be totally here now, if meditation is to be successful. In life also, in day-to-day living, as you move amongst people performing your duties, fulfilling your obligations, executing various tasks and functions, at the same time the overall orientation of your personality should be towards the ideal and the goal. Never for a moment should it be out of your mind. Never for a moment should the mind be out of it and put into

any other thing. The mind should be fully centred in God. It should be God-centred.

“Perform actions O Arjuna, remaining in a state of Yoga within. Be in a state of Yoga within and perform action.” This is the great teaching of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, of the Upanishads, of Vedanta, expounded again and again in and through the Srimad Bhagavad Gita. This is the teaching: “Remember Me at all times and carry on this struggle towards the ideal in life—*Mamanusmara yudhya cha.*”

Inwardly, ever be in a state of contact with the Divine and carry on this struggle of life. That is the great admonition. Always we have to abide in the Divine; no matter where we are, what we are doing, in what surroundings we move about, we must always be centred in the Divine.

That is the secret of successful meditation. The outer life should support your periodical meditation, because your meditation is only periodical - maybe in the morning, maybe in the evening, maybe once more. But what about the rest of your time? You are involved in the outer world of many things. The mind is not indrawn, the mind is not God-centred. The mind is attending to many affairs that need your attention. What is happening to you then? A portion of you should be ever rooted in God: Ishwara-Pranidhana. You have to offer yourself to

the Divine, live your life and do your meditation. Dwell in God and do your duty. That is the art and science of supporting your inner meditation by your outer life and making your outer life a suitable base, supporting your inner meditation.

This total co-ordination is absolutely essential; all the five senses should move in the same direction in which you are making your mind move. The senses should follow the mind and move in the direction of Yoga, in the direction of God-realisation. It should not be the other way. If the mind moves in whatever direction the senses pull it, then it is the opposite of meditation. If you let this undesirable state prevail, then your meditation will be a futile struggle. Because the greater part of your life will be contradicting this little part of your time which you devote to meditation. You are creating within yourself a conflicting two-way pull: one in the direction towards your goal of meditation, and the second in several directions towards other desires and fulfillments in the outer field of activity. So you will stand in life as a great contradiction. You will stand in life as one in opposition to yourself.

The Gita does not permit it. You have to be your greatest helper. Your outer life has to be your greatest support of the inner meditation towards God. If your body is steady in meditation but the mind is restless, if you sit silent but the mind is

busy, engaged in inner conversation with the past or with the future, then you are here and yet you are not here. Just as a fickle-minded schoolboy is sitting in the classroom and the lesson is going on, but the boy is not listening to the teaching. And what happens in sum totality? He fails to obtain any benefit by his time spent in the classroom. Because he was he was elsewhere, even though he was sitting in his seat.

Meditation requires you to be here now. Mediation requires that you are present totally, not partially. Meditation requires the ingathering of your entire being and concentrating that entire potential towards one central ideal and goal. It requires dedication. Meditation means dedication. Meditation means a constantly God-centred or Truth-centred life, or a divinely oriented life.

Even so, pondering these various truths and requirements of the meditative process, we conclude that there is need for wakefulness. There is need for total dedicated one-pointedness and there is need for the awareness at all times that: "I am here not for anything else, but for attaining the goal supreme." When there is such a state existing inwardly, then you are called a Yogi. You are called a Sadhaka, because inwardly you are always united with your goal, with the Reality. That is Yoga. In that state you must be inwardly,

and at the same time you must function and fulfill your duties and obligations outwardly. That is the Gita ideal.

The Upanishads tell you: "O Sadhaka, have you not noticed how skillfully the danseuse executes her dance? Her concentration is always on balancing the pots she has placed upon her head, so that they may not fall, while a portion of the mind is attending to all the necessities of a perfectly executed dance sequence—Tala, Gana, Laya, Nritya—all these are not allowed to affect the perfect balancing of the pots on the head. Even as the dancer very skillfully executes the dance and maintains the balance, even so, O Yogi, live your life and engage in activity. O Sadhaka! O seeker! O Bhakta! Thus you should live your life with skill. The activity should be done with such skill that it does not in any way affect the inner balance. Such skillful action that does not affect the direction of your life towards God-realisation is also part of Yoga."

And the Gita says: '*Yogah karmasu kaushalam*'—*Yoga is skill in action*. Yoga is not unconnected with daily life and activity; they have to be made to proceed in a unified direction, hand in hand. A connection between the outer activity and your Yoga practice should not be absent. This should be remembered.

morning talk, offered at the feet of the Guru and God. May they be pleased with this sharing and serving and deign to accept it and bless us all. Godbless you!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Radiant Immortal Atman! May the grace of the Supreme Being manifest as the all-conquering leader of the celestial forces! May the choicest blessings and benedictions of the Supreme Being manifest in the form of the spear-wielding Karthikeya, Subramanya, who is Deva Senapati. Karthikeya is to be invoked within the heart of all seekers who are struggling to overcome negative pulls and undesirable trends, the pulls of the gross Tamasic aspect of one's nature. Human nature is triune, composed of a gross brutal nature, of a vacillating imperfect human nature and of dormant divinity. Thus, these three factors that make up this mysterious phenomenon called the human individual have to be recognised and dealt with suitably.

The Tamasic or lesser nature whose pull is downward, away from Light, away from Divinity, is not to be encouraged, is not to be given free play, but is to be kept under one's wise discriminating control. It is called Samyama, or Dama. It is one of the Sadhana Chatushtaya (four necessary preliminary qualifications of the seeker—discrimination, dispassion, sixfold virtues and burning desire for liberation). If the

4 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 12/11/91

higher mystical knowledge of Vedanta is to be imparted to him, the seeker must first be qualified. He should be fit to hear and receive such knowledge. Otherwise he will not be able to grasp the right implication of what is taught and will not be benefited by it.

If the correct meaning of what is taught is to be grasped, one requires a subtle Sattvic understanding and intellect. For that preliminary disciplines have to be developed and within these preliminary disciplines four factors have been prescribed. It is called Sadhana Chatushtaya. The four-fold disciplines are very important, and they are required to be able to receive higher knowledge, to grasp it and understand it correctly. Dama is one of the six factors (Shad Sampada) that go to make up the third of the four-fold disciplines.

The right way to deal with the lower Tamasic nature is not by pampering it, encouraging it nor by allowing it free play, but by wisely keeping it in its place. It has a place for itself. Even inertia has a place; weight has its place. Weight will hold one back from rising up, but the same weight is necessary if something needs to be held in place. We have paperweights to hold papers from flying away if the fan is on or the window is open and a gust of breeze blows in. So in its right place, in its right function, it has a role to play and a place in

our life. But if it is given the wrong function, it starts interfering, and it becomes an obstacle for the onward evolution and ascent of the Spirit. Therefore the Gunas have to be dealt with in a manner that is wise, that is suitable. They should not be given free play, but be held in check. A Sadhaka or seeking soul should not come under their domination.

Victory, not slavery, is the keynote of effective spiritual life. Therefore, at all stages, at all times, you have to be in control. If the driver behind the steering wheel is fully in control, the vehicle proceeds in the right direction and reaches its destination without any mishap. If the driver seated behind the steering wheel is inebriated, the car goes out of control. If the brakes fail or the steering wheel does not function properly, the driver is no longer in control, and there is the possibility of a mishap.

We should not be controlled by something, but we should be in control of it. When we have to use something, we should know how to use it. We should not be used by it or be at its will. It should not be allowed to take us over. We should always be in charge. That should be the keynote of the spiritual seeker, of the Yogi.

Thus the right way of relating yourself to the lesser self is to be the master and to direct it as you want it to function. And in relating yourself to

the human part, you should always say: "Better and better, day by day. The human aspect is imperfect. Now it is up to me to cut it, polish it and make it shine, to make it perfect." Where there are drawbacks, lacks and insufficiencies, you must eliminate them. Trim and prune where there are excesses of any kind. This should be a daily process, a daily movement towards perfection. The Apurna should be transformed into Paripurna. There should be constant evolution, progress, unfolding and shedding all that stands in the way of the process to perfection.

We have to relate ourselves as a sculptor relates himself to his material. Whether it is a lump of wood or a piece of stone, he goes on working on it and gradually eliminates all that stands in the way of revealing the beauty hidden in it. He works upon it as a jeweler works upon a gem or a diamond, cutting, polishing and thus giving it the right angle and shine.

In this way we have to work constantly and not be absent any moment of our life. In all ways, physically, mentally, intellectually and morally, we should go on working. That is our supreme task in life. Never opt for number two. But always say: "I should be number one." Never be satisfied with merely acquiring one or two little special abilities. See what is lacking and try to fill the lack. This is Sadhana. This is the right way to

relate yourself to yourself. ‘*Uddharet Atmanatmanam* (Let a man raise himself by his own self.) This is the right way to deal with the human level, always towards excellence, always towards fullness and completeness.

Our ancient Upanishadic seers have already said that in relating yourself to the Divine, it should be to make it awake, to make it arise, to make it dynamically manifest. ‘*Uttishthata, jagrata, prapya varan nibodhata!*’ (Arise, awake, having reached the wise, be enlightened!)

They have given this call. “Arise, awake!” Be fully aware of your divinity. You should not be slumbering. You should not be in a state of self-forgetfulness. And you should not be inactive. If you do not use a faculty, it gradually becomes inactive, and eventually it does not function anymore. It is only by exercise that muscles are developed, made strong and kept in a good condition. Similarly, failure to exercise Divinity gradually makes it lose its tone. And then it atrophies. Therefore, divinity should also be exercised. It should manifest dynamically in our dealings with life around us. That is the way of developing it. That is the way of gradually expanding it.

This is the way in which you should relate yourself to this innermost reality, to the divinity that is your true identity which has been

forgotten, ignored, neglected. Start actively engaging yourself in arousing it, making it dynamic, making it manifest. That is Sadhana. It should not be ignored. Ignoring Divinity is the greatest folly of the human being. To ignore one's reality is a great folly. It would be losing a priceless opportunity through foolishness. Therefore be wise, be wise!

Thus fulfill your destiny, which is victory! Victory and not defeat is the destiny of man. Therefore we always call upon the Divine within us. We say: *Sri Ram, Jai Ram, Sri Ram Jai Ram!* Gurudev used to greet people "Jai Oji! Victory unto you!" And there is a great Sanskrit hymn, '*Jitam Te*' in which every verse begins with the words "Jitam Te! - O Lord, victory unto Thee! Victory unto Thee!"

Today is the day when the devotees of Karthikeya celebrate this victory. In South Indian temples there is a grand procession where the Deity, gorgeously adorned, is drawn in a chariot. They call it Rathotsavam. The chariot comes out of the temple, perambulates the city, town or village and returns to the front of the temple. The culminating feature depicts the victory. One of the worshippers takes the spear in his hands, walks across to where a representation of the demoniacal force stands, Surapadma Asura. He then takes the spear and makes the tip touch the

throat of the demon from the front. At that time someone from the back removes the head of the demon. Then suddenly another head appears. It is repeated several times because this demon is not an ordinary demon. If you cut one head, another head comes. If you cut the second head, a third head comes. If you cut the third head, a fourth head comes. Like that, he assumes various aspects, refuses to accept defeat, refuses to die. So we have to go on cutting heads. Just as they say, “a cat has nine lives.”

This particular undivine force is the main barrier between you and God or Self-realisation. It is this ego-principle that assumes various guises. It is not merely ‘I’ or arrogance. You might have eliminated the gross manifestations of the ego, such as pride, arrogance, haughtiness, disobedience, impertinence etc. But then it takes other subtle forms. You think it has gone, but it says: “No, I have not gone.” So it requires introspection and a sharp, analytical intellect, if you want to find out in what form the ego is lurking within you. As long as the ego in one form or another—very gross or less gross, or even very subtle—as long as it is lurking in you, you cannot claim victory. Even if one strand of a thread is crooked and moving sideways, the thread cannot pass through the eye of a needle. No matter how pointed you think you have made the thread, by

putting it in the mouth and sucking it and twirling it with your fingers, yet if one strand is sticking out, then try as much as you can, when it comes near the eye of the needle, the thread will become a camel's back. It will not pass through. This is an analogy I am taking from the teaching of Sri Ramakrishna.

Therefore ego, even in a subtle form, should be found out and eliminated, so that you are filled with Aham Brahmasmi or divine ego or Atma-Nivedana. "Not I, oh Lord, but Thee, Thee alone, not I: *na'ham na'ham twam eva sarvam, tvam eva sarvam*—not me, not me. You are the all, You are the all!" And so Atma-Nivedana if proceeded with Bhakti, or Aham Brahmasmi and Brahmakara Vritti if proceeded with Vedanta, that state is to be attained analytically. With discrimination you have to eliminate the last vestiges, the last traces of the ego-principle. Then there is victory. Once all the heads are exhausted, the spear passes right through and then there is a headless demon, and victory is celebrated!

Today is Skanda Shashthi, the culminating sixth day of the lunar fortnight. And it is the day of victory, of rejoicing, hailing the Lord, Jai Ho! Just as on the tenth day after the nine nights of worship of the Divine Mother, the Cosmic Force, the tenth day is a day of victory, Vijaya Dasami.

May you all rejoice, for you are essentially divine, and you are made for victory. Defeat is alien, foreign to you. Victory is your element. Victory is your natural birthright. Know this, affirm this and say: "We shall overcome. One day we know that we shall overcome." Gear yourself up for it. Orient yourself in a positive pattern and crown yourself with victory and attain life's supreme goal. Become a perfected being, become a Jivanmukta. Become an Apta-Kama (one whose desires have all been fulfilled) and a Krita-kritya (one who has finished all actions). This is your glorious divine destiny. Towards that you orient all your thoughts and activities and your life and become a perfected divine being. Attain victory and be blessed! God bless you to succeed in this task!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

24th September 2016 marks the auspicious occasion of Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out one hundred booklets comprising illuminating talks of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

To propagate Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's gospel of Divine Life, Worshipful Sri Swamiji Maharaj travelled extensively in India and abroad and showed the path of divine life to countless seekers through his spontaneous and highly inspiring lectures. His lectures, in Sadgurudev's words, are the outpourings of his saintly heart, the revelations of intuitive wisdom.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of his hitherto unpublished lectures in booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary. The present booklet '**Necessity of Contemplating**' is a compilation of his four inspiring talks given at the sacred Samadhi Shrine during the year 1991 and 1998 and at the U.K. Retreat in 1989.

We express our heartfelt gratitude towards Shri Mukund Jere, Mrs. Moo Briddell and the inmates of the

Headquarters Ashram for their loving service in transcribing, editing and compiling these talks.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—The Divine Life Society

Worshipful homage unto Thee! May Thy divine grace be upon all these seekers and aspirants who are assembled in the presence of beloved and worshipful Master to start their day in a holy and spiritual way! Beloved and adorable Gurudev! May your glance of grace be upon these Sadhaks and Yogis who have drawn near to you in this early hour for their daily spiritual nourishment, their daily bread, their code of silence, of meditation, of collective prayer, of their contemplation upon the great Reality seated in the hearts of all. May your Gurukripa ever be upon them!

Blessed Immortal Atman! God bless you all! This morning as I started to come upstairs, a venerable eighty-five year old devotee of God, who is constantly repeating the Divine Name and thinking about God—this venerable eighty-five year old devotee got hold of my hand and said: “A great soul once asked a question. He queried a group of Sadhaks and seekers, who had gathered around him for Satsanga: ‘In this world, in this phenomenal universe, is there any happiness? Is there any happiness to be expected? Is

¹ Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 14/08/1991

there any happiness to be found?’ And he himself supplied the reply: ‘No, definitely no. There is no happiness here. Then where is happiness? Happiness is in constantly dwelling in God, in thinking about God, in uttering His Divine Name, contemplating His universal presence. In this alone, when heart and mind are God-directed, God-centred, there is happiness. When they are outgoing, there is no happiness. For the outside world has no happiness to offer. It is a desert. It is a wilderness with thorny plants and poisonous fruit.’ And then the holy man continued and asked the audience: ‘If so, then what is the best thing for you to do?’ And he supplied the answer, saying: ‘The best thing for man to do is to constantly and continuously be thinking of God, ever be contemplating God, ever be engaged in His worship, in His adoration, in devotion, in prayer. This is verily the one thing needed. There is happiness only in the renunciation of craving for happiness in objects, in wealth, affluence, rolling in luxury.’”

And I said: “Yes, perhaps that is why Tulsidas asked Rama: ‘O Lord grant out of Thy compassion, out of Thy grace, grant that now, leaving aside all things, I may engage myself in Your adoration day and night, day and night.’”

‘Night and day, night and day, I look for Thee night and day.’

Thus runs a line of a prayer song of Swami Yogananda, author of ‘Autobiography of a Yogi’. They have compiled an English version of his Bengali songs, with the title ‘Cosmic Chants’, which they use during their Satsang, their prayer meetings, even their meditation.

‘Night and day, night and day, I look for Thee night and day.’

Coming, going, sitting, standing, laughing, playing, eating, drinking, resting, working, within and without, at all times, may I be looking for You, may I be seeking You only, in all things, wherever I am, whatever I am doing. May I be constantly seeking You only, night and day, day and night. This is the key to peace and joy, and the world has no happiness to offer.

This is what I told that old venerable devotee of eighty-five years: “What you have said just now is more precious than gold or diamonds. It is indeed the very essence of the life spiritual. I will go up, and when I speak to the people, I will tell them what you have told me.” I came, and what that venerable devotee has told me, I have told you, namely: “In this world, is there any happiness? No. Not an iota. There is no happiness in this world. Then where is happiness? In constant contemplation of God—therein alone lies happiness.

Not in wealth, in affluence, in luxury, but in renunciation.”

This was the treasure I got, and I have shared this treasure with you this morning by the grace of Gurudev. God bless you all.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Radiant Immortal Atman, beloved blessed children of the Divine, Sadhakas and Yogis, Mumukshus, Jijnasus, lovers of righteousness, Dharmapremis and Satsangis! With the passing of each dawn and sunset the opportunities that we have for evolution, the occasion that we have for self-improvement steadily diminish. It is a peculiardelusion of the mind to continue to think: "I have time. I have time, I shall do it later, I have time", which is quite contrary to the actual fact. We have less and less time. The time that we in our delusion think we have has already diminished. We have less time. But yet a mysterious cosmic delusion, the power of Maya, makes us think that we have time and therefore, we shall do it later. We do not contemplate the fact that as I think that I have time, time has already passed. Time is passing.

There should be an unceasing movement towards the Divine. For the wise seeker life should mean a constant movement towards the Divine.

² Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 26/9/91

*Dinamapi rajani sayam pratah shishira vasantau
punarayatah
kalah kridati gachchatyayuh tadapi na
munchatyasha vayuh*
*Day and night, dusk and dawn, winter and spring
come and go;
Time sports and life ebbs away; yet one does not
give up desires.*

The Yogi is aware that time is like a furious flood rushing underneath the arch of a bridge. Thus, a discriminating Sadhaka is ever alert, is ever awake and is endeavoring that each and every moment is gainfully applied, so that not a moment merely passes by, but that it enriches, it enhances our spirituality, and it takes us nearer to the goal. That is the life really lived. That is the time fully utilised. That is the way of wisdom.

“Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today.” “Make hay while the sun shines” and “Strike while the iron is hot”. You all know these time-honoured adages. We never ponder the implications. Because even if there is time, that which is possible at one given moment, may not be possible when that time has passed. The opportunity will have slipped and gone. Sadhana, therefore, is an unceasing movement towards that supreme goal. Spiritual life is an unceasing movement towards fulfillment of your divine destiny.

Do you ever stop to think that since the moment that you were born, have you ever stopped breathing? Have you given rest to the breathing process at any moment? One has never stopped breathing. Therefore one lives. The essence of life, physically and biologically speaking, is breath.

The essence of the spiritual life is the ceaseless Godward movement. That is genuine spiritual life. One who knows the mysterious working of the mind is always vigilant. One should not allow the mind to put the cloak of delusion over us.

The mind is ceaselessly occupied in the thought process. Therefore see to it that its ceaseless movements are gainful, are constructive, that they add to this onward movement towards the Divine and do not divert you away from it. As breath in the body, even so is the ceaseless movement of thought within the mind. Therefore, wisely guide the mind, educate the mind, and train it in such a way that its thought processes are of the right quality and are taking you in the right direction.

The great enlightened Buddha laid this down as one of the fundamental Sadhanas that the wise seeker should engage in. He said: "right thinking, right reasoning, right discrimination". Sadchintana, Sadvichara are known to be the nature of the true seeker,

the wise spiritual aspirant. You have no time to lose. You have been given time to live. Live the Divine Life! Lead the spiritual life so that there is no room for any regret. Thus may your life be one spiritual process only and nothing else but that.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Beloved and blessed children of Light! Great is our joy, and great is our privilege that we are able to meet the devotees in a sacred temple of the Lord!

Difficult it is to get a human birth! Even more difficult it is to get a glimpse of the real purpose of your being here on earth, as a being who can think, feel, reason, who can wonder at the world around you. You can enquire, “Why am I here? What is this thing called life, and ‘Who am I?’ What is the purpose for which I have been sent here?” Such enquiry and seeking answers is not given to all.

Of all forms of life it is the human individual, who has the God-given capacity of thus wondering and enquiring and seeking to know, Jijnasa. Life is not merely something that is lived out of necessity—this we share with all other forms of life. Every insect, bird, fish, every animal—small or big—they are all living only governed by instinct, driven by the necessities of certain aspects of their nature. We share all of this, but we do it in a little polished way We bring in a bit of aesthetic taste, we

3 Talk given on 21st September, 1989 UK Retreat

like food to be of a certain aroma and arranged in a nice way, clean and neat. But animals go to their food as they find it in nature. Otherwise, if you analyse the anatomy of biological living, it is identical. The animals do it driven by instinct; we do it applying a little bit of our intelligence. But then, is this all? No! Man is not satisfied. “No! I don’t want to be a dumb-driven creature, just living because it is forced upon me. I would like to know the deeper significance or the higher meaning of life, so that I may live purposefully.”

Therefore, since the dawn of creation man has sought answers for the deeper meaning and wanted to understand life and death. He wanted to know if life has a greater significance than the mere making of livelihood, the mere living upon the physical and biological level. Because he has seen the monotony of it; he has seen day after day, month after month, from birth to death, that man repeats the same thing. He was not satisfied; he refused to accept this to be the only level of life, and he sought deeper within, “Why am I here? Have I come to just live a physical life and pass away like every form of life does; then what is the difference between me and the animals?”

And pursuing this quest relentlessly, the ancients, the great pioneering explorers of the inner realm of man’s being, ultimately had their answers. They arrived

at a stage of knowledge where they beheld that Reality in man was far above their expectations, far above what they had expected to find!

It filled them with ecstasy, with a great vision and with joy. They had sought answers to merely the terrestrial life and its meaning, but they found that man went beyond this world; there was something in man that transcended life, transcended creation itself. There is something in you that is uncreated, eternal, beginningless and endless. The discovery of some absolutely unexpected dimension of man was the greatest thing that has happened since the phenomenon of man was brought into being in this process of creation, something extraordinary, wonderful and glorious!

Then the ancient sages proclaimed: ‘Shrunvantu sarve, amrutasya putraha’ “O ye children of Immortality, listen! Listen all of you! We have come face to face with the great Truth! We have beheld a Being, the Eternal, the Imperishable, the Infinite, and beholding that Being, He has revealed to us the truth about you that is tremendous! He has revealed to us that He Himself has become all life, and He has manifested Himself as the individual soul. The Universal Soul—eternal and infinite, timeless and limitless —He has given to us this great experience by which we have seen that every human individual is a spark of that great Divinity! You are a radiant spark of the Universal Spirit. Neither have

you birth or death, and neither have you a beginning or end. You are indestructible, without birth and death, transcending time and space, beyond name and form. You are Atman, whom weapons cannot injure, fire cannot burn, water cannot wet or drown, and wind cannot dry! Unborn, eternal, permanent, and beyond death—imperishable is your real being. That is the plain truth. That is the central fact that you have to realise in this birth!”

The coming and going of the body does not affect you. It means nothing! Just as a person has been wearing clothes for a long time, he discards them and puts on new ones. This phenomenon of birth and death is meaningless to you. You are the birthless, deathless, eternal Atman! This is the fact of your identity. You are dreaming a temporary false identity: “I’m so and so, I’m such and such, I’m a son or daughter of someone, this is my birth date, this is my age.” Age, height, weight, birthday, all these things pertain to something which is temporary, which is not your essential being. Nija-Swarupa is your real, essential nature—what you are in reality.

*Jyotishamapi tajjyotistamasah paramuchyate.
Jnaanam, jneyam, jnanagamyam, hriddi sarvasya
vishthitam*

You are part of that great Light of lights beyond all darkness, the light that illuminates all things here. You come from the realm of that great Light of lights beyond

all darkness, where the sun does not shine, neither the moon, nor the lightning, what to say of this earthly fire! Because It shines, all things here shine! You are a part of that great, eternal Light. To know your Self, be yourself, and be firmly established in the awareness of your true nature—that is your birthright! In the sleep of ignorance of one's true nature one enters into a dream of a little non-entity, which seems to be everything. And this little personality in this dream of your earth life identifies with a body, with a head and hands and feet—and with a mind and intellect. Due to this involvement you move away from your real nature. The body after all belongs to the material universe which is subject to dissolution: 'Janma, mrutyu, jara, vyadhi, duhkha' this is part of this phenomenon. This is a world of pain and death, of birth and death, a world of old age, disease, death, and ever changing. The mind is part of this ever-changing fluctuating phenomena; the very nature of the mind is 'Chanchalata' , fickle and restless. It is its Dharma, Mano-Dharma. But identifying yourself with the body and mind, you think you are undergoing the conditions of the physical body and the states of this mental-intellectual part of your being which is called the psychological being.

Why do you keep company with your mind? Why do you make friendship with it and become one with it and make it enslave you and push you into the experience which is its realm? Transcend the mind! Why

don't you cultivate friendship with the inner being who is witnessing all the different conditions of the physical body, calmly witnessing all the ever fluctuating states of the mind? There is a Being within—serene, unaffected, in a state of absolute equipoise, ever in a state of peace, ever in a luminous state of joy. There is That Being in the centre, and He is your eternal companion. From endless time you have been together. You are inseparable; you are part of Him.

Forsaking Him, you have got into the company of these dacoits, these deceivers. The mind is the greatest deceiver, and the body is a liability, a burden. Swami Vivekananda, observing this phenomenon of man on earth with his eyes of understanding said, "What is man? What do I see? The whole world is a great prison house, and every human body is a cell in which a prisoner is locked and roped, and in darkness this being is moving. He has been hypnotised into thinking that, "I am lost—finished; I have to suffer here in this darkness." Whereas he has got in him the power to break the lock and come out into the light and rejoice—that the being does not understand.

Guru Maharaj Swami Sivanandaji says, "Wake up! 'Uttishthita, jagrata, praapya varan-nibodhita.' Wake up! What is this weeping and wailing! You are the heir to immortal glory! Freedom is your birthright! Who are you? Why are you identifying yourself with this little body which has been thrown into this prison house? You

are not this body; you are not this impure and ever restless mind. You are the Atman divine; the indwelling divinity within you is your eternal companion. He is the eternal, transcendental Reality who has become this world, entered into it, and He is present in every speck of space and every atom of matter. He is the immanent and the indwelling Reality. He indwells you. He is waiting for you with outstretched arms. He is infinite joy! He is profound, immeasurable peace!

Neglecting it, you get caught in the clutches of this mind which is Maya, and the clutches of these five senses who are dacoits and plunder you! Body and mind are instruments given to you; but you have fallen into their clutches thinking that they are your masters. Gurudev Swami Sivananda said, “Realise your true nature! Know that you are part of that Divine Being dwelling within you! Therefore, wake-up from this slumber of ignorance! Shatter this dream of delusion and bondage. Roar Om, Om, Om, and come out of this cage of flesh and bones. Om is your real name. Om is your true identity. Om means immortality. Om means eternal existence. Om means peace and joy! Om means light. You are That! Where is sorrow for you? Where is delusion for you? Where is bondage for you? They are all dreams! How can there be sorrow for you who are made of pure bliss and peace? There is no such thing called sorrow. Bliss alone is Truth!”

Can you tell me, “Is there some principle called darkness in this solar universe? Can you capture darkness?” Darkness simply does not exist! It is a word given for a state where light, which alone is the Reality, is temporarily in a state of absence! One could have said, ‘non-light’, but they gave it the word ‘darkness’. In the solar universe light alone exists. This has been proved by the astronauts who went beyond the earth; for them it was 24 hours brilliant light and light alone! They experienced the truth. It is only when you come back upon planet earth and are subject to its rotation, then there is darkness and light, night and day. In the same way, in your true nature there is no such thing called sorrow, there is no such thing called grief. In you there is only bliss, absolute bliss. In you there is only peace that passeth understanding, indescribable peace. Peace and joy are not things that you are supposed to search and find. If you go out in search of peace and joy, you will never find them, because it is like honey going in search of sweetness. How can you find peace and joy in an imperfect world of dualities? A Hindu philosopher said, “What is this earth? It is a mixture. It is 50% sugar; 50% sand—a mixture of sand and sugar. You don’t have to lift a finger. You don’t have to move one step in order to have peace or happiness. You have to just ‘BE’ as you are, for you are that peace you are seeking, you are that happiness.” But because you have turned your gaze away from yourself, you are not able to have this

Self-experience. Peace and joy, they constitute the quintessence of your own Reality! You are Peace

profound! You are bliss absolute because you are Atman! You are an Amsha of Paramatman, and that Paramatman has been realised by your ancestors as nothing but bliss, bliss, bliss. Ananda is the Svarupa of Brahma! Brahman is Ananda Svarupa Brahman!

Sri Swami Sivananda was born in South India, not very far from the land's end of India, in this beautiful village of Pattamadai, with paddy fields and coconut palms and Muslim mat weavers who weave wonderful mats. His mother tongue was Tamil. He qualified for medicine in the Tanjore Medical School and went over to Malaysia and Singapore for practising medicine there. After coming face to face with suffering, with pain, with disease, and not able to save the patient in spite of his best efforts as a doctor, he understood that there is one thing which is absolutely certain, it is that one day we have to die.

“We come alone; we go alone.” It is true from one point of view. But, if you go a little deeper, we come with a companion. Who is that? We say, “God.” “Okay, that is also true.” Then, let us modify that statement. Every soul that is born into this world comes with two companions; two invisible entities are our constant companions. One is God from whom no one is ever separated; you are part

of Him, He is part of us, He is within us, we live in Him. The other one is Death. Both of them are your eternal companions!

And, when you're born, they say, "life starts", and so they celebrate each 12 months—they make a cake and invite people and enjoy. It is true, but it is true due to your wrong way of looking at it. It is not that life starts, but the process of death begins when you are born. Consider for a while, each one is born with a certain predestined lifespan or 'Aayush', and the moment the child is born and the heart begins to beat, the clock begins to tick and from that moment it is a steady march towards that ultimate exit point. You are moving towards death. Therefore He is there, because He is taking you towards that point where He says, "Okay! Now, let us go out! As we came together, now I take you!" Death is the one great certainty. Therefore, He is always moving by your side, unseen, but your companion.

This fact should not depress us, but on the contrary, it must fill us with a certain determination: "Body and mind have been given to me for some purpose, and that lofty purpose is to correct the error which I've fallen into, thinking myself to be a creature bound by birth and death. I am an immortal soul, an effulgent centre of eternal consciousness, to whom death and birth have no meaning. The body is born and will die. The mind is ever fluctuating and changing. Neither do I change, nor have I birth or death."

*'Ajo nityah sasvato'yam purano
Na hanyate hanyamane sarire.'*

Our ancients had a vision that, “I’m a divine spark of the Supreme Universal Soul. But I’m living in a state of self-forgetfulness; my life is not life, it is the travesty of life. True life is, when I am aware of what I am and be what I am, and manifest my divinity in every thought, word and action. But instead of doing that, I’m only growing upon the earth. I must awake! I must affirm and assert my divinity, and I must make life a glorious process of manifesting what I truly am. I cannot postpone it. Why? Because death is the one certainty. This physical instrument is given to work for and attain this great consummation. I can reach this experience; I can make use of my power to think, to reason and to feel. Connecting myself with my origin, my cosmic source, I can get that illumination. I should not postpone this central duty of my life. I have come here to realise my reality and attain that experience of being established in fearlessness and freedom. Together with the process of making a livelihood, I must go on with this dynamic process of moving towards divine consciousness, Self-realisation. That is the value of being aware of death, “one day I have to go”. I must be up and doing!”

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage to that supreme eternal Reality, the universal Spirit Divine whose power controls all, to which Swami Atmasvarupanandji was just now referring. That power is omnipotent; It is supreme; It can help you overcome anything and everything, because nothing is impossible for It. While things may appear impossible to you, to that supreme omnipotent Being nothing is impossible. May we all offer our worshipful homage to that Divine Power! And know it as such and therefore turn to it in times when we think and feel that circumstances are overwhelming us, and it is beyond our power to do anything to ward them off.

Loving adorations to revered and beloved Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj who did this very thing. Out of His inner recognition of the ultimate supremacy of the Divine He surrendered to it, and He emerged with a changed way of His life into a sage, a seer, a great devotee, the supreme among Yogis, supreme among Vedantins. Even His Vedanta was God's grace, Ishwara Anugraha.

4 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 29/11/98

It is only through the grace of the Supreme Reality—Ishwara—that the seeking soul can attain the Vedantic awareness of the non-difference between its essential nature and Its eternal identity, the great Reality. Thus unambiguously and in clear language, the scriptures have stated. May He, who has proved this true through His own attainment and experience, always be the guiding light in our life!

Yesterday we had reason to mention that the human individual wants joy. Despite being told many times – through various Satsangas, lectures and spiritual discourses by eminent saints and sages—why is it that—knowing full well that to attain Self-experience is supreme bliss – men still continue to pursue their deluded way of seeking happiness through limited passing sense objects of this material world? Why? This was the question we were considering yesterday.

And we saw how no amount of listening and hearing of this truth will be of any avail unless you continue to contemplate it, reflect upon it deeply. What exactly does it imply to you? What exactly does it mean for your life? How will this contemplation make you aware of the deep reality of life? And how will it bring into your consciousness with compelling force the necessity of turning away from transitory things and seeking the eternal? However, you never contemplate. You hear and that is the last of it. You do not go a step beyond in constant reflection, constant contemplation,

constant dwelling over these truths and try to recognise their place in your day-to-day life. It is not only by hearing discourses and having things said to you that you get food for thought and reflection and higher knowledge. Even by seeing things, you begin to go beyond mere perception, if you don't stop there but reflect over what you saw and begin to think about the implications. It creates within you a train of thought based upon that seeing. From such a process also you may be able to draw new lessons, new insights.

Yesterday night after Satsanga when I reached Guruniwas and stepped out of the car, came out of the parking shed and looked up, the sky was perfectly clear and blue. A half-moon was shining with extraordinary brilliance. And a little star above was glittering like a diamond, like a multifaceted, scintillating diamond. And I exclaimed to the Brahmachari, "Look, how beautiful, how bright, how clear the sky is, how bright the moon is!" The Brahmachari has the habit of listening to something I say and making a remark which is completely going off at a tangent from what has been said. And he said, "Yes, yes, today the Ganges water is a little turbid." He said, "It is a little turbid, because evidently some rains have fallen somewhere in the upper reaches of the river." I looked at him for a moment, and then I said, "Is that so, is that so? Maybe you are right. Something must have happened. Ah yes, it might be

raining in Uttarkashi." So I received that food also for thinking and went up.

As I was going up, I was contemplating what the Brahmachari had said. I thought, "He sees the Ganges in Muni-ki-Reti and concludes that something must have happened in some part of the river higher up, a part which is not visible to us, and he draws a logical conclusion from here. From the state of things here he relates to the state of things in a previous part of the same immediate river that flows by Guruniwas". Then I went up and put the walking stick in its corner, took off the sandals, and as I was going into the inner room, the reflections continued. Yes, it is only if you raise your vision up, you see the clear blue sky and the bright moon and the shining star. Only then! Otherwise if you keep it at your own level, you will only see the drabness of your immediate surroundings – trees and walls and still worst the wall posters and the graffiti written everywhere upon fading walls and buildings. You see it in the rain, messy, black, discoloured. In front of Guru Niwas there is a Dhaba. So what hits your eyes is not the clear blue sky nor the bright moon and the shining star, but a Dhaba with big, big vessels and busy people pampering their palate. Sometimes there is a little man who sells all types of books, and his shop is not neat and clean, because it is cleared away every night. Once again it is

spread out in the morning. He doesn't have glass almirahs or front windows for people to do window shopping. It is all packaged, carted away and brought again every day. And these are the sights.

Shatruघna Mandir, whose upper part is always a sad sight to me because bird droppings have made trees to spring up, and there are many banyan trees, like the hair of a Tapasvi. It is not getting the attention of the Darbar. This temple is sprouting so many trees on its top. I feel anxious that these roots grow into the masonry and bring about a crack one day or the other. And many times I tell Guru Niwas people, "Go and tell the owner of the temple to do something about it before it starts cracking and affect other parts of the temple building". They say, "Swamiji, we have already told him many times. We have also brought it to the attention of the head of the family, the head priest of the temple and the son who was once head of the municipal council of Muni-ki-Reti."

Anyway, these are the things you have to absorb if you keep your vision upon the earth level. In all directions you see things, and you are affected by them. Your interior also gets the impressions and the impact of the things at your own level. If you want to elevate your spirit, elevate your thoughts, then look up, keep a lofty vision, strive to attain a loftier and evermore loftier status until you reach the highest, the Supreme Being.

This is the reflection and this is the conclusion which I share with you this morning.

Keep your vision always upraised, never upon the earth level, never upon this Prapancha and this Samsara level. Your real existence is not the worldly existence. Your reality is in the level of the Satchidananda Brahman.

And similarly, if you see some symptom in your behaviour, in your activities, in your dealings with others which is not crystal clear, transparent and pure, if there is something turbid about it, then you can draw this conclusion for certain that in a previous stage of this outer activity there is something wrong. Outer activity is the ultimate state of our being, the outflowing of our personality. The previous stage is not visible to us. It may be in the feelings, in the sentiments we are harbouring in the heart. It may be in our thoughts, in the quality or the kind of thoughts that fill our mind. And therefore, the sources of this outflow of our nature in the form of actual action are to be traced in the previous state of this action. Action is the ultimate state and the result of that previous state.

So when you observe something, be sure there is something happening, some rain has fallen, as they say, and made the water muddy. And therefore something in a previous state of our action and a previous stage of our psychological self must be analysed. It is our internal which is not immediately seen, but it can be inferred. So

if you carry on this process and set things right, then you can change the outer situation in your day to day life and bring it into a spiritual realm.

Thus reflection, contemplation is gainful. It is not without reason that they said, “You should reflect, you should contemplate.” Then the truth will become real to you. This is the advice given to us by our wise forefathers. Let us benefit from this advice and the directions given to us and keep our vision always uplifted and lofty. Perceive that which is pure, sublime, bright and shining, and let us always contemplate on the why and where of the outer expressions of our inner being. May the supreme grace of the Lord and blessings of Holy Master enable us to do this unto perfection. God bless us all.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

24th September 2016 marks the auspicious occasion of Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out one hundred booklets comprising illuminating talks of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

To propagate Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's gospel of Divine Life, Worshipful Sri Swamiji Maharaj travelled extensively in India and abroad and showed the path of divine life to countless seekers through his spontaneous and highly inspiring lectures. His lectures, in Sadgurudev's words, are the outpourings of his saintly heart, the revelations of intuitive wisdom.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of his hitherto unpublished lectures in booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary. The present booklet '**Keep Contact With God**' is a compilation of his four inspiring talks at the sacred Samadhi Shrine during the year 1996 and 1998.

We express our heartfelt gratitude towards Shri Mukund Jere and the inmates of the Headquarters Ashram for their loving service in transcribing, editing and compiling these talks.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord,
Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful
Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—The Divine Life Society

Worshipful homage to the sourceless source of all things! Worshipful homage to that causeless cause of all things that exist! Being beginningless, eternal, without itself having any source or cause, it is nevertheless the source and cause of all things. You are in reality that absolute, non-dual transcendental Reality, which alone is. You are not the unreal, ever-changing aspect of your gross, visible human personality, your external features and hands and feet, but you are the invisible aspects in the deep subjective centre of your essential nature; you are a part of that supreme cosmic Being. That is the heart of Vedanta. That is the ultimate declaration of the Upanishads. Not to realise that real Self of yours becomes the source and the cause of all the dual experiences of this world, pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, elation and depression, rejoicing and grieving. You don't have to look for the cause for these ever recurring emotions in your psyche, because they are all caused by yourself.

Of the three afflictions this is the self-caused, the self-generated experience that comes and plagues you and bothers you no end. It arises from your inside and appears in the form of endless desires (Kama), anger (Krodha) avarice (Lobha), delusion (Moha), arrogance and aggressive ego (Mada) and envy and jealousy (Matsarya). Kama, Krodha,

1 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 21/7/98

Lobha, Moha, Mada, Matsarya constitute the true inner afflictions. These self-generated afflictions are neither discomfort nor disease of the body nor mental illness; but they constitute this invariable, inner content of all human psyches, invariable because it is present in this entire human world, in global human society. This phenomenon is the common feature in man throughout the world, in all races and nations and in all sections of people. These inner afflictions become not only a source and cause of botheration and loss of peace to your own self, but it becomes the prolific source of trouble to others with whom we have to deal in our daily life while doing our duties and fulfilling our obligations.

We are meant to be a source of service, of goodness to others and solace to others; in all ways, we are meant to be a constant source of giving, relieving, healing, helping, benefiting and bringing cheer into the lives of all, be a light in the darkness. For that is our Dharma. This is what God does to all mankind, and we are part of God. *Tat Twam Asi*. You are not what you think yourself to be, but you are no other than That, the great Reality. This is the central declaration of Vedanta and also the supreme experience Vedanta points to, “Attain this experience of your eternal oneness with the supreme Reality. In that you have to be established. This is your birth right.” Yoga Shastra also says the same thing. The gradual process of discipline, self-control and inner concentration ultimately culminates in the supreme heights of meditation. One goes beyond duality and breaks the chains of one’s false ego principle; this is the result of identification with the non-self and failure to identify yourself with your

true unchanging Self. That bondage is shattered when you reach the supreme oneness of Yogic meditation, Jnana. Ultimately you know yourself as the supreme Purusha, beyond all afflictions, delusion and phenomenal appearances created by Maha Maya, untrammelled, above afflictions and untouched by Maya.

The same ultimate experience is bestowed upon one who follows the devotional path and tries to attain the supreme Reality in its aspect of the personal God. The path of devotion through various processes, maintaining a dual attitude of devotee and God and expressing this attitude through prayer, worship and adoration ultimately leads to a culminating point when the devotee is aware only of God. God-awareness becomes the ultimate experience in the approach through devotion and love.

Thus all paths, seemingly at variance with each other and proceeding along different processes, all Sadhanas, apparently moving in diverse directions, ultimately they all merge into the same experience. This is therefore what we should strive for.

The Supreme Being is ever ready to help us at any step upon this glorious path. Hold on to this Sadhana till the last breath in your life, for that is why you have been sent here by God, due to your own aspiration you have come here and are living on the sacred banks of Divine Mother Ganga in this holy Uttarakhand. Being a seeker of the Supreme, being dedicated to this quest, that is how you will justify your existence here. In this way you will be fulfilling the prime

purpose for which you have come here by the will of the Supreme Being.

Loving adorations to revered and beloved Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji. In order to facilitate our smooth progress towards the goal, in order to provide for us a field, a scope for engaging in diverse Sadhanas according to taste, temperament and ability, he has brought about this set-up, which we call Ashram.

This is an Ashram just as there other Ashrams around, in Tapovan, Swarg Ashram, Rishikesh and Haridwar. And in common terminology Ashram means a group of buildings, a temple, a Satsanga Bhavan, residential quarters for monks, Brahmacharis, Sadhus and holy people and seekers and of course a central kitchen, because Prasad needs to be offered to the Deity after being worshipped, and all the inmates have to take the Prasad after chanting 15th chapter of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita and reciting ‘Brahmarpanam’. All these things put together is called an Ashram.

But the true and invisible Ashram is a blessed area, filled with spiritual fervour, a blessed area where there are vibrations of great aspiration, great longing for the Lord, where there is a keen and determined spirit of, “I shall seek. I am determined to find, and when I thus do Purushartha, then suddenly the Lord will open the doors to me. He is the bestower of the fruit of actions and among other things Bhagawan is Karma-Phala. And, therefore, certainly He will most graciously bless me with the supreme fruit of my spiritual action.”

An Ashram is filled with spiritual fervour, and the translation of this quest is actively and dynamically lived. This is the true invisible form of the Ashram pervaded by holiness. There is nothing negative; all is sanctity, spirituality. Karma, Bhakti, Yoga, Dhyana comprise the lives of individuals living here. The real Ashram is a blessing in contemporary times. And who is it, who makes an Ashram such a blessed centre? It is the inmates of the Ashram. It is you people who persevere in your spiritual life and add this sublime quality.

May the grace of the Supreme, the source-less source of all existence, the causeless cause of all existence enable you to fulfill this role in the highest measure for your own benefit and for the benefit of one and all. May the loving benedictions of Holy Master bless you and enable you all to fulfill this privileged and most fortunate goal. You must be a shining ideal for others to follow, by the manner in which you live and pursue your day-to-day activities. Thus, may the grace of the Supreme and the blessings of Master enable you to be really what you are, and that is no other than radiant divinities. That is what your ancients declared you to be on the basis of their own experience. Thou art That, that glorious reality, that eternal and infinite reality.

Bring your consciousness to that reality level and shine with the light of the Divine and radiate it in your daily lives. May God bless you. This is the sharing by the grace of God and Guru.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage to that Supreme Eternal Reality, the one non-dual Existence absolute, that transcends all manifestations, that is beyond all names and forms, the one that is imponderable, infinite and supreme, the one and only Reality that is. To that Being, which is your origin, your support and your ultimate fulfilment worshipful homage at this early morning hour when you are all gathered together in a most blessed spiritual fellowship by Its motiveless grace and Its divine will!

Loving adorations to beloved Gurudev who has made possible this coming together morning after morning of all of you sincere seeking souls whom God has chosen to draw in His direction. The whole world is made crazy; unthinkingly it is rushing towards petty perishable objects, rushing headlong towards momentary experiences of superficial sensations that the world has to give, pleasant sensations of a deluding and enslaving nature, that are like a flash in the pan; one moment it is there, the next moment it is not there. Because it is not continuous, it creates an unending hankering in the deluded individual soul to perpetuate it by repetitive experience, but it ends in greater slavery, more delusion, and in the meantime time flies away. The allotted life span is

² Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 8/5/96

rapidly depleted for it is rushing like the river waters under the arches of a bridge.

This is the behaviour of the vast majority of unthinking world-bound individual souls. They think what is visible is real. They think what is a momentary sensation is happiness. So they try to preserve the momentary, and the only way to make it seemingly continuous is to go on repeating it. As we go on repeating it, life goes away. The delusion becomes stronger, slavery results, and from it issue a whole host of sorrow, disappointment, fulfilment, elation, depression, jealousy, envy, clash and conflict, fights and quarrels. When there is one bone and two dogs, there is always a battle. And there are only a few treasures and more human beings, and it creates within the human mind the sense of a solid reality of this seen physical world which is an ephemeral dream. But the repetitive experience of momentary sensations gives it an appearance of something substantial, something real. If you put a stick into a blazing fire, the end of stick catches fire. And if in a dark night you shake the stick and the flaming end becomes fiery red; and if you whirl it in the darkness, it creates the illusion of a circle of fire. The more rapidly it is whirled, the more it gives the illusion of a circle of fire, and it can be photographed. You can photograph a circle of fire which does not exist! That flaming end of the stick is not there always. But you can take a photograph because the camera is even more rapid than the whirling stick.

So this is how the delusion is created that there is happiness to be experienced in this world. It is as real as the unending lights of red and white that are seen in an aerial

picture of the night traffic in Manhattan or some other highway, when automobiles are taking their owners home after office and night entertainment; they are moving in opposite directions, and in the darkness a snap shot registers a continuous unending line of red tail lights and a continuous unending line of white head lights. There are no lines! There is only a centre of light in each tale light or head light. But the continuous movement along a highway shows on the photograph unending ruby and diamond chains, an illusory effect!

That is the reality of this world. It is there, but not what it seems to be. What it seems to be is created by us and having created it, we endow it with a sense of reality, and we get caught in this illusion, this sense of reality we ourselves have created.

The one way to rise above this web of illusion and get a taste of what real happiness is Satsanga, taking recourse to the company of those who have tasted the higher experience of true happiness, true inner bliss which is objectless, independent of any external source. It is not the result of any contact of the senses with sense objects. Nothing compels you, forces you, urges you in any particular direction. You maintain your independence, your integrity, and you do not depend on any outer source for its experience. And what is more, it is ever present. It is perennial, requires no inducement and it is always there. And those who have been blessed with this experience, they call upon us, "Come, come, there is a state of bliss, there is this true happiness. Why are you running after petty pleasures? It ends in sorrow,

disappointment and a host of other complications. Whereas here is this perfect bliss. It is within you, it is yours, it is perennial. It does not deprive you of your independence. It is free from the origin of desire, of the temptation of outer attractions. It is natural, ever present, has no adverse reaction, does not at any time cease to be, for its source is the eternal Brahman, the supreme eternal unchanging Reality!" To turn towards that Reality is the highest good. It is the greatest wisdom.

It is the central purpose of being endowed with the human nature. You were brought into this existence so that you may attain that supreme blessedness, the greatest of all things. You will therefore not turn away or escape. On the contrary you will be fulfilling the purpose of your existence. You will be making the highest and the best use of your existence.

All other things constitute un-wisdom. All other things constitute opting for number 2, 3, 4, 50 or 100. All other things constitute the lesser, *Alpa*. This alone constitutes the right choice, the true wisdom. This alone constitutes a positive step, a movement towards light and not towards darkness.

Therefore all the great ones who have entered into the Experience Absolute and returned to human consciousness to behold the human world, they raise their voice aloud and call upon all humanity to partake of that blessedness. That is a central voice of religion and of all scriptures. That is the central message of all great messengers of God, prophets, illumined and liberated souls.

Get into contact with them in whatever way, either by actually meeting them, sitting at their feet or acquainting yourself through their wisdom teachings or by spiritual fellowship with other sincere seeking souls, talking about these great ones, discussing matters of the Spirit and the Reality. All these put us into direct contact with the great Reality. Then life starts to be true life and you will feel, “Great indeed is my good fortune and blessedness to sit in the company of such souls who are leading the true life, who are walking the way of wisdom.” You will yearn to spend a little more time in the company of such wise, awakened, seeking souls, who are putting their life to the highest use morning after morning. Thanks to this Holy Ashram instituted by revered and beloved Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji right from the earliest times when he started this divine Life Society!

Understand its value and come together day after day in silence, in spiritual upliftment, in meditation, chanting and listening devotedly to the selfless sharing with good intention of anyone who shares for a few minutes. All these constitute benedictions of Holy Master. All these constitute grace from the Divine, the source of all grace that we call God. You are graced and blessed indeed. May you realise this. May God continue to shower grace and Holy Master continue to shower benediction. May you continue to bless yourself. God bless you!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage to the eternal, the transcendental, the infinite, imponderable Universal Spirit Divine, the be-all and end-all of our existence! If we could only reflect upon it with wisdom, with discrimination and discernment, for which alone that Being has endowed us with the supreme faculty of the intellect, to ponder the imponderable, to reflect upon that which cannot be thought about!

Reflection itself becomes a process of Sadhana, for it gets you dwelling upon that Reality. To dwell upon it is to gradually keep moving in its direction. To dwell upon it is a means of opening ourselves to its transforming divine power. Also it has the additional result of keeping the mind from straying towards things that lead to attachment and bondage. If you determinedly keep moving in the right direction, this very process ensures and guarantees against moving in a direction that is not right; it means that its ultimate result is not good for you, not good for your evolution unto perfection which is your divine destiny. Anything that encourages the upward progress towards the fulfilment of the divine perfection that liberates should be diligently cultivated and taken into your being.

3 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 2/3/98

In this process we ought not to be swayed by other people's opinion. "Oh, you have neglected your duty, your duty towards the secular world. You have failed in fulfilling your worldly obligations." These comments and arguments are only too familiar. We cannot determine what people think or say about us. But by our very life we can determine what people ought to think and say about us. This is within our power by the sheer adherence to certain noble principles and by adhering steadfastly to a lofty ideal. This life is too short and too precious to be wasted away in worrying what people think and say about us.

Worrying in this manner is a futile exercise. It is a misdirection of your energies, a misuse of this precious thing called time or life. Therefore, always establish yourself in a positive state. With absolute humility and meekness submit yourself to God and say, "I am whatever You have made of me. Let me move forward with this as my asset, with this as my tool. Making use of whatever You have endowed me with, I can move forward."

Rather than regretting that one is not like someone else—regret never helps anyone to move forward – sincere repentance and remorse is a purifying and transforming process. It generates energy from within. Wallowing in regret is a non-productive and useless process and can never help you to move forward. Gurudev used say, "Do not brood upon the past. The past is finished, consign it into the hands of God and be at peace."

Breaking up shackles at every step, that is the inner content of Sadhana. Not to allow yourself to get shackled. Sometimes you fall in love with certain states and conditions of your inner being and do not wish to move out of it. This is an all too familiar phenomenon in the life of human individuals. We wish to nourish and cherish that very thing which is our affliction and not an endowment. Life is too short and too precious to be misdirected into this process. You must look straight ahead and move forward with determination. As a poet put it, "Heart within and God overhead."

May the divine grace of God and the benedictions of revered and beloved worshipful Holy Master, Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji enable us to be discerning individuals, determined Sadhaks, keeping our eyes fixed upon our great destiny, not allowing anything to divert us into a wrong direction, keeping our eye fixed upon the goal and ever diligently striving for it. This is spiritual life, the essence of the inner spiritual life. May God and Gurudev transform our interior into this state of a determined dynamism in the direction of our divine destiny. This alone endows our life with meaning and with a value that cannot be measured in terms of earthly achievements. All earthly achievements pale into insignificance in comparison with this aspiration and determined inner movement toward the fulfillment of the central purpose of our existence on this earth. This is not a plane into which you have come to dwell in. It is a plane to be

passed through wisely and to go beyond, leaving it behind as it has served its purpose and is no longer necessary for us. Go beyond it where the dimension of our eternal Being is. God and Gurudev help us to do this. God bless us all!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage to the eternal Universal Spirit Divine! Loving adorations to revered and beloved Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj whose spiritual presence calls you here morning after morning into close proximity with him, to contact him through Bhakti and Bhava, the feeling of your devotion and heart's love. He calls you to spend a period of sanctifying fellowship, to bless you so that your spiritual life may proceed with greater inner force, with a greater longing in the direction of the supreme goal. We supplicate the Universal Being who is within and without, we turn to Him, appeal through prayer, through supplication, through surrender, through taking shelter.

“You can do all this and you will be liberated. Do not worry, do not sorrow”, thus the Supreme Being has given a standing call, a standing invitation. “Abandoning all, you must come unto Me.” This is an eternal call, ever present for our accepting it, listening to it, answering it even today. It was not only in the age of the Gita. The call might have originated there, but it does not limit itself to that age or that set-up. Yes, it has an origin, but it is for all times, forever, this great call.

“You are wandering about in this dense darkness of self-forgetfulness, repeatedly receiving knocks and blows.

4 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 27/6/98

You are coming again and again into this wheel of birth, death and rebirth. Enough! Put an end to this. I will show you the way, by giving this direction. Now it is for you to take to the way, to follow that direction.” This means, ‘Now cease your meaningless contact with this multifarious, temporary manifestation, this ever-changing carnival around you. Now come, put yourself into contact with the Eternal.” It is like extending a hand and saying, “Come, grasp My hand!” And putting yourself into conscious, purposeful contact with the Supreme is the very essence, the central factor of the entire matter. Once you put yourself into conscious contact with the Divine, then you are worry free, carefree. He takes upon Himself everything concerning you and your spiritual life and your ultimate success in life, everything. He does not do things by half.

But you have to put yourself into contact. It is in this context there is a feelingful popular Bhajan of Surdas where he says, “Drain-water that flows and is regarded as unclean, polluted, the moment it comes into contact with the Ganga, it becomes holy water. One moment it was drain water, but from the moment of its entering into and becoming one with the sacred waters of the holy river Ganga, it becomes a thing to be treasured at home and worshipped.” It is the contact that does it. And taking this analogy further, he says, “One moment an object is a little piece of iron, but the moment it

comes into contact with the philosopher's stone, it is pure gold, the most precious of all metals." That is an indication.

Contact with this created universe, we have enough. Willy-nilly each morning when you wake up, you are part of this phenomenal universal show. The physical body is part of this earth show and therefore whether you want it or not, it is already in contact. It cannot be helped.

If God's plan for you was not different, He would not have brought you here, and He would not have created Uttarakhand, Himalayas, Ganges, Gita, Upanishad, Bible, Koran, prophets, Avatars, saints, sages. By all these things and many more He proves that He has other plans for you. You belong to Him, He belongs to you. You are His own and therefore, He is calling His own back to Himself. Allow Him to work out His plan, and on your part, in the midst of all contacts, keep the most important contact. Keep close contact with God within. Keep close contact with God everywhere.

Everywhere He is around you. Not for a split second are you removed from Him or far away from Him. Thus, base your life and attitude upon this truth, for God is a here and now God, this is the truth. Keep in close contact with Him by and through as many ways as possible. That is Sadhana. That is Yoga. That is spiritual life. When the contact breaks due to forgetfulness, distraction, anything else, again renew it. Keep

contact with God, deeply, intensely. This is the one important thing.

God help you to do so. May the divine grace of the Supreme and the benedictions of the Master help you to do this most important thing, help you in your efforts to consciously and constantly keep an inner spiritual contact with the Supreme Being.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Publishers' Note

24th September 2016 marks the auspicious occasion of Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out one hundred booklets comprising illuminating talks of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

To propagate Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's gospel of Divine Life, Worshipful Sri Swamiji Maharaj travelled extensively in India and abroad and showed the path of divine life to countless seekers through his spontaneous and highly inspiring lectures. His lectures, in Sadgurudev's words, are the outpourings of his saintly heart, the revelations of intuitive wisdom.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of his hitherto unpublished lectures in a booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary. The present booklet 'Anatomy of Life Spiritual' is a compilation of a series of three inspiring talks, given at the Sangeet Kala Kendra, Kolkata in 1999. We express our heartfelt gratitude towards

the inmates of the Headquarters Ashram for their loving service in transcribing, editing and compiling these talks.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—The Divine Life Society

Worshipful homage unto Thee, who art the beginningless and endless Cosmic Principle. Thou art the Reality, the one unchanging eternal Fact. May Thy light shine upon all those who turn their gaze and face Thee, wishing to approach and attain Thee.

Loving adorations to Shri Gurudev, beloved Swami Sivanandji Maharaj, who is the light and guide of our life. May your glance of grace be upon all aspiring souls. May your hand of benediction be upon all those who strive to emulate your selflessness and your fiery state of service.

Radiant Atman! Beloved children of the Divine!

Everything is due to Prana. Each cell is living, developing, but also every moment cells are dying, and new cells are being born; these two processes are called metabolism. How are the new cells born? When the cells begin to die, why don't they go on dying without being replaced by new cells? Why? Prana! Prana holds the key. Even when you are living and your health is strong, if the Prana withdraws temporarily, you are like a log of wood.

In each cycle of 24 hours, by some strange process of God's creation you are awake, you are in a state of Jagriti: you are able to see, hear, etc., and in this state the Prana is located in the Ajna Chakra area (a little space slightly above and between the two eyebrows, which is the seat of the mind). Therefore you are vigorously active, you can talk and understand, you can give orders, you can desire, you can plan; all processes are possible because Prana is in the mind centre. After a full day's work you come home tired, have your supper and maybe listen to the radio for some time and chitchat, and then you start yawning and want to go to sleep. When you put your head on the pillow, the world is switched off, in one moment it disappears: Calcutta, Howrah Bridge—everything disappears! What happens? What is this miracle? Prana has withdrawn from the active mind centre.

However, you don't fall immediately into deep slumber. Sometimes there is some experience of a duplicated world where outside things are created. You are answering a telephone from someone in your office, and what is being said is also very clear; a world is existing, but it is called Svapna-Avastha, the dream state or second state of consciousness. The outer world does not exist, and temporarily an inner world is created; the Prana is located somewhere in the throat in a

subtle current called the Hita Nadi. After some time another switch is switched off, and dream-consciousness comes to an abrupt end, and then you know nothing! There is absolute silence, absolute peace—there is no knower. The awareness of: ‘I am enjoying sleep’ gets also switched off! In that state, the Prana goes into the heart centre, where it always abides, the Anahata Chakra (not the physiological heart, but a little to the right of your chest, where you always identify yourself). It is all a miracle of Prana. And when the Prana departs for good, the person departs for ever; he does not come back. So Prana is the very key to the entire process.

In the first stage the youngster is taught: “Thrice a day, you must think of the Supreme Being; thrice a day you must do Vandana, worship of God; thrice a day you must salute the Sun, Surya Namaskara, and this you must do at the junction between the passing night and the oncoming day, at dawn; at the junction at the meridian point: 12 o'clock midday; and at the junction between the passing day and the oncoming night—it is called Sandhya. In that Sandhya-Vandan first of all is Achaman, sipping of water; then Maarjan, you sprinkle some water in order to purify everything: and then you have to do Pranayama: inhaling, retaining and exhaling the breath.

The boy is invested with the sacred thread

between the 8th and the 10th year when his understanding has developed—he knows what he is doing and why he is doing it. From that day onwards he has to do Pranayama and Surya Namaskara to build up a strong and healthy body. Exercise makes the body strong, and Pranayama makes the body immune to diseases. At the same time, he is asked to develop a noble character and good behaviour. The firm foundation of a noble life is given at the very beginning, and naturally he also has to acquire knowledge, both secular as well as spiritual knowledge. He is asked to read the Subhashitas, Panchatantra, Gita, Hitopadesha—all the stories with moral instructions.

He became an ideal young person; he moved into the second quarter. He took a partner for his life, entered Grihastha-Ashrama and made the house an abode of worship. There also Trikala Sandhya-Vandana, Devata-Archana and Puja was going on, and both he and his wife were to lead an ideal married life. The couple was useful to society, kept good relationship with neighbours, and both of them did some Paropakara, because that is the highest ideal, '*Paropakarartham idam shariram*'—this body is meant for doing good to others. When the children had grown up, the responsibility was given to them. They said: "We

are here; whenever you want any advice and guidance, we are available; but now you look after

the things.” And then they went into the third order where they spent their time in reading scriptures, living more the inner life, going to Tirtha Yatra, Vrata, Niyam, Satsanga—meeting saints and sages, living for some time in their ashram: 7 days, 10 days.

This period led to the total renunciation of the man. He entrusted his Dharmapatni to grown-up sons or a daughter—a good son-in-law is as good as a son—and then he took to complete Vairagya, Tyaga and Sannyasa; he turned his back to the world and went into the forest. In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad you will find Yajnavalkya—one of the greatest sages, a giant personality in the Upanishadic age, who was invited by Rajas, Maharajas, Chakravartis. King Janaka, himself a God-realised person, used to call Yajnavalkya ‘Maharishi’ and tell: “Please enlighten us all with your knowledge!” He was a Rishi, but he was not a Sannyasi, he was a Grihasthi. Vast gifts had been showered upon him, gold, silver, cattle. He had two wives, Maitreyi and Katyayani. He tells them: “Take all these things, and divide them between you two. I will now go to the forest and take Sannyas, and I have to ascend into my own realm of God-consciousness.”

God-realisation was thus attained in successive stages until one attained Sakshatkar. All that is seen around us is ephemeral. We come from an abode of eternal light where there is no darkness. But having come into contact with the factors that make up our physical personality, we have moved away from the centre of our true consciousness, Nija Swarupa, and become caught in a state which is not our Self. We are caught in a state of Dehadhyasa, and have forgotten our pristine divine nature.

Bhagawad Padacharya Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya has devoted an entire volume called 'Vivekachudamani', where he tells you how to discriminate between the Atma and the Anatma, the Shashvata and the Ashashvata.

And there was a saint called Khalasdas. Just like Kabir and Surdas and Nanak and other people, there was Khalasdas. In one of his very meaningful Bhajans he has this to say: '*Jhoothे jaga mein dila lalacha kar asala vatana kyon choda diya*'—'What is this? You have made your mind to get completely entangled in this false world, and your real abode you have forgotten.'

Since thousands of years, when no other religion existed, Sanatana Dharma existed; its origin is shrouded in the deep past. Sanatana means eternal, it has always been. Sanatana Dharma declared that the greatest attainment of

the human being is the realisation of the Supreme Reality. To that end they made this Ashrama Dharma: Brahmacharya-Ashrama, Grihastha-Ashrama, Vanaprastha-Ashrama and Sannyasa-Ashrama.

And the ancient prayer was given by those great Maharishis who had seen the changeful and transitory nature of all things:

*Asato ma sadgamaya
Tamaso ma jyotir gamaya
Mrityor ma amritam gamaya*

From the unrealities of this outer world, take us unto the eternal Reality; from the darkness and ignorance which has made us think the apparent to be real, take us unto the light of supreme wisdom. There is no question of death for you. You are the eternal. For the attainment of this ascent from the unreal to the Real, from darkness to Light, from mortality to Immortality, they wrote a Yoga Shastra. As long as you live only upon the physical level, you will become enmeshed in Vishaya (sensual objects) and Vishaya-asakti and Vishaya-bhoga. You have to transcend and climb to a higher level where you see clearly that Vishaya-bhoga is only a means of Roga. It brings you sorrow and pain and suffering. The opening Shloka of Astavakra Gita says:

*Yadi moksham icchasi te tata, vishayan
vishavat tyaja
Brahmacharyam Ahimsam cha Satyam
piyusha vad bhaja.*

O beloved one! If you want liberation, discard the sensual cravings and sensual inner things like poison, choose nectar and accept in your life the triple elevating virtues of self-control, chastity, purity of thought, word, and deed; truthfulness, compassion and kindness towards all creatures.

These are the strong foundations of a spiritual life. The outer form of spiritual life may take various appearances. You may sit and do Japa, Gayatri or Ram Nam or Krishna Nam or Shankar Nam. You may do meditation; you may do Svadhyaya of the Bhagavad-Gita, Bhagavad Mahapurana or Aparoksha-Anubhuti, the Upanishads or the Vedanta Sutras of Vyasa Maharishi; you may undertake fasting or restricted diet, and you may do Asanas and Pranayama also. These are all outer forms of a person who has decided, "I should not merely live the worldly life. I have been told that within me there is something which is not of this world, which will always be. I have been told, 'I am Avinashi Atma.' So in that dimension I must be active; I must also lead a spiritual life."

First of all start with the personal God with form. Do Abhisheka, Archana, Alankara, Deep,

Dhoop, Naivedya. Your mind, your hands, your gaze are focused on one object, and therefore concentration will develop. This is the outer form of spiritual life, and your interior will be gathered and focused upon the Supreme Being. Lord Krishna says: "O Arjuna! Become Mine. Give your mind, your heart, your thoughts to Me, and I will liberate you. Have no doubt." Giving the entire being to that one great Reality, transcending all unreal names and forms is the quintessence of the purpose of Yoga. Spiritual life means Yoga. Spiritual life means detaching your being from the passing things of the world and attaching it to that Great Being. And that is possible only if you change the nature of your mind.

The mind has inveterate tendencies. It will never be steady and calm, as it is always in a ferment, ever restless and chaotic. No one can stop the thought processes; throughout your waking hours automatically thought processes are going on. You have no control over it. You can control your body; you can say, "I won't move; I will be in one place." But you have no control over the mind; we know that there is a mind, but we have never seen it. It is Avyakta, Adrishya, Gudha, Antarika (unmanifest, invisible, hidden, internal), and so you are helpless. There is nothing you can do: "Chup raho." "Keep quiet." That is Vikshepashakti (tossing of the mind)!

The mind never stays within. "All right, as you are constantly moving, please keep moving in one direction." It will always go out, and what is worse, even in this outgoing tendency, there is no stability; it will not go and rest upon one single object. The mind is worse than a monkey, always jumping from object to object.

When you go on doing all the various practices of your spiritual life, getting up in the morning and after your bath doing Asana and Pranayama, then sitting and doing your Japa and Dhyana, doing Sakar-Saguna Upasana and Svadhyaya, what happens inside?

You purchase a brand-new car, get into the driver's seat, turn on the key, and the car starts. Now this is what happens outside. Apparently the car moves because this man opens the door, gets into the driver's seat, closes the door, and takes hold of the steering wheel, does something with both feet, and the car moves. But what happens inside? The very act of pressing the starter makes something move inside which you cannot see, unless you tell the driver, "I want to see what happens inside." Then you see that the moment the spark plug is ignited, the pistons start going, and if you press the accelerator-pedal, they run like mad! So what happens inside? How is the petrol made to dwell into the piston? How does the spark plug come into action? I'm not a technical

engineer, but this is the inner anatomy of the car springing into life and starting to move.

So, what is the inner anatomy of our spiritual life, what happens when we are doing all these various acts of outer Sadhana, what happens inside? You rise from unreality and move towards the Reality; you rise from the darkness of ignorance and move towards the great light of supreme Atma-Jnana or Brahma-Jnana, and you rise up from the state of getting entangled in this Avagamana Chakra (cycle of birth and death).

But what has made us get caught in this Avagamana Chakra? A patient is suffering due to a disease. You take him to a doctor who examines him thoroughly and finds out what the disease is, and upon the basis of his diagnosis he gives a prescription. Until now it was the doctor's work; now comes the patient's work. If he takes the prescription and puts it in his pocket, the disease will continue. But if he takes it to a chemist and then takes the medicine as per the doctor's order, then the cause is removed, and the effect is also removed.

So you must know the cause of this Avagamana Chakra. The cause of this is that the whole world and all of us are part of creation, we are all the outcome of that mysterious force of God called Maya, and She is Trigunatmika (characterised by the three Gunas). "*Daivi hyesha*

gunamayi, mama maya duratyaya" (It is very difficult to overcome my Maya); "Mameva ye prapadhyante mayam etam taranti te" (those who take refuge in me alone cross over this illusion.) That is the way to go beyond Maya. And Maya has Rajo Guna, Tamo Guna, Sattwa Guna. And very clearly Bhagawan says: "Sattwa-Guna takes you up; Rajo-Guna binds you here; Tamo-Guna takes you into further darkness." There is an inner anatomy of these various acts of spiritual Sadhana. The Sattwic processes go on creating greater and greater powers of Sattwa, and due to sitting in one pose and controlling the flow of Prana, you bring about a certain control over the restless movement of Rajo-Guna. Then as the Sattwa flow increases, you try to overcome Tamo-Guna in all ways possible. Let your eating be Sattvic (Ahara is divided into Tamasic, Rajasic and Sattwic Ahar). Let your reading be Sattwic (no trash magazines and things which will create more Vikshepa and the wrong type of thoughts).

So the inner anatomy of spiritual life is the rising up from Tamo-Guna into Rajo Guna, purifying Rajo-Guna and giving it an upward movement towards Sattwa and attaining a state of Shuddha Sattwa. Bhagawan is Shuddha Sattwa, so when you become like Him, pure Sattwa, you attain Him. The body is animalistic in its gross movements, "*Ahara nidra bhayam maithunam cha*

samanyam etat pasubhīh naranam" (food, sleep, fear, copulation, these are common to animals and men). But you all have the human faculties of thinking, feeling, reasoning, discriminating, and in essence you are divine. You are a mixture of animal, human and divine. The inner anatomy of spiritual life is to gradually eliminate the animal, purify the human in such a way that it goes towards the source of all things (Ekameva Advitiya) and awakening the sleeping divinity within you so that you rise up from pure consciousness into divine consciousness. This is one glimpse into the inner anatomy of the spiritual life.

Tomorrow evening we will enter into other dimensions of the same subject. God bless you all.
Hari Om!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Radiant Immortal Atman! Beloved children of the Divine!

All the great Acharyas, Shankaracharya, Ramanujacharya and Madhvacharya, have written commentaries on the Upanishads, on the Brahma Sutras of Veda Vyasa Bhagavan and on the Srimad Bhagavad Gita. These three—the Upanishads, the Brahma Sutras and the Bhagavad Gita—are the highest authoritative scriptures. In their contents, all matters of dispute or unclarity are referred to and whatever these three great scriptures decide, that is taken as the absolute and final truth. So they are called the ‘Prasthana Traya’.

I’m neither a great scholar nor a professor of philosophy, and I don’t know the present percentage of literacy in India. The Central Government had taken a decision for making all India literate. They funded the Adult Literacy Training Projects in all the States and Night Classes for the rural population busy with agriculture during the day. The Government supplied gaslight with petromax and also gave kerosene lanterns for the villagers to come to the place of study.

But just think, during the time of Shankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, Madhvacharya and others, more than a thousand years ago, what would have been the state of literacy? There would not even have been proper roads to reach these villagers, and the media was totally absent. There was no question of educating them via Radio or Television, and most villages were inaccessible, and those that were accessible, had to be approached by a footpath. And yet, somehow spiritual life, Sadhana, Kirtan, Bhajan, going to the temple, offering some flowers, some water, offering some Bael leaves or Tulsi and doing Parikrama (circumambulation), this was going on even in the remotest villages. Even Adivasis (tribal people) had their stone or something under a Banyan or Peepul tree, and they worshipped it. How come? How did this knowledge reach them?

Knowledge reached these remote villagers through wandering minstrels and saintly bards walking with bare feet—that was their way of life; they were devotees of God, they were Tapasvis. They went from village to village, and through songs they awakened the spiritual consciousness of the people, they told them the meaning of life, the purpose and the greatness of human birth; they sang about the supreme goal that had to be attained, and how it will take them beyond all sorrow, pain and suffering. They will get peace

and joy, they will get great inner spiritual strength. This phenomenon has been witnessed throughout India. Sixty-three Saints wandered the length and breadth of Tamil Nadu in order to bring the knowledge of God, the practice of devotion and God-attainment to the poor rural people of Tamil Nadu. They were all Saivite saints, and four great Vaishnavite saints. They are immortal in the memory of the Tamil speaking people of the South. Similarly, in Kerala there had been great spiritual personalities and saints.

And you all know about the various devotees of Lord Krishna in Karnataka, their devotion centred around a beautiful temple of Lord Krishna in Udupi. They composed wonderful devotional songs covering all the aspects of human life—the do's and don'ts, the plus and minus—and they expounded the glories of God and the spiritual life in Kanarese verses. Purandardas was the Father of this great movement.

And there was Kanakdas; he was a Harijan, an untouchable saint. A wonderful miracle is attributed to him. Upon a great festival, the birthday of Lord Krishna, Kanakdas tried to have Darshan of Lord Krishna and entered the Udupi temple with a song. At the temple door some Brahmin authority who knew this sweeper told him: "No! You cannot see Him." Kanakdas replied, "All are equal; He is the Father and the Mother of

all beings. In the eyes of God, all are equal. Please allow me! How can the all-pure, all-holy Lord be polluted? I may be purified; but He cannot be polluted.” But he was turned away. In great sorrow and with tears, he came out of the temple. On one side of the temple, in a wall surrounding the main shrine, there was a little aperture, like a window. So, standing in the street he tried to have Darshan of the Lord. But that window was on one side of the Lord, and he could only see the profile. But he was satisfied, “at least I have gazed upon my Lord”. As he was saying this, the image suddenly turned one quarter, and Kanakdas had the Darshan of the Lord with the face fully turned towards him! Even to this day you cannot have the direct Darshan from the door of the inner shrine; you have to come around and have Darshan through that little window on the left side. They call it, “Kanakdas’ window.” Even today in Udupi, the ‘Krishna-Darshan’ is through that window.

The devotion of the wonderful galaxy of Maharashtrian saints was centred around Lord Krishna, Panduranga of Pandharpur, Pandharinath Vitthal. Among the great devotees Nivrittinath, Jnanadev, Tukaram, Namdev, Eknath, Ramdas and many others there was also a potter called Gora Kumbhar, a gardener called Savata Mali, a servant maid called Janabai, and a barber called Sena Nai. So when devotion comes

into the heart, all these differences of caste and creed melt away, and they become the Lord's own. These bards went from door to door to spread the spiritual knowledge.

Even in Bengal they had this phenomenon of Bous (folk heroes) who were the itinerant messengers of Bhagawad Bhakti and Prem. They went from place to place, they suddenly turned up and sang and danced. They had a peculiar instrument, a single string instrument, which they played just like Ektara or Tanpura.

So in every part of India we have this phenomenon. The North has produced Kabir, Surdas, Tulsidas and Meerabai and so many others. In Gujarat there are Sri Narsi Bhagat and Akhada, a lady saint. The saints were the ones who spread the spiritual knowledge, and what a library full of books on philosophy and religion cannot bring, they were able to bring. Through melodious songs their message went directly into the heart, and thus they brought about God-awakening. Rural India was as much spiritual as learned India.

How they brought the highest philosophy within the easy reach of the common man, we will see tomorrow. Wonderful songs and Bhajans have been sung by Sri Guru Nanak and Kabir Das. Yesterday, I mentioned about Khalasadas:

*Nama japana kyon chhoda diya
Krodha na chhoda jutha na chhoda
Satya vachana kyon chhoda diya
Juthe jaga mein dila lalacha kar
Asala vatana kyon chhoda diya
Kaudi ko to khooba sambhala
Lala ratana kyon chhoda diya
Jehi sumirana te ati sukha pave
So sumirana kyon chhoda diya
Khalasa ika Bhagawana bharose
Tana- mana- dhana kyon na chhoda diya
Nama japana kyon chhoda diya*

Oh! Why have you ceased reciting the Divine Name? You have not relinquished anger or telling lies, then why did you forsake this word of Truth? Enamoured by this false world, why have you forgotten your real Abode? Protecting your petty wealth, why did you forsake this Priceless Gem? The remembrance of whom gives you the greatest happiness, why have you left that remembrance? Thus says the poet Khalasadas. Trusting that one God alone, why have you not relinquished the care of body, mind and wealth? Oh! Why have you ceased reciting the Divine Name?

What you should do, you do not do. Leaving God, you are running after this unreal world. This is utter foolishness, sheer ignorance. Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya cuts asunder this foolishness

and ignorance by his one sword. He says, ‘I do need a full verse to tell you the Truth’:

*Shlokardhena pravakshyami yaduktam
granthakotibhih
Brahma satyam jagat mithya jeevo Brahmeiva
naparah*

I will give you in half a verse the essence of crores of scriptures – Brahman is real, this world is unreal. Jiva is none other than Brahman.

So One alone is real and you are a part of Him. There is no difference between you and Him. In embodied state, you feel finite and limited, and He is Infinite. Our seers and sages have illustrated this truth through many examples. The space is infinite; but as we are sitting in this Kala Kunja Hall, the space here is limited due to these four walls. Similarly, suppose a lady uses an earthen pot for keeping water during day time and when her work is over, she empties it and keeps it for drying; then there is some space in the pot also. When we go out of this hall after the lecture, we will find the vast space of Calcutta. And suppose one has to go to Delhi or Mumbai by flight, one will experience that vastness still more. If you are going to a foreign country, you will see space of thousands of kilometres. What is the difference between the space in the pot, in the hall, in Calcutta or which you experience while you fly to Hong Kong or Tokyo? The space in the pot, hall,

Calcutta is same. Only due to the boundaries, it seems limited in the pot or this hall. Similarly, Jeevo Brahmeiva naparah—you are none other than Brahman, but you feel limited due to the limiting adjuncts of name and form. You have forgotten your real nature.

Yoga-Abhyasa, spiritual life, is trying to point to something that you have not lost. You are always what you are; you cannot search yourself and find yourself, because when you are searching, you are the searcher, and when you find yourself, you are the thing found. So, both inhere in you—both these capacities.

The honey bee started a quest of that sweetness which it had heard of, and perhaps it went on asking, “Where is that thing called sweet?” Narada Muni came along and took pity on the honey bee and might have said, “Where are you going?” Then the honey bee might have said, “I have heard so much praise about sweetness; I would like to know what that is?” And Narada might have exclaimed, “Arey Bhai! What are you saying? You are that thing which the whole world uses to make things sweet!” So what you are searching for in the outside world is in you! Happiness! Happiness! You are the storehouse of Supreme Bliss!

The field of inner spirituality is characterised by four great paths for the supreme quest and for

attaining that Supreme Reality. They have made by and large the contents of Indian spiritual life. Why four? Because they found that the nature and the temperament of the human individual are not uniform. Some are predominantly emotional. Some are born with a tendency to activity. Their mind is outgoing, they believe in working. The third category of people are ‘Buddhi-Pradhan’ – intellectuals; they want everything to be explained. The fourth temperament is by nature thoughtful, given to reflection, given to a quiet inner speculation.

For the thoughtful being who is given to deep inner thought, a method is given which makes use of the mind faculty and its ability to dwell upon something seriously, calmly and quietly. They gave them a scientific method of training this faculty, so that the mind gives up all its minus points and becomes a fit instrument, well under control and obedient. This is the classical Yoga which is expounded in the form of brief aphorisms by the great sage Maharishi Patanjali.

The rational approach is Jnana Yoga or the Vichar Marga by the great sage Maharishi Veda Vyasa. The sages referred to him in predominantly Sanskrit verses,

*Vyasaya vishnurupaya vyasarupaya
vishnave
Namo vai brahmanidhaye, vasishthaya
namo namah*

“You are Vishnu Himself and no other. There is no difference between you two. You are identical in two forms.”

And in one other verse they said, “You are Brahma with one face. You are Vishnu with two hands. You are Shankara with two eyes.” Such a great sage was Maharshi Veda Vyasa. Just as Patanjali made Sutras to expound the Yoga science, Sage Veda Vyasa made Sutras to expound Vedanta. He put the supreme, quintessential teachings of the Upanishads into an aphoristic form; they are called the Vedanta-Sutras of Badarayana.

Those who are predominantly emotional express their desire for God in the form of devotion and love. How to develop this love towards some Being about whom you have already heard through scriptures, but you have never seen? Love is a great binder and a great attraction. It is everywhere seen, and it comes naturally to human beings because they are already accustomed to expressing this love towards parents, towards children, towards everyone. Systematising this approach to God, the great sage Devarshi Narada gave the Narada Bhakti

Sutras. A contemporary of Narada, Maharshi Shandilya gave the Shandilya Bhakti Sutras.

What about Karma Yoga? For Karma Yoga no Sutras were necessary. Through 700 verses, through 18 chapters, the Lord Himself expounded to Arjuna the way to attain the Supreme through doing one's duty. Who are you? "You are only an instrument. It is I who is seated in the hearts of all beings, and it is I who enables you to do all the Karmas." The driving person who is sitting behind the steering wheel knows how to manipulate the car. Of course they did not have this analogy, but they had the analogy of the charioteer. Bhagavan Himself sat in the charioteer's seat and expounded the Bhagawad Gita; He said: "If you perform actions without the sense of doership and offer them unto Me, I accept them as worship offered to Me. But if you feel, you are the doer, then that Karma belongs to you and it will bind you. The Karmas can be the cause of your liberation if you perform them with the feeling that I am not the doer, nor the enjoyer. I am only an instrument in the hands of the Lord." This feeling of non-doership is worship of God; this feeling of offering up everything to God acts like a philosopher's stone, transforming the iron of secular activity in this world into the pure gold of highest devotion.

Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya who lived more than 1200 years ago has made a beautiful composition called ‘Siva Manasa Puja.’ He adores and worships God as a Yati, a Sannyasin. He did not have a house, vessels, bells, ghee, lamp, Arati, Kapur (camphor) and all that. So he says: “All these things, I offer to You as my worship. My lamp is the Sun that shines in the daytime and the moon and stars during the night.” And he ends this Shiva Manasa Puja Stotra in a very, very beautiful way:

*Atma tvam Girija mati sahachara pranah
shariram griham
Puja te vishayopabhogarachana nidra
samadhishthithih
Sancharah padayoh pradakshinavidhiih
stotrani sarva giro
Yadyatkarma karomi tattadakhilam shambho
tavaradhanam*

You are seated within me as my Atma and your companion is Girija, Parvati; She is the mind. All the Pancha-Pranas are your retinue to do your Seva. This body is Thy dwelling house. Wherever I have to go during my busy day, I take it all to be a Parikrama around You. Whatever comes from my mouth in the form of talking, let it all be Your Stuti and Stotras, my praise offered to You. Throughout the day, I am walking about, and when the night comes and I go to sleep, take that

to be my Samadhi-Avastha (a person in a spiritual deep trance is not aware of what is going on outside, he is unaware, he is in a different state of consciousness). He ends the Shloka by saying, yadyatkarma karomi tattadakhilam shambho tavaradhanam – “In this way, O Lord! O Shambho! O Parampita! whatever I do through my mind, words and hands is Thy continuous worship.” What a beautiful concept! He was a great philosopher, yet with so much devotion he tells that: “Everything is divine, if you regard it as such; everything is Sadhana.”

This has been elaborated in the whole of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita. The Lord says: “Be united with Me through devotion. Constantly think of Me, and outwardly do all your duties, and if anything comes in the way of this way of life, be away from that; it is no good to you.

*Yogasthah kuru karmani sangam tyaktva
Dhananjaya
Siddhyasiddhyoh samo bhutva samatvam
yoga uchyate*

Perform action O Arjuna, being steadfast in Yoga, abandoning attachment and being balanced in success and failure. Evenness of the mind is called Yoga.

*Yat karoshi yadashnasi yajjuhoshi dadasi yat
Yat tapasyasi kaunteya tat kurushva
madarpanam*

Whatever you do—secular as well as sacred, offer it up to Me, and your life will be lifted up to the level of Yoga; all Karmas will become transformed into Sadhana.

Thus, the Supreme Being incarnating as Purna-Avatar, taking the place of a Guru through Arjuna, initiates us into this Yoga of transforming all human activity into Divine Sadhana. This is the inner anatomy of Yoga, the inner anatomy of spiritual life. Outwardly you seem to be doing something, but inwardly you are centred upon that Supreme Being—the mind is with God.

The mind has been delegated to you being the highest of God's creation. A person whose mind gets degenerated and goes to the lowest level in the form of impure thoughts and criminal tendencies, becomes the greatest problem in the family and in society. For that, one has to keep a police force, a penal jode, a judge and jails. The Upanishad says:

*Mano eva manushyanam karanam
bandha-mokshayo*

Mind alone is the cause for bondage as well as for liberation.

And in Hindi there is a saying: "Jaisa mati, vaise gati." – As the mind, so the action. "Mane changa to kathoti mein Ganga" – If your mind is pure, there is no need for purification in the Ganga.

Therefore, keep away from everything that can hinder your attainment of the Lord.

Guru Nanak said:

*Sadho mana ka mana tyago.
Kama, krodha, sangata durajana ki, tate
aharnishi bhago.*

Renounce egoism, anger and passion and keep away from everything that comes in the way.

Our mind is a mixture of all things. There are latent Samskaras (impressions) and Vasanas (tendencies) in the mind. Whatever actions you have performed, their subtle impressions are formed in the mind like grooves on a gramophone record, and these Samskaras prompt you to act in that certain way. Similarly, whatever you have enjoyed, those experiences lie hidden in the form of latent tendencies. The Samskaras are not as dangerous as Vasanas. The Vasanas are vital and they have got the dynamism in the direction of enjoyments that created them in the first instance. You should observe your mind and encourage the Shubha Vasanas and strictly avoid the Ashubha Vasanas. Go on doing this. You have

to ‘Detach and Attach.’ Take away your connection from worldly people and connect yourself to those who are devotees of God, who are devoted to the life spiritual. These are outer Sadhanas in order to bring about a transformation in the mind. You have to purify it, make it full of Sattwa and make it the subtlest of all the subtle things. You must do Japa, Pranayama, Prarthana, go to Tirthas, have Darshan of saints—all these things increase the Sattwa Guna within us and purify our Chitta. These outer processes have as their objective to bring about an inner transformation. The person becomes a different person though his outer life may be the same.

These are the hints for the outer Sadhanas of spiritual life. Tomorrow we will see what the great ones like Nanak and Kabir, Tulsidas and some other saints have to say. That will be the content of our Seva tomorrow. Thank you again for the trouble that you have taken to come here and give your presence and your patient hearing.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Radiant Immortal Atman! Beloved and blessed children of the Supreme Cosmic Being!

You are all here upon this earth to fulfill a great divine destiny. This is the central call of all the scriptures of all religions. “Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven, and all these things shall be added unto you.” First of all God’s kingdom—then this earthly kingdom! Do not commit the great blunder of throwing away the wonderful treasure which awaits you as your birthright, because you are a child of God, an heir to this divine treasure. Do not throw it away for the sake of these petty earth experiences. This is not wisdom. The Upanishads, Puranas, Srimad Bhagavad Gita, Ramayana, Mahabharata—all have as the central theme the call of divine perfection, the call to everlasting life and immortality. A poet has said, “Ashcharyam etat manushyaloke sudham vrisajya visham pibanti”—What a great wonder it is in this world, that you avoid nectar and choose to drink poison!”. In another place, the poet says, “When you come into this world, you are offered priceless diamonds, and you give that up for a shining piece of glass.” Aho Ashcharyam! Aho Ashcharyam - What a great wonder! What a great

wonder! Another poet says, “What can one say about the good fortune of a human being? The utterance of the name of God is sufficient to give you the highest blessedness!” The single essence in all this essenceless world is the name of God, which is the sure way and key to liberation.

*Harernama Harernama Harernamaiva
kevalam*

*Kalaunastayeva nastyeva nastyeva
gatiranyatha*

If there is anything that can grant one liberation in Kaliyuga, it is the name of Hari and Hari alone.

*Abrahmastambaparyantam
mayamayamakhilam jagat
Satyam satyam punah satyam Harernamaiva
kevalam*

From the status of Brahma down to a little blade of grass everything is false and pervaded by Maya. The only truth that exists in this world is the Name of God.

God has endowed you with a tongue which can utter whatever you want; it is fully under your control.

*Narayanayeti namosti vakastivashavartini
tathapi patanti ghoranarake kim ascharyam
atha param*

Even though both these things juxtapose - the Name of the Lord and the tongue - they do co-exist in this world; yet people are going to terrible hell. Can anything be more surprising than this?

It is by observing all these things, that our ancients have said, "Do not commit this folly which from ages the human world has been following—there must be some difference. As time goes on, there should be a little evolution, there should be greater understanding and more knowledge. In creation, wherever you look, there is a process of evolution going on; you must also show signs of this evolution in your nature and in your understanding. And therefore, we are concerned that in spite of so many bitter lessons the previous generations have committed, yet we are doing the same thing. There is a sarcastic proverb in Hindi, "Jan boojh karake, ankh khola karake, koyi ja karake apane ko khatare mein dale, to bolate hein, "Wah! Kya bhala! Kya tumhara jeevan hein! Savere dekhe hue kuvein mein, rat ko chalate waqt ja karake gira", which means deliberately you put yourself into danger. You have seen a well during daytime, and if at night you are going into that same locality, you must be very careful, you must avoid and bypass it and make your way. Having seen the well in the

daytime, if you carelessly pass and fall into the well, is it wise on your part?

Seeing all these things, our great saints and sages were very much concerned, because unfortunately this chance that has been given to human individuals on earth is not very long lasting. Tell me how many persons have you met in your life who have completed 100 years and have stepped into the 101st year? You could count them on your fingers. Even today, the great Paramacharya of the Kamakoti Mission passed away when he was 99 years, 11 months and 29 days. Only one day was left for his Centenary. A Committee for the Centenary Celebration had been constituted; but just one day before he could complete 100 years he passed away. Even if a human being lives for 100 years, it is only an idea, it is only a fancy. No one has got 100 years to utilise.

The great King Bhartrihari has this to say,
Ayurvarshshatam nrinaam parimitam ratro
tadardham gatam
Tasyardhasya parasya chardhamaparam
balatvavriddhatvayoh
Shesham vyadhiviyogaduhkhasahitam
sevadibhirneeyate
Jeeve vaaritarangachanchalatare saukhyam
kutah praninam

Out of 100 years, 50 years are spent in sleep due to night; so only 50 years remain. Out of this balance of 50 years half of it is spent in childhood and old age. And the remaining portion is spent in the ocean of Samsara in the form of Vyadhi, Viyoga, Duhkha, (illness, bereavements and troubles). What happiness can there be in a life which is more uncertain than ripples on the surface of water?

We have to be up and doing; we cannot afford to delay. All the great saints and sages have said, “You are here today. How long will you be here? How long this chance will last you do not know. Therefore, it is far better to be up and doing now, when your health is good and your mind is clear—when you still have some time. Do not allow things to pass away.

Long ago, in the school days, I liked the poem ‘Death the Leveller’ by James Shirley. Death levels everything. The poet says:

*The glories of our blood and state
Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armour against Fate;
Death lays his icy hand on kings:
Sceptre and Crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.*

One Hindi poet warns us through his song:

*Utha jaga musafira bhora bhayi
Ab rein kahan jo sovata hein
Jo sovata hai vo khovata hai
Jo jagata hai vo pavata hai*

O traveller! Wake up. The night has gone.
Why are you still sleeping? He who sleeps loses,
and he who keeps awake gains.

*Tuka neenda se ankhya khola jara
Ai gafila Raba se dhyana laga
Ye preeta karan ki reeta nahin
Raba jagata hein tu sovata hein*

Open your eyes a little from slumber and
meditate on the Lord. This is not the way to show
your love; the Lord is awake and you are sleeping.

*Jo kal karana so aja karale
Jo aja karana so abhi karale
Jaba chidiyan chuga kheta liya
Pheera pachhataye kya hovata hein*

Whatever you have to do tomorrow, do it
today. Whatever you have to do today, do it now.
After the birds have eaten away all the sown
seeds, what is the point of regretting?

*Nadan bhugata apani karani
O papi, papa men chaina kahan
Jaba papa ki gathari sheesha dhari
aba sheesha pakada kyon rovata hein*

O fool! You have to pay for all your deeds. O sinner! Where do you find peace after sinning? When you are carrying a bundle of sins on your head, why do you hold your head and cry?

Therefore, be up and doing. Great Pandits quote scriptures and tell you, "This is what the Upanishads say, this is what Yoga Vashishta says, this is what the Vedas say, this is what has been said in the Gita and in the Jeevan-Mukti-Viveka." But our saints and bards have said it in such a simple telling manner that it appeals to us, it goes within the frame of our own experience—as I have told you the other day about what are the inner unseen contents of life spiritual, the inner anatomy.

The opening verse of Ashtavakra Gita says:

*Yadi moksham icchasi cheta
Tat vishayan vishavat tyaja
Brahmacharyam ahimsam cha
Satyam piyushavad bhaja*

If you want Moksha, shun sensual pleasures as poison; these sensual enjoyments will kill you and destroy your spirituality and wisdom. Adopt in your life Samyama or self-control. Brahmacharya is that way of living that will lead you to Brahmajnana. Do not be a slave to the senses. Be compassionate towards all creatures. Stick to Truth. As the very ambrosia or nectar,

accept into your life the three great qualities of Brahmacharya, Ahimsa and truth.

This wonderful saying has been repeated by a very great Jnani called Bhole Baba. He was an Anubhavi-Jnani living on the banks of Mother Narmada. The famous Brahmananda of Etah has compiled the wonderful ‘Brahmananda Bhajanavali’. All hindi speaking people are familiar with the Bhajans of Brahmananda, and the famous classical singers also sing his Bhajans. Similarly Bhole Baba compiled short and pithy sayings containing the essence of all the scriptures in four-line verses. He called them ‘Vedanta Chandavali’, four quatrains that give you the essence of Vedanta. Previously they came in six volumes, but now they have been brought out in a single volume: Vedanta Chandavali, Bhakti-Vedanta Chandavali, Anubhava Chandavali, Sadhana Chandavali. He says:

*Jo moksha hein tu chahata
Visha-sama vishaya tyaja tata re
Arjava kshama santosha sama-dama,
Pi sudha dina-rata re
Samsara jalati aga hein,
Isa aga se jhata bhaga kara
Aa shanta sheetala desha mein,
Ho ja ajara ho ja amar.*

O Man! If you desire to attain liberation, shun sensual pleasures as poison (tata re is an

endearing term). Day and night drink the nectar of simplicity, forgiveness, contentment, serenity and self-control. This world is a terrible fire, run away quickly. Take shelter in the cool, serene realm of the Self, go beyond old age and become immortal.

*Prithvi nahin jala bhi nahin,
nahin agni tu, nahin hein pawana,
Akasha bhi tu hein nahin,
tu nitya hein chaitanya-ghana.
Ina pancho ka sakshi sada,
nirlepa hein tu sarva-para.
Nijarupa ko pahachana kar,
ho ja ajar ho ja amar*

You are not earth or water, nor fire or air and not even ether. You are the eternal mass of consciousness, the constant and unattached witness of these five elements. Realise your true nature, go beyond old age and become immortal.

*Chaitanya ko kar bhinna tana se,
Shanti samyak payega
Hoga turanta hi sukhi,
Samsara se chhuta jayega
Ashrama tatha varnadika,
Kinchita na tu abhimana kar
Sambandha tyaja re deha se,
Ho ja ajara ho ja amar.*

By separating your consciousness from the body, you will attain true peace and joy. Do not

feel arrogant about your Varna or Ashram (caste and status). Renounce all relations with the body and go beyond old age and become immortal.

*Nahi dharma hein na adharma tujhmein,
duhkha-sukha bhi lesa na,
Hei ye sabhi ajnana mein,
karta-pana bhokata-pana,
Tu eka drishta sarva ka,
isa drishya se hein tu duratara,
Pahachana apane apa ko,
ho ja ajar ho ja amar*

You have no righteousness or unrighteousness; not pleasure or pain. Doership and enjoyership only exist in ignorance. You are the one Drishta (seer) beyond all the seen phenomena. Know yourself and go beyond old age and become immortal.

This is what Bhole Baba has to tell us.

These great ones who gave in the form of songs the quintessence of the highest philosophy and wisdom did not only reveal to us the inner anatomy of our spiritual life, but they dwelt one depth deeper, and they revealed to us the innermost anatomy of our spiritual life.

Let us take the example of our own body. We have hands, feet, ears, eyes, nose and all that. This is our outer physical gross body. Then there is the inner anatomy for which the second year

medical students have to study. They start with dissecting upon the frog and other things; then they are given the cadaver from the mortuary. What is the inner anatomy? Liver, spleen, pancreas, the small and the large intestines, stomach, duodenum, gullet and the entire internal viscera—above the diaphragm and below the diaphragm. But then, there is a still innermost anatomy which cannot be dissected by the scalpel or any surgical instrument. How does the liver, the spleen, the stomach, the intestines, the heart function? How do the lungs do their work? Everything is made possible by the innermost, the subtler than the subtlest, cellular structure of the body—it is the ultimate vital portion of the body, invisible to the eye. If we have to see the cells, we have to use a microscope. From head to toe, it is the vital activity of these countless billions of cells in our body that keep up the entire process called life. If the cells die, gangrene comes up immediately, and your life becomes endangered. This is the innermost anatomy.

In the same way, the innermost anatomy of spiritual life is something common to all spiritual life anywhere in this human world within the context of all religions. It may be Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Jainism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism—it may be any ‘Ism’. The innermost anatomy of spiritual life anywhere in

the world, at any period in history, in any religion is the directing of our consciousness in a unceasing movement to the source of our being.

*Yeh Maya ki Srishti hein. Prakriti ka khel hein.
Lekin prakriti se pare jo purush hein, vo paripurna
hein, anandamaya hein, shantimaya hein,
jyotirmaya hein. This world is the creation of Maya.
It is Nature's play. But beyond this is the Supreme
Being. In Him there is nothing but joy and bliss; in
Him, there is nothing but peace, peace and great
silence. There is nothing but Aram (rest); there is
nothing but light. Reaching there, our journey will
end. Then there is no coming back into the cycle of
birth and death. This is the innermost content of
spiritual life anywhere in the world.*

The call of the great ones is, “Whatever are the outer circumstances of your life, from within your consciousness constantly move towards the source of your being. Don’t stop. Night and day, you must keep going.

*Krishna Govinda Gopala gate chalo
Mana ko vishayon ke visha se hatate chalo*

Go on singing Lord Krishna’s names : Govinda, Gopala. Go on weaning away the mind from the poison of sensual pleasures.

*Dekhana indriyon ke na ghode bhage
Rata-dina inpe samyam ke kode lage
Apane ratha ko sumarga chalate chalo*

Be alert! See that the sense-horses do not go astray. Day and night restrain them with the reins of self-control, and direct the chariot of your life on the right path. It is a non-stop express, and the urgency is because nobody knows when death comes. Nothing is everlasting in this world. Therefore be up and doing. Be quick, before it is too late.

There is another wonderful Bhajan of Sri Guru Nanak Dev.

Dina nike beete jate hein

The days are passing quickly. Day by day, life is ebbing away.

Sumiran karo Sri Rama Nama

Tyaja vishaya bhoga aur sarva kaam

Tere sanga na chale eka dama

Jo dete hein so pate hein

Remember the holy name of Sri Rama, give up sensual enjoyments and all desires. Not a cent will go with you. Those only get who give.

Bhai bandhu kutumba parivara

Kisake ho tum kaun tumhara

Kisake bala Hari Nam visara

Saba jeete jee ke nate hein.

Brothers, sisters and family members are related to you only as long as you are alive. Whose are you? And who is yours? Relying upon whose strength have you forsaken the name of Sri Hari?

The Lord is yours all in all, how have you forgotten Him?

*Lakha chaurasi bharama ke aye
Bade bhaga manusha tana paye
Isa para bhi na kachu kari kamayi
Phira pachhe pachhatate hein*

You have already traversed 84 Lakhs of life-forms; with great good fortune you have received this human birth. If in spite of this, you have not made any effort to attain Him, what is the point in repenting afterwards?

It is a wake-up call, calling us to invoke His Name.

*Sumirana kara mere mana
Teri beeti umara Hari Nama bina*

O mind remember the name of the Lord. Your life has been spent without Hari's name. If you are not actively engaged in connecting yourself with Him, then your life is a waste.

*Kupa neera binu dhenu ksheera binu
mandira deepa bina
Jaise taruvara phala binu heena tyon prani
Hari Nama bina.*

As a well without water, a cow without milk, a temple without a lamp and a tree without fruits, so is a living being without the name of the Lord.

*Deha naina binu reina chandra binu dharati
megha bina*

What is the use of a good body, but you are blind. The glory of night is the full-moon. What can the earth give without rainfall.

*Jaise Pandita Veda vihina tyon prani Hari
Nama bina*

As a scholar is without the knowledge of the Vedas, so is a life without the name of the Lord.

*Sumirana kara mere mana re
Teri beeti umara Hari Nama bina.*

This is the only thing which makes life worth living.

There are some very nice compositions by the great ones:

*Sadho mana ka mana tyago
Kama-krodha sangata durjana ki,
Taate aharnishi bhago.
Sadho mana ka mana tyago
Sukha-duhkha dono sama-kara jaano
Aur mana-apamana,
Harsha-shoka te rahe ateeta,
Tin jag tattva pichhano
Sadho mana ka mana tyago
Astuti-ninda dono tyaage
Khoje pada nirvana
Jaga Nanak yah khela kathina hein
Kohu Guru-mukha jana*

O Seeker! Renounce egoism. Day and night run away from lust, anger and evil company. Be steady under all circumstances. This is what you must do if you want to finish the Karmas in this birth. You should not be upset by these things.

Do not be carried away by pain and pleasure, reverence and insult, praise and criticism. Bear insult and criticism and be intent upon your quest for God-realisation.

This world is a difficult game to play; one can learn about this game only from one's Guru.

Sitting here in Kala-Kunja, you all are getting this wisdom treasure from the mouth of the different Gurus!

*Sangata Santana ki karale
JANAMA ki sarthakata kachu karale
Kahan se aaya kahan jayega
Ye kuchha maloom karana
Sadguru charana mein jaa ke baba
Janma-marana dura karale
Sangata Santana ki karale
Uttama nara-deha paaya prani
Apna hita kachhu karale
Do dina ki zindagi re bande,
Hoshiyara hokara chalana re baba
Sangata Santana ki karale
Kaun kisi ke joru ladake
Kaun kisi ke sale*

*Jaba laga pallo mein hein paisa
BHAYI, taba laga meetha bole
Sangata Santana ki karale
Kahata kabira suno bhai sadho
Baara baara nahin aana re bhai
Apana hita kachhu karale pyare
Akhir akela jana re bhai
Sangata Santana ki karale*

Cultivate the company of the saints, and utilise this rare gift of human birth. You must think, from where have you come? And where will you go after death? Take refuge at the feet of the Sadguru. The Sadguru will tell you how to go beyond the cycle of birth and death and rebirth. This life is only for two days. You alone can think thus. The animals do not have the intelligence. God has endowed you with the faculty of intelligence. Now is the time to think and ponder. Enquire who am I, know Thy Self and be free. No one is really yours; wife, sons and other relatives will talk sweetly to you as long as you have money in your pocket. Kabir says: Listen, O seeker! You should not come here again and again. Think about your own welfare as one day you have to go alone.

And thus says Nanak:

*Rama sumira Rama sumira,
yehi tero kaja hei.*

Remember Rama. Remember Rama. This is your only work.

You have taken a human birth mainly in order to constantly remember God. We are forced to do other things only to fill the belly.

*Maya ko sanga tyaga
Hariju ki sharana laga
Santon ki sharana laga
Jagata sukha mana mithya
jootho saba saja hei*

Part company with Maya and take refuge in Lord Hari and in saints.

See the pleasures of the world to be unreal. All phenomena are illusory. Rama sumira Rama sumira, yehi tero kaja hei.

*Sapane jyon dhana pichhana
Kahe ko karata mana
Baloo ki bheeta jaise
Vasudha ko raza hei*

What is the use of being proud in the waking state, when in your dream you have become a millionaire? The Lordship over the whole world is nothing but a wall made of sand which will tumble down if there is rain or a storm.

*Nanaka jana kahata bata
Binasi jaihein tero gata*

*Chhina chhina kari gayo kala
Jaise jata aja hein*

Thus says Nanak: your body is decaying day by day, moment by moment, and you are not aware of it. Therefore, be up and doing. Do not forget that the human status has been given to you mainly to remember the Name of God. Rama sumira Rama sumira, yehi tero kaja hei.

We have now gained a little bit of knowledge from the Guru-Mukhi sayings and Bhajans of these great saints like Guru Nanak Dev, Sri Kabirdasji, Raja Bhartrihari, Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya, Bhole Babaji, Khalasdasji and the great Sage Ashtavakra. We must digest whatever little we have received. Therefore, right from now ponder what has been shared, and try to assimilate the inner meaning as it applies to you. Try to walk the path as the great sages have shown. Then only it will be beneficial for you. These great saints have shown us what we should do and what we should not do.

In the 16th Chapter of the Srimad Bhagawad Gita Bhagawan has enumerated all the divine qualities which one should cultivate and has also said what one should reject. He says to Arjuna: Trividham narakasya dvaramnashinatmanah. Hey Arjuna, there are three doorways which lead

straight to hell. Kamah krodhah tatha lobhah
tasmat etat trayam tyajet.

Therefore renounce these Asuric qualities –
passion, anger and greed.

In another place the Lord says, “The carnal passion of the physical body and the impure desires of the mind are your enemies. Just as a warrior I am asking you to fight the opposing army, I also ask you to fight the dire enemies within you. And in the third place, He says, “Jahi shatrum mahabaho, kamarupam durasadam—Hey Mahabaho! Hey Arjuna! The carnal passion is a very dangerous enemy residing within you. Slay it.”

That is why you must be aware of both the aspects of the inner anatomy of the life spiritual and fulfil all the conditions in your Sadhana—the outer and the inner. The outer form of Sadhana in the form of Japa should continuously go on. At the same time the inner transformation should take place in the form of rejecting the undivine qualities. Then as sure as the sun rises after the dark night, your attainment of liberation will be hundred percent successful. There is no doubt about this! This is the Truth. Hari Om Tat Sat.

May God’s infinite Grace ever be upon you and give you all fullest success in your life

spiritual. I again thank you all for your kind presence and patient hearing. I thank the Birla family for giving me this wonderful opportunity of serving His beloved children!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

24th September 2016 marks the auspicious occasion of Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out one hundred booklets comprising illuminating talks of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

To propagate Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's gospel of Divine Life, Worshipful Sri Swamiji Maharaj travelled extensively in India and abroad and showed the path of divine life to countless seekers through his spontaneous and highly inspiring lectures. His lectures, in Sadgurudev's words, are the outpourings of his saintly heart, the revelations of intuitive wisdom.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of his hitherto unpublished lectures in a booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary. The present booklet *The Great Truth—You Are Divine* is a compilation of his two inspiring talks, one given at the Zotokuin Temple-Hall, Japan and the other at the Toshima Hall, Tokyo, Japan, on 29th and 30th April, 1995.

We express our heartfelt gratitude towards the inmates of the Headquarters Ashram for their loving service in transcribing, editing and compiling these talks.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—The Divine Life Society

*(Talk given by Param Pujya
Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, at the
Zotokuin Temple-Hall, Japan,
on 29th April 1995)*

Worshipful homage unto the Supreme Divine Reality! Worshipful homage to that eternal beginningless and endless Universal Spirit Divine! He is your cosmic source and origin, your invisible inner support and also the ultimate goal and fulfilment of your life. May His divine grace be upon all of you and all the members of your families—now and always!

Loving adorations to Holy Master, revered and beloved Swami Sivananda! It is as his servant and representative that I sit here and try to serve you by sharing a few thoughts and truths. May His glance of grace and His hand of blessings be ever upon you! Be active, be practical, and engage in the work that you have to do with full-heartedness. At the same time be detached and inwardly be ever connected with the Supreme Being, who is your all in all! That is the central teaching of all the scriptures of all the religions of the world. Live in this world to benefit God's

creation, and at the same time keep moving forward in order to fulfil your divine destiny.

The most ancient of all religions that exist upon earth today is the Vedic way of life. It was already being practised dynamically by millions of people when no prophet of God had appeared in human society. All the great living religions of the world are ‘prophetic religions’. They all have one exceptional divine personality as the originating point of that particular religion. Among the more ancient of the prophets we have to count Moses, Zoroaster and Buddha, the enlightened one, and then we have the great philosopher who has given us the philosophy of Taoism; later we have Jesus who gave us the living Christianity and Mohammad who gave us Islam. I forgot to mention Mahavir, the prophet who gave us Jainism; he is the contemporary of Buddha. The Sikh religion is not a separate religion; it is a part of the Hindu faith, because the great scripture which is enshrined and adored contains innumerable references to all the Hindu aspects of divinity.

Long before any of them had appeared upon earth, this great Vedic faith was being followed by millions of people in a highly advanced way with a great philosophy of its own and with towering pinnacles of spiritual experience! It was the outcome of the highest spiritual experience of the great seers who paved this way for humanity. The great truth that they discovered through their experience and the great proclamation is that

each individual being is inseparably connected with a glorious Divine Cosmic Being. That Being is of the nature of supreme peace and inexpressible joy! That Supreme Spirit is the Light of lights beyond all darkness! That Being is the Beauty of beauties and sweeter than the sweetest, in one word—unutterable, indescribable Bliss Absolute! This they experienced!

In the light of their experience all the joys and enjoyments of the world put together appeared like a tiny grain of sand before the mighty Himalayas or like a drop of water before the mighty Ocean! What is more, they experienced directly that this Bliss alone is real and eternal! And what is more, they experienced this Bliss to be limitless, endless and infinite! Being infinite, there is nowhere where It is not! That Supreme Bliss, being all-pervading and everywhere present, is here, now, in this hall of Zotoquin monastery! That Bliss pervades every speck of space. It fills every atom of matter. It is within you and without you and everywhere about you, it is the one unchanging Reality. You live, move and have your being in this ever-present Divine Bliss Absolute! This is the great discovery declared by the ancient seers before the Vedic era. This is the greatest and richest part of the global human heritage, because unlike the teachings of the prophetic religions, this was not addressed to any group of people in any geographical location or in

any specific historical period. It is the universal truth proclaimed to all mankind for all times.

This is the discovery of your inseparable connection with that glorious Truth. Each seemingly human individual is a spark of that divinity or a ray of that Supreme Light! You are human in your lesser aspect. But your humanity is based upon your real, divine and eternal nature! Your divinity is primary and fundamental; your humanity is a secondary, lesser aspect of your being. Therefore, they declared to you, "While you are engaged in your obligatory duties of this world, seek the Eternal Reality! Reclaim your eternal relationship with that Supreme Divine Reality." This inner process is the very heart and life-breath of all religions. The different practices are to bring about this glorious reunion and experience. It could be called the practical inner science of religion.

As we meet in this Zotokuin monastery I pray to the Almighty, to Holy Master Sivananda and to all the great saints and Masters that they may bless you and grant that even while you are engaged in your worldly duties, you will give your attention and be engaged in the even more important duty of moving towards that great experience which is your birth right! If your life is very successful only upon the field of worldly activities and you completely neglect, forget and ignore your spiritual activity, then your success is a failure. It will be like taking very great care of

your money purse and losing all the money inside it. No matter how beautiful the jeweller's velvet-box is, it is not for the box that one goes into the shop, but for what is inside, what is precious. If on the outer surface you are most successful, but you have neglected your spiritual life, then you have not lived. Physically, psychologically and mentally you might have lived a very vigorous active life, but you, the real person, the spiritual identity of yours, is in a deep state of sleep—not yet awakened! Therefore, when you yourself are sleeping and some lesser aspect of your being is very active and feeling successful, then that is a counterfeit type of life; it is not authentic and genuine. A counterfeit note looks exactly like the real currency note, but those who can recognise it, what value will they give? They will say, "No value!" Is it not the same with our life? If the most valuable thing is totally forgotten and lying unused, is our life not a counterfeit?

The ancient seers did not want that you should lose this most precious gift called life. They had great love for all creation and for all humanity, and due to their realisation they were identified with all existence. And therefore they said, "To lose this wonderful chance, this golden opportunity, there is no greater loss!" They called it in Sanskrit language 'Mahati-Vinashti'. Therefore, they called out, "Uttishthata jagrata prapya varan nibodhata" – "Arise, awake, having

reached the wise, be enlightened!” (Katha Up. 1-3-14)

That ringing call which they gave tens of thousands of years ago in the Upanishadic age is sounding even today, calling all human beings to attain the great and glorious divine destiny.

In the possibility of this great attainment lies the importance of your human status. No other form of life has this unique ability to think, to feel, to reason, to analyse, the ability to investigate and discriminate—it is unique to us. That is why the pinnacle point to which we can rise has no limit, and this fact gives real meaning and value to an otherwise meaningless life!

Come to think of life! What is there in this earth life? There is birth and death, old age and disease, fighting and quarrelling, loving and hating and violence and crime! Wherever you look, you see pain and suffering and the people trying to avoid this, but it is part of life! You cannot avoid! Heat is very uncomfortable in summer; cold is very uncomfortable in winter, and hunger is very uncomfortable! Life is not very satisfactory. After having experienced life, no one is willing to give it a certificate, praising it and saying, “You are wonderful!” All human beings all over the world are constantly engaged in trying to avoid pain, suffering and discomfort and trying to get some comfort and happiness; but no one has fully succeeded in achieving this condition.

Men of wisdom who have realised and known about this world said, “Even if you go on trying for hundreds of years, you will never be able to get it, because this world is imperfect! It is made of this stuff.” But what makes this life wonderful in spite of all these imperfections and defects is the fact that it is a golden ladder to immortality and peace, if it is properly understood and utilised. If you ask, “Swami! Living as we do in 1995 in Dainippon, and in this modern world, is such an achievement possible?”—then Swami has to say, “100% percent absolutely possible!” For who is Swami to contradict what so many great souls have said: “If you fulfill the conditions and move in the right direction, it is not only absolutely possible, but it is why you have been sent here!” And if you ask, “How is it possible in these changed modern times of technology?”—I will tell you! It is surely possible, because, even though the world has changed, your entire environment has become totally transformed, everything might have changed—but you have not changed! You are the same spark of divinity! You are the same 24 carat gold; what the individual was a million years ago or 10,000 years ago, that the individual is even today. The individual is a spark of divinity, a spark of that Light of lights, a wave upon that Ocean and an inseparable part of that Being who is worshipped in all the different places of worship in this world today. The full potential for this realisation, for this divine experience is within you already; it is the most important part of you. Just

as there is the potential for the evolution of a diamond under the earth or the potential of oil, fuel and petrochemicals that make the whole world run, deep under the desert of the Middle East.

Within you is hidden God! Within you is immortal soul! Within you is fountain of joy! Within you is Ocean of bliss and peace! This is you! What you really are, I cannot describe, because human language cannot express it! Be what you are! You are always what you are; it requires no effort. This experience is now inherent in you, but in a dormant or latent form. It is like a closed bud. You must give it all the conditions so that it may blossom forth into a fully-blossomed flower - a flower with 1000 beautiful petals because it is not of this earth! And this process is called Yoga or spiritual Sadhana.

From the most ancient past beyond human history, down the centuries, there have always been people who have fulfilled the conditions, made the necessary effort and attained divine perfection. In that land of the Vedas and the Upanishads this has been the order of the day. India has been the land of Self-realised people, but it is not the monopoly of India. Illumined beings have appeared in all countries, all over the world. Mainly in the Orient there have always been illumined people, especially in China and Japan; but many of them were not recognised, and unfortunately many are forgotten! You have a

rich background of spiritual experience. Therefore, be up and doing; live your life, and make use of this life also to attain that supreme state!

“With things existing around us in such a way, it seems too difficult; it seems to be impossible!” This is the excuse given by people who really don’t want it. If you really want it from the innermost depth of your heart, nothing will stop you attaining That! You are not the first person to say that it is impossible. Long, long ago, when a great teacher told his disciple, “This is how you must practice and attain that state of illumination,” he replied, “My God! It is impossible!” The teacher was a wise teacher. He did not directly contradict the student. He appeared to agree with him. He said, “Yes! Yes! You are right. But your saying that it is impossible is not right. It is very, very difficult, but it is possible!” And I would like to tell you what he told him, because I don’t want to say, “I will tell you...” I say, “I will tell you what He told!”

There is a Chinese proverb, a saying, “The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” But you must not stop taking that step, and if you keep on taking the step, one day you will be at your destination. You all know the fable of the race between a rabbit and the tortoise. And in English they say, “Slow and steady wins the race.” The secret of success is perseverance—never to let go of the effort! Keep on the effort with sincerity

and earnestness. Now, what is that effort to be kept on?

I can tell you a much nearer example. You have been invited for a big dinner. The table is filled with food. But will you eat everything at once? The biggest feast also is one mouthful at a time. So when day dawns and you wake up from sleep, God has given you the gift of one wonderful day. As you fill the day with so many types of activity, also fill it with spiritual activity! What is the central principle of this spiritual activity? Never to lose touch with the Cosmic Being, and in dealings with others always be inwardly connected with the Cosmic Being! This central principle of spiritual life has been declared to us in various ways: "Remember Me and engage in this strife of life, because you are battling with so many obstacles, difficulties and problems day after day! Okay! Engage in the battle of life, but always remember Me; keep your mind and heart centred in Me!" In another place it is said, "Be centred in Me; Inwardly be closely connected with Me, and engage in all your activities!"

We have forests full of towering trees seemingly touching the skies; we stand in awe before these great trees! But what is the secret of their strength and of their towering height? These towering trees are able to stand in their magnificent way because under the earth, invisible to us, they are always in contact with the source of nourishment and growth. They have a

constant, living connection with the source of life. Like this be rooted in the Cosmic Spirit, and let there be an inner link and relationship with That

Being while you engage in the outer duties of life.

The lights are illuminating this hall because they are connected with the source of electricity. As long as that connection is there, they convert night into day. If that connection is removed, we will be in darkness, and the microphones cannot work. I went to the washroom before I came to this hall. I opened the tap, and immediately the water came. I took it for granted—all of us take it for granted—but we never realise that if the connection between the tap and the source of water is removed, nothing will come! So is our spiritual life: a product of a constant connection and an inner relationship with the Supreme Spirit. We are involved in this world through our body, mind, intellect, emotions and sentiments. Make use of these very faculties to become livingly involved with the Supreme Reality also. Keep a constant, unbroken undercurrent of God-remembrance. As you have friendship, relation, love and attachment to things of the world, have the same devotion and love for the Supreme Reality. Here in this world, you have relationships with particular persons: father, mother, friend and relative; but That Being is all these put together in one. That Being is to you father, mother, friend, relative, sister, brother, well-wisher, helper—everything! Therefore He is

to you the perfect concept of all that is good, beneficial and all that can protect you and provide your total welfare. Being related to That Being is our highest good, it is our supreme welfare; and That Being is immanent in this world. All the

religions and all the Scriptures of the world affirm the Omnipresence of the deity. We literally live in That Supreme Being! Your life and all your activities are done in His presence. Knowing it brings about a feeling of worship and reverence in all your activities. It may be in your place of work, in your home, in the kitchen, in the garden, and while you are moving about in society or in shopping centres—anywhere! Whatever is being done, is being done in that all-pervasive Divine Presence. That Presence is subtle, and it is invisible.

We are all sitting in this hall, occupying space; because space is present in this hall, we are able to occupy this space. But has anyone seen space or touched space? Can you take so many kilos of space and put it in your house? Space is everywhere. Yet none of us has ever seen it, but we believe in its existence. Let us even come closer! We are all living; how come we are all living and are not dead? We are alive because we are breathing! From the date of birth we have been keeping alive due to breathing. But has anyone of you seen the air that you breathe? You cannot touch it, smell it, feel it, but you know that it is there. Two ordinary elements like air and space

are so subtle that even though being constantly in their presence you can only know they are there. Much more subtle is That Being, the all-pervading Reality, and our whole life is in Him. Knowing it, brings a feeling of reverence into all activities, and knowing that you're living in the presence of that Most High, you offer all your activities as worship

and adoration at His altar. Then every action becomes a Yogic activity.

Anything that puts you into contact with the Divine Reality is Yoga. When you live and act in such a way your entire life is Yogic activity. And the level of your physical life is raised to a higher level of spirituality. In the morning before you enter into the earthly activities and in the evening after you have finished your duties, keep some time when you do the same process in a more intense and internal way. Retire to a quiet corner and sit still and relaxed, let go from your mind all tension and pressure and agitation, and repeat, "Om! Om! Om Shantih, Om Shantih!" Still the thoughts, subdue the restlessness of the mind, withdraw the mind and direct it to the innermost centre of your being; withdraw the outgoing mind, gather all its rays and focus it upon the great Reality. It is the normal thought process of your mind, but made very intense, concentrated and one-pointed. The restless, scattered, outgoing mind is a net in which you are caught and bound, and it raises many problems. But the same mind, when it is indrawn, subdued and focused upon the Reality, becomes your

liberator! It not only becomes a solver of all your problems, it once for all takes you beyond all problems and liberates you. The powers of your intellect which you are now giving to matters here and solving problems etc, give it for pondering intricate mysteries of life: "From where have I come? Why am I here? What is the way to my ultimate destination?" Ponder these, make use of your intelligence in order to ponder the why, wherefore, whence and whither of your own self.

Thus, the four-fold powers with which we have been endowed—the physical power of action, the mental power of thought and feeling, the power of the intellect and your sentiments and emotions - change their direction, and utilise them in order to move towards the supreme Divine Reality. Make them the means of your liberation from this present unsatisfactory state of limited life. The outer world has a connection, a right and control over your outer life of activity. But this inner, subjective, personal life is your own; the world has no right to interfere; it is something between you and That Being.

The purpose of a Satsang like this is precisely to make you aware that this is an important dimension of your life; you must get busy and start being progressive. It is to give you a fresh impetus to your spiritual awareness and prompt and inspire you to go further—that is its importance and value. Sat is Reality and Sanga is sitting in its company - that means, to sit in the proximity of the great Reality. And Satsang says:

“Do not postpone this inner task of your personal life! Do It Now! Life is limited; time flies away.” Therefore, the wise person does not delay or postpone! Every day must be a day of secular activity as well as spiritual Sadhana.

This is the sharing and serving in the name of the Master Swami Sivananda. And I thank the Supreme Being for giving me this opportunity of spending this evening with all of you noble souls, devotees of the Lord, devotees of the good life, and offering this little service. And my special thanks for all those people who taken great pains and put

much effort in order to make today's evening possible. And I thank all of you for having given of your valuable time, for your divine presence and your patient hearing. But no matter how happy I am, I cannot prolong this Satsang because all of you have to go to different places. God bless you all! You are all already blessed, otherwise you would not be here! May He ceaselessly shower His grace and blessings upon you. And may you all, every day, move onwards and Godward, so that your life will be crowned with that supreme attainment which is your birthright. You have the fullest potential for it, and while you are engaged in this glorious journey, make people happy, make all beings happy as much as you can. Let your life be a centre of benefit, goodness, helpfulness and service, and may in this be your own happiness. Thank you and God bless you!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

*(Talk given by Param Pujya Sri Swami Chidanandaji
Maharaj, in Toshima Hall, Tokyo, Japan, on
30th April, 1995)*

Worshipful homage to that One Supreme Eternal Reality, the beginningless, endless, all-pervading, imperishable Divine Spirit—to that Being our reverential and worshipful homage at this moment! May the divine grace of that Supreme Being be upon all of you who are gathered together here in this very beautiful Toshima Hall! May the grace of the Universal Spirit Divine grant you long life and good health! May It bless you with prosperity and success in all your undertakings! May It grant you progress and evolution upon all the fields of your activity! May you be blessed with a cheerful heart and a peace-filled mind! May your innermost being always be bright with everything that is positive, creative and constructive! In that deeper area of your life which is behind and beyond your mind, let there be always satisfaction, joy and light. May there never be the darkness of dejection or pessimism. While I pray to the Supreme Being to grant you such an interior, I also urge all of you to heartily cooperate with the Cosmic Being and try to keep yourself in a state of joy and peace and optimism within. It is very necessary for the

human spirit to respond to the blessings of God, to recognise one's blessings and to cooperate in furthering the blessings already received.

This is a world of duality and of opposites, and no perfection is to be found in it. The fullest joy can only be found in the all-perfect Divine Being. Knowing this, we have to accept life as it comes; we have to say "Yes" to life and make the very best. If you take a positive view of your life and consider for how many things you have to give thanks to God, then, by thus counting your blessings, you will have no time to either grumble or complain; all the time will be taken up in saying, "thank you" to the Supreme Being. We compare ourselves with those who have something which we do not have, and unnecessarily we make ourselves unhappy. If you compare yourself with millions of others who do not have what you have, then you will understand how fortunate you are! Through such a right view, you will have a cheerful heart and a peace-filled mind - an interior full of brightness and joy!

I pay my loving adorations to Revered and Beloved Holy Master Swami Sivananda. May His glance of grace be upon you always! May His hand of benedictions be upon you and all the members of your families! May His blessings grant you the gift of a divine life! This is the best and the highest gift that a human individual can receive, and it is the most needed gift at this time in human history! Because at this time peace, welfare,

happiness and a serene living - all this is threatened and destroyed due to undivine forces prevailing all over the world. The quality of the Divine, 'God-substance', is present in all creatures and especially in all human beings. If this fact is recognised and this truth is known, and if you try to unfold and manifest that 'God-substance' or divine principle, then life would indeed be a place worth living and a thing of joy.

Divinity means infinite love and compassion. Divinity means highest purity and holiness. Divinity means harmony, unity and oneness. Divinity means serenity, peace and equipoise, equanimity. Divinity means absolutely selfless love for all existence. Such spiritual love irresistibly manifests itself in acts of motiveless and selfless service unto all beings. Where there is love, service is inevitable. These are qualities that flow directly from the Cosmic Divine Spirit upon this earth. To make yourself a recipient of this beautiful divine quality is a great blessing! To relate yourself to that Cosmic Being and open a channel for the inflow of that divinity is the one thing necessary to elevate human life. The art and science of real life is to be in this world physically, but at the same time to dwell in God spiritually here and now. You have a direct access to the Supreme Being, for you are an inseparable part of That Supreme Being. To open yourself to the inflow of the Divine is a natural thing for you to

do—the most natural thing! To do this and become filled with the light and the goodness of the Divine and express it in day-to-day life is to become a real blessing to mankind. This is what the world needs—such beings, who have connected themselves with the Supreme and received His perfection, and they share it with the rest of mankind.

I am not here to give any lecture. I come on behalf of all the great spiritual masters of India, and I come especially on behalf of our Holy Master Swami Sivananda, and with the intention of conveying to you their awakening and life-transforming message. My purpose is to awaken you to the higher purpose of your seemingly ordinary life.

Having come into this world, you have to act and keep busy in order to make a living; people do it in ever so many ways, but fundamentally they are all engaged in supporting themselves. It is something one has to do—one cannot avoid! The way and the manner in which you do it may be an individual choice. But making a living in this world should not be mistaken to be life; life is something totally different and far more important! It means to make use of your presence here on earth in such a wise way, that you attain your own highest blessedness.

Today we shall consider the human being and the Law that governs the life of this human being, and how best we can make use of this Law to

make our life a success; how best we can utilise this Law to attain our highest good and supreme welfare, ours as well as that of all others.

We just now saw that each individual has got direct access to the supreme Cosmic Spirit. And if one takes advantage and makes use of this direct access and opens up the channel for the inflow of Divinity within, one's life becomes a great blessing and benediction to all living beings and all fellow human beings. When this is the central truth and when this possibility is there, why then do human beings not do so all over this world and make this world a little heaven? Why is this world filled with so much evil, sorrow, destruction, violence, hatred, and so much of complications and problems? Why is there so much suffering, fear and hatred all over the globe? Why? When this possibility is there, why should this be the condition of the human world today? Why don't we connect ourselves with the Divine and thus make ourselves a channel for the inflow of His divinity and become channels for the expression of His perfection, of His love and compassion, everywhere, each moment of our life? How to understand this paradoxical situation of the human individual? To answer this question you must get some idea of what the human individual is, what all of us are.

We are a mysterious composition of three distinct ingredients. One is self-evident: we have a human nature. And the second is what was said a

few moments ago: we have a ‘God-substance’, the divine nature of God. Unfortunately, there is a third ingredient, that is a gross, unrefined nature of the animal, of the brute: all that is negative, all that is of the nature of darkness—that is the third ingredient that goes to make up the human personality. If there were only two ingredients, the human and the divine nature, there would be not such a problem; with some effort and the right direction we could connect with the divine nature. But the third negative gross element is so close, so much part of our physical and psychological being, that its downward pull is constantly exerted upon the human nature. Whereas the sublime, uplifting and elevating pull of the higher divine nature is rarely felt; it seems to be remote. The powerful pull of the downward gross nature, the beast nature, human beings have to tackle every day. It is always felt as an obstacle on the way; always it confronts us, and we have to deal with it. So there is this inward pull, this tension between the gross lower nature and our weak human nature; and we are not told how to develop our resources, our inner strength to resist it, and how to develop it to such an extent that we may be able to overcome it ultimately. This discipline, this science, this training is rarely imparted. Even more deplorable is that a vast majority of human beings don’t even know that this confrontation, this tug-of-war, exists, and they willingly submit to the pull of the lower nature, thinking that they will find some satisfaction and happiness. They

don't know of themselves as distinct and different from it—they are identified with their lower nature. Due to identification with this lesser nature and due to ignorance, weakness of will and a tendency to succumb to the attraction of pleasant experiences, the human individual becomes enslaved by the lesser nature. To rise up from this condition and to assert one's superiority over this gross nature is the beginning of the upward ascent of the human spirit towards its divine origin.

We are not doing it, because we are not taught to do it, either at home, in the schools and places of education. In society indulgence in unnecessary habits like smoking, drinking, gambling and pursuit of pleasure are encouraged by vested interests, because they are able to enrich themselves due to the weaknesses of the human individual, and the whole society has become oriented towards this pursuit of superficial pleasures and is completely caught in this net. If we observe human life in general, what do we find? We find that the higher divine principle, 'God-substance', is completely neglected and slumbering, and the lowest nature is very vigorous, active and asserting itself; the poor human nature, due to weakness and not having developed its higher powers, which are inherent in the mind, and due to a tendency towards pleasure has given itself over to the

aggressive lesser nature. This is what we find in the world today.

It is precisely to give us positive support and help in this situation that all the great religious systems and all the Scriptures have given certain rules for living and conducting ourselves. They have explained to us certain Laws that prevail in our life, so that by putting ourselves in the right relationship with these Laws, by observing the rules, we may save ourselves from a great deal of harm, and we may be able to successfully give a positive upward push. But unfortunately due to a wrong attitude towards these benign Laws and rules, and due to the spirit of independence or ego, one says, "I shall not be bound by any of these old rules and regulations. I am a highly advanced modern individual. I am rational. Why should I observe these old regulations?" That becomes the attitude of modern man. But it is the height of irrationality and pseudo-intellectualism. These universal Laws regulating human conduct have not been given to curtail our independence, they are not being imposed, but their idea is to help and give support in all situations.

Everywhere in life there are rules and regulations and laws governing day-to-day human conduct. In every Government Department there is a certain manual for regulating the activity of the employees; no one would dream of ignoring or breaking these rules; they are quite content to observe them correctly.

Education institutions, schools and colleges, they have their own rules and regulations for the students. Every hospital or medical centre has strict rules and regulations on how to get admission, what the patients should do, what all forms they should fill and sign. Even in a department store or supermarket a customer has to do his purchasing only according to a certain system. One cannot go and come through any way, it is all co-related. When you go out into the streets, you have to observe specific traffic rules. There is a law governing this entire activity and which lays down the consequences if one breaks the rule! You don't ever think that it is an invasion upon your independence; you are perfectly ready to observe all these rules and regulations. Also a highly educated, rich and independent lady, driving an automobile, will never think of going on the wrong side of the road.

Now I will tell you why I am going into so much detail about this particular aspect of the Law. I want to make you aware of a specific principle behind all these laws that regulate our conduct in any big city like Tokyo. When this lady behind the steering-wheel of an automobile is adhering to the correct side of the road and is observing all the rules and regulations, is she doing this because she is thinking of the Police Department, the Magistrate in a Court or the money she will have to pay if she is fined? All these things may have some indirect connection with

her sticking to the right way of driving her vehicle; but these things are not in the mind of the lady. She knows that in a fast traffic, if she makes a mistake, there is going to be a collision; she may kill some other driver, or she may become crippled for life or lose her life. It is this consideration, the danger of breaking the law and coming to grievous injury that is weighing foremost in her mind. That is why one is sticking to the correct side of the road and observing all the traffic rules while moving along the highway.

This brings us to the most important point: the main purpose of this law is to save you from harm; save others from harm through you, protect you and guarantee your safety and welfare. You may try to analyse the rules and regulations prevailing in any department of life, you will find that ultimately the main objective of all these rules is to ensure the welfare and the protection of the people who live according to these rules. Therefore, they are benign, beneficial and positive in their purpose towards those to whom these laws are given.

There is one great Law that prevails in the life of the human individual. It is the Law of action and reaction. It is the Law of cause and effect. It is just like sowing a seed and reaping the fruits of the seed. ‘Action and reaction are equal and opposite’. Whatever is the nature of the action, the reaction tends to have the same nature; and whatever direction the action has taken, when it

has been initiated by some agent, the reaction will take the opposite direction and come back upon the agent. It is like throwing a rubber ball against a wall, it will rebound to the thrower. ‘Cause and effect’ - bringing into being a certain cause, then its effect will follow as the wheels of a cart follow the steps of the animal that draws the cart. It will follow without fail. As the sun rises in the east and sets in the west, as the wheels of the cart follow the footsteps of the oxen that draws it, reaction follows the action; the effect follows the cause.

What is the relevance of this Law? What is the use of this Law? What is the relation with the present human situation? What is the meaning and significance of this Law? This Law is a Cosmic Law—not the law of any human government or authority or organisation. We found out that any law that prevails in a human system is aimed at our welfare and good, and it is not in order to punish us or make us suffer; but by breaking the law, we bring upon ourselves great suffering.

When human law is formulated and created with such benign consideration, with such a sympathetic view, do you think that the Cosmic Law of the all-perfect Spirit can be a Law just to bring about punishment or retribution to the human family on earth? Never! Never! Never! It is impossible to think of such a fantastic idea! However, it is a wonder that the vast majority of beings who have heard of this Law only think of it in a negative manner; they think that it is a Law of

retribution or punishment for offences committed here. It is due to a lack of evolution and proper understanding that they only perceive a negative reason for its existence; they are not able to understand its real positive purpose and significance. This Law is the greatest single act of Supreme Grace, Supreme Divine Justice and the Supreme Divine Desire for your highest good and supreme welfare. This Law gives you the freedom, the ability, the power to attain and achieve whatever you wish to attain and achieve! This Law gives to you the ability to fulfil any aspiration that your heart is filled with. It is a golden key given by the Divine to the human being. It is a golden key given by the Universal Spirit to the individual spirit, by which to open the portals to highest blessedness and supreme welfare.

But let us pause for a little while. There is something about this golden key which we have to understand fully, if we are to benefit by it. Let us look for a moment at the potential and the scope of ‘man on earth’. This golden gift of life that God has given to man has opened up a field for us; it has thrown before us innumerable opportunities. But then the harvest will depend upon what the person chooses to sow in that field. “As you sow, so shall you reap!” The field is our psychological inner being, and this body also is a field. According to the type of activity we engage in through this body will be the result that comes upon this body—strength or weakness, health or

ill-health. The development or destruction depends upon what type of actions we engage in through this body: through the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue and all the parts of our body. In this we are our own best friend or we are our own enemy. We can lift our life to highest heights or put it into degradation. This is even more so in the field of our inner being: our mind, emotions, sentiments and in the way our intellect works. If you make use of your psyche in a purely human way, you reap benefits only pertaining to this level of your life. But if you become dynamic and active upon the higher spiritual and divine level, you rise up on the scale of evolution and attain the heights of divine perfection. Fire is a power! The heat of it can support millions and billions of lives; but it can bring about destruction of life. It is the way in which you relate to any power and how you utilise it; it depends upon the way in which you think your thoughts. If you sow the seeds of a sweet fruit, it gives you a harvest of sweet fruits. If you sow a seed of a bitter fruit, it gives you a harvest of a bitter fruit. If you sow the seeds of a very thorny plant, it brings about a great deal of discomfort and suffering. If you sow the seed of a poisonous fruit, it produces fruit that brings death! The field is the same. What it produces depends upon what you sow in it. Therefore, be always alert and awake and careful what you sow, for that will be produced due to this Law. Be wise and choose well the seeds in the form of thought, of intention, of desire in your mind.

There are three ways of relating yourself to whatever has been given to you, and three ways of utilising whatever has been given. There is an unwise way; there is a sublime, noble, lofty way; and there is an ugly, dark and degraded way. If you are unwise and fail to utilise whatever has been given to you, it becomes an unfortunate waste; it produces nothing for you. If it is used in the wrong way, you become the enemy of man and the destroyer of the welfare of beings. This is the opposite pole of spirituality or divinity or goodness. It is like the North Pole and the South Pole—nowhere near each other! It is the contradiction of the Divine Law which is the Law of Love and living for the welfare of God's creatures. It is the rejection and the contradiction of the divinity of our own real nature. If you are living in accordance with the Cosmic Law, all is well!

Now I want to tell you something about the symbol OM. Om means Peace, Light, Purity – Ananda, Bliss; it is the Light of supreme perfection and knowledge! Om is the highest state of divine consciousness. And that highest state of divine consciousness is infinite love and compassion and infinite of all that is positive, auspicious and blessed. Om stands for eternal life! Om stands for liberation! From our human point of view Om stands for love, goodwill and friendship. Ultimately Om can only be experienced and realised in the deepest depths of

meditation! But if you want to understand and know what it is upon your mental and intellectual level, Swami Sivanandaji, my Holy Master, has written a book called ‘Philosophy and Meditation on Om.’ This small book will give you a good knowledge of what Om stands for.

There are a number of Upanishads in Vedanta; they are small Sanskrit compositions giving records of highest spiritual truths. Of these Upanishads ten are the most important ones. From the Sadhana point of view, from the ultimate experience point of view, the first short Upanishad is the most important, the ‘Isavasya Upanishad’. From the practical spiritual life and Sadhana point of view the third Upanishad is the most important, the ‘Kathopanishad.’ But from the point of view of Vedanta and of the philosophical exposition of the nature of the Ultimate Reality and your real divine nature the sixth is the most important, and this Upanishad is called ‘Mandukya Upanishad’. It is regarded by all Vedantins and Jnana Yogis as the most important of all the Upanishads. It is a deep, penetrating analytical study and exposition of what Om really implies, what it constitutes. The great world teacher Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya who lived 1200 years ago has written a big commentary upon this important Mandukya Upanishad.

He said, “You are unwise to allow this precious gift of human life to be wasted away by not utilising it in a good way. If you are fortunate

enough to have been awakened by the wisdom teachings of some good teachers, then you know its precious value and put it to the highest use, and thus make your life blessed.” You have to choose wisely. Resolutely reject the pull of the lower nature and take a determined stand: “I shall only put myself in the hands of the Divine within me, and shall follow its directions and thus make my life sublime.” This choice should be taken every day. At each dawn when the sun rises and you greet the new day, you must take this determined stand, freshly and newly. You have to renew this stand every day. In this only lies your own highest good and supreme welfare.

Long before Japan invented the quartz crystal watch, we had to wind up our watch every day. If we did not turn the key, the watch slowed down and stopped! Unfortunately, your mechanism does not work upon quartz crystal. Every day it has to be freshly wound up! Each day is a divine gift for you. Each morning you are reborn, and you commence a new life each morning! This is the secret of making each day a golden day and go a step higher, Godward, towards perfection and blessedness. Do you not cook and eat your food every day, a fresh breakfast, then fresh lunch and dinner? When you are prepared to do this for the physical body which one day will go anyway, how much more ready and willing must you be to do it for your real nature. Therefore be up and doing upon this glorious path. Neither be unwise and

waste your life nor degrade yourself, but be divine, as you really are. Have a noble aspiration!

Therefore, my beloved friends, my beloved spiritual seekers upon the path! Know that the key, whether it is silver or gold, can open a door, but it can also close it. If you open the door, you step out into the sunshine and upon the highway to blessedness! If you turn it in the wrong way, you close the door, and you are imprisoned by your own action. We do not have to worry either about God or devil. We don't have to fear either God or devil. We have to fear and have to be concerned about our own actions. Knowing this Law but ignoring it, we engage in wrong actions, either mentally, verbally or physically, and we create our own bondage and our own trap. The Law is unfailing. But if you engage in the right type of actions, mentally, verbally and physically, then the Law becomes your greatest friend. The Law guarantees and ensures that through this very earth life you will attain the highest state of liberation, peace, bliss and divine perfection.

This Law of Karma makes you the master of your own life. This Law of Karma gives to you the ability to be the creator of your own future. You can make and fashion your future in whatever way you wish. You need not worry about past Karma; it does not play a major role in your present life. But you have to pay full attention upon your present Karma, the action you are engaged in now, today. The present makes your

future; this moment is the all-important moment. Today is the only real and important day in your life! Yesterday does not matter, and tomorrow is only an imagination, a mental concept. There is no tomorrow. What you have is only today, because when you wake up, you don't wake up to a tomorrow; you wake up to a today! Live today, and live today divinely. Be selfless, filled with the spirit of service to all beings. Be a centre of healing, consolation and blessing to all. Be a centre of help, service and benefit to all! Today, with devotion and prayer, connect yourself to the supreme divine source of your being. This is the most important thing in your private inner life; all other things stand secondary to it. The top priority is this inner contact with God. Control your senses, subdue the mind, and train it to become one-pointed, focusing upon the Great Reality. The more you keep contact and connect yourself with Reality, the more you will become like that Reality. And in your daily life keep an active intellectual discrimination that will give the right direction and make you take the right step each moment. In this way, live each day wisely and divinely. Let your life become pervaded by a divine quality. Let the whole life be given a spiritual direction. Do it now! Do not postpone!

Guru Nanak, the first Guru of the 10 gurus of the Sikhs said, "Eh! This human being is a creature of half a breath." Because what guarantee is there, that when you have exhaled

you will be alive to breathe in again? What guarantee is there? And when you have inhaled and you get a heart-attack and die, the breath will never come out again. No one can guarantee that your breathing will be complete, when suddenly the call comes from the Being who sent you here. This is to tell you the importance of living each day, each moment, in a spiritual way and in a divine manner. God has given you everything. You are supremely blessed! You are most fortunate! Make use of this blessedness and good fortune, and starting now may your golden vacation lead you to a glorious future! God bless you all!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

24th September 2016 marks the auspicious occasion of Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out one hundred booklets comprising illuminating talks of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

To propagate Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's gospel of Divine Life, Worshipful Sri Swamiji Maharaj travelled extensively in India and abroad and showed the path of divine life to countless seekers through his spontaneous and highly inspiring lectures. His lectures, in Sadgurudev's words, are the outpourings of his saintly heart, the revelations of intuitive wisdom.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of his hitherto unpublished lectures in a booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on

the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary. The present Booklet Hinduism and its Relevance to WCRP is a talk delivered at Princeton University, U.S.A. by Param Pujya Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj on 31st August, 1979 at a plenary session of the Third Assembly of the World Conference on Religion and Peace.

We express our heartfelt gratitude to Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj who used to accompany Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj during his World Tours and preserved it carefully for posterity.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—*The Divine Life Society*

HINDUISM AND ITS RELEVANCE TO WCRP¹

Almighty Lord! O Supreme Father of Mankind, O Thou God of Love, Wisdom and Compassion, Salutations unto Thee. I bow down in reverent homage to Thee, O Ahura Mazda, the Radiant, Homage unto Thee, O Allah, the all-merciful and gracious. Homage, O Arihanta, O Bodhisattva, the Compassionate, steeped in the Great Peace of Nibbana (Nirvana). Homage unto Brahman, the Paramatman. Worshipful Homage unto Ek Omkar, the Satnaam. Homage to God Almighty, our Father in Heaven. Hail to the exalted Satori and Zen meditators. Worship and Homage unto the Supreme Tao and to Yahaveh, the Divine Mystery. And unto Zeus.

O beloved, Thou who are the One known by all these names, bless this assembly of Thy loving

¹ (*Talk delivered at Princeton University, U.S.A. by Param Pujya Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj on 31st August, 1979 at a plenary session of the Third Assembly of the World Conference on Religion and Peace*)

and believing children gathered together here at this moment, in Thy most Exalted Name, and in the cause of human welfare, global peace, unity of mankind and universal love, understanding and cooperation. May your Divine Grace alight upon each and every one of them. Grant them happiness, health, long life, prosperity, success, and spiritual illumination. Be present with us all, who are united in Thee. And help us in our deliberations, our discussions, conclusions and decisions. Pray, give the right thoughts and words to this servant of Thine that he may rightly share and serve this august assembly of beautiful souls, Thy noble children of the WCRP. Thank you.

Blessed Immortal Souls, Radiant Children of the Divine! My most loving and humble salutations and greetings unto you all in today's evening session, when I have been given the great privilege and the equally great joy of addressing you and bringing to you all, the true and factual picture of the time-honoured faith of the world community of Hindu peoples and its relevance and effective relation to the important question of "Religion in the Struggle for World Community," and allied themes such as religion and

international economic justice, religion and human dignity, etc. that are inseparable from it.

The WCRP, as you very well know, is not a speech-making or a sermonising conference, nor is it a place for the advocacy and the propagation of any particular religion and its beliefs. But we are here primarily to consider our various faiths with the desire to recognise and to emphasise the areas of our agreements and similarities, thus discovering and utilising the scope for our unified action in the cause of peace in this world, welfare of the human family, and in drawing closer together in love and mutual understanding upon the solid basis of our irrefutable oneness in the Spirit. For indeed, the Spirit is the one common universal source of our very existence, our basic being. Our attempt would therefore be to present the salient features of the Hindu faith concisely and to consider its possible contribution and role in the context of international relations and such pragmatic situations, like armament and disarmament, economic development, human dignity and peace, and the like. We have to see how our religions have been able to work for peace. How, at the present moment, our religions

can now work together for peace within a country, between countries, and within human individuals as well.

Hinduism is a term that is not at all very prevalent or popular among the non-English-knowing majority of masses in the Indian sub-continent. It does not constitute the original name of a specific system of faith, belief and worship, from out of which its adherents and followers derive the name Hindu. On the contrary, its name was unknown. The people living in the region of the Indus River in North-western India were given the name of the Sindhu people. For the Indus was known as the River Sindhu. It is surmised that Alexander of Macedonia called them by this name, feeling the need to identify them. These people at that time were already in a state of considerable evolution, having a well-established religious tradition. For convenience, their religion became for Alexander the religion of the Sindhus. The word ‘Sindhu’ underwent changes in course of time, becoming corrupted first into Indu, and then later into Hindu. Their religion therefore became an “ism” called after them. Thus emerged the occidental

language term “Hinduism,” that has no origin or roots in any one of the indigenous languages of India. What is its real name? Wherein is its origin, its roots? Whence does it derive its authority or its sanction? To where and to what source does it turn for ultimate proof of correctness or validity in situations of differences or disagreements amongst its followers?

This holy religion that had experienced millennia preceding the era of Jesus and Buddha, derives from an ancient body of knowledge referred to by the term Veda. This Sanskrit term Veda implies a mass of accumulated wisdom. There was a time in the far remote past when the Veda did not exist as written records. Down the centuries, generation after generation, the Vedic wisdom was taught and transmitted by word of mouth. It was lifelong study. A section of society existed, called the Brahmana, whose primary function was the study of the Veda and the teaching of it. They mastered the wisdom and memorised it. They, in turn, gathered pupils and taught them, and thus transmitted it to the next oncoming generation. Thus, through the corridors of time, the Veda continued to flourish and

provide the basis and support for the faith, belief, and worship of the peoples of the Indus Valley region and the Ganges River territory. This system went on, and the religion spread to other parts of the Indian subcontinent.

The Hindu believer in India calls his religion “Vaidika Dharma,” meaning thereby, the religion of the Veda. The term Vaidika is an adjective form of the original word Veda. Thus, its origin and the basis is the Veda. The religion of the Hindu derives its sanction and authority from the Veda. The later portions of the Veda comprise records of highest spiritual experience and deep inner spiritual revelations. Called the Shrutis, these revelations have been given the supreme status of highest ultimate authority in deciding all issues pertaining to religious and philosophical matters.

The Veda was put down into its present written form through the stupendous lifetime labours of one single genius named Vyasa, the great sage. Like a mighty colossus, this spiritual and intellectual genius, Vyasa, dominated the Vedic scene in the period sometime between 2500 and 3000 B.C. Due to this great achievement, he has come to be known as Veda-Vyasa. He is the

father of the Indian religion, culture and tradition known today as Hinduism, Hindu culture and traditions.

The deepest spiritual experiences of the Vedic seers and their loftiest mystical visions constitute the very foundation and the framework of the religious beliefs, doctrines and practices of the Hindu. The central truths proclaimed by them, expound the following, namely:

- a) THE ONENESS OF GODHEAD, (i.e. monotheism),
- b) THE DEATHLESS OR IMMORTAL SPIRITUAL NATURE OF MAN,
- c) SELF-REALISATION OR GOD-EXPERIENCE AS THE GRAND GOAL OF HUMAN LIFE,
- d) THE ABSOLUTE SUPREMACY OF THE MORAL ORDER, namely, RITA AND DHARMA in all human affairs,
- e) The existence of the LAW OF KARMA or human action and its inevitable result, governing the entire universe of man. Also its natural concomitant and corollary,

f) THE PHENOMENON OF METEM-
PSYCHOSIS, the rebirth and
reincarnation of the individual.

These, the Hindu accepts as proven truths and spiritual facts, upon the authority of the direct personal spiritual experiences of the Vedic Seers, who recorded them for posterity in the Upanishads which comprise the concluding portion of the VEDAS, which had now been compiled and divided into four tomes by Veda Vyasa, the great sage already mentioned above.

Human life upon earth is an evolutionary process to culminate in supreme FREEDOM, ETERNAL LIBERATION FROM BIRTH AND DEATH and all the finite limitations and imperfections of earth life. This is the Divine Plan for man upon earth. This is to be achieved through ATMA JNANA OR SELF-KNOWLEDGE OR GOD-REALISATION (BHAGAVAT SAKSHATKARA) by the unfolding of the latent Divine Perfection already inherent in Man, whose innermost reality is in fact, an inseparable part of GOD or the COSMIC SPIRIT. Man is a divine spark enfolded in mind and body. Man is a radiant ray of the INFINITE DIVINE LIGHT which is the Alpha

and Omega of endless myriad universes. Religion is to be perceived and understood in the context of this divine destiny of Man. It was not to be taken to be merely a matter of a certain faith, belief and traditional form of worship and ritual. But it is to be seen and recognised as a means and a systematic methodology of consciously and purposefully moving towards this goal of spiritual unfolding and divine perfection. Within the context of Hinduism (which term I shall use to denote the Vedic religion, from now onwards), within the framework of the Hindu's religious life, this process of ascent unto spiritual awareness and higher consciousness, was formulated into a well-defined science of inner unfolding. This psycho-physical science which ultimately took the practitioner into the highest state of supramental spiritual Consciousness, comprised certain ethical disciplines, certain well experimented and well-tried physical and vital techniques of body and breath, psychic withdrawal, inner mental concentration and deep meditation. This is the Science of Religion or the practical technique of religious experience designated as YOGA SASHTRA in Hindu scriptures. Today it is widely known as the Science of Yoga in the Orient as well

as the Occident, and in both hemispheres. The Hindu belief asserted that the above disciplines and techniques, and the above attainment were not meant only for any restricted section of special persons. But they were meant for all people in all stages of life alike. They were equally meant for the teenage student, the adult householder and family man, the elderly retired person, as well as the aging recluse and monastic. This sublime attainment is the common birthright of every man. Religion verily exists to help man to recognize, claim and attain this birthright of his.

It is at this point that we are brought face to face with another salient dimension of Hinduism. It proclaimed the fact that man's religion implied as much his relationship with fellow-beings and all God's creatures, as it implied his relationship with his Creator. The Vedas clearly declared that God was not only a transcendental Being, but, He is at the same time immanent in His entire creation. HE is the indwelling Presence within man. Therefore, your worship of the Supreme Godhead must necessarily include your reverence and your loving service offered to your fellowmen, in whom His divinity is manifest. This Vedic vision

is the foundation of Hindu Ethics. Do unto man as you would do unto God. For God comes to you in and through man in this earthly place. “*Sarvam Vishnu-Mayam Jagat*,” i.e. World is permeated with God. “*Vasudevah Sarvamiti*,” i.e. All is God. “*Purusham evedam sarvam yad bhootam yatcha bhavyam*,” i.e., “Whatever has been and shall be, is indeed God. “*Eko Devah Sarva Bhuteshu ghudah*,” i.e., “One God is hidden in all beings,” and a hundred such statements assert why man must have reverence for his fellow-beings and refrain from injuring any creature of God.

DHARMA constitutes this spiritual idealism in human conduct and human relationship. Without this DHARMA, religious practices are dry and sterile. They will produce no fruit. No meditation will succeed, no spiritual unfoldment will take place, no God-Realisation is possible without an ethical character and moral code of conduct in life. Thus, in Hinduism, Ethics and morality on the one hand, and God-Realization on the other, these were inseparably bound together. No wonder therefore, that the Science of Yoga formulated a specific pattern of strict ethical living as its very first foundational step, in its systematic

technique of eight distinct steps. The very essence of the Life Ethical was loving service of all beings, Paropakara, with the willing setting aside of selfish considerations, the strict adherence to truthfulness, self-control and purity of conduct, simplicity of life and total renunciation of greed and cupidity. These constitute Dharma.

The human body is declared as an instrument of service. Benefiting others was its highest function and its immediate justification. Thus, the concept of “Loka Hita” (World benefit) and “Vishwa Kalyana” (Global-welfare) are basic to ethics and spirituality alike, in the Hindu view of life. So also, the aim and objective of “Sarva Bhuta Hita” (Welfare of all creatures or beings) forms the perpetual prayer and daily intention of the follower of this Vedic faith.

These values are for practice and not for emotional acceptance alone. To this end, they were incorporated and interwoven into the daily life of the normal man in the work-a-day world. The householder is enjoined to come out of his front door at mealtime, look both ways along the street to see if there is any hungry person outside on this road, so that he could invite him to come in

and share his meal with him, before he himself sat down to eat. He also went into the backyard or the garden and put some feed for the birds, animals, and even insects before he took food. Hence it is, that the first and foremost exponent of Vedic Hinduism in the occidental New World, the great SWAMI VIVEKANANDA declared, “He lives, who lives for others; the rest are dead even though alive.” Then again, “Him, do I call a Mahatma (a great souled one) whose heart bleeds for the sorrowful, the suffering and the poor, the fallen and the uncared. He, whose heart is devoid of such deep feelings of sympathy and compassion, he is verily a Duratma (an evil-souled one).” Further, “I do not care for liberation or salvation. I would rather go to a hundred thousand hells, doing good to others silently, like the Spring season. This is my Religion.” This unselfishness is the test of religion. That which is unselfish, that is moral. That which is selfish is immoral. True religion comes with intense self-sacrifice. It is no wonder therefore, that when the Vedic sages postulated four fundamental values for all human striving, they put DHARMA, namely, the Ethical Value as the prime and fundamental value and they made MOKSHA, the supreme spiritual value,

as the highest ultimate value. Then, in between these two, they mentioned the pragmatic secular values of wealth earning and desire fulfilment. Because, these two were to be firmly based upon the ethical foundation of Dharma and move unerringly in the upward direction of ultimate spiritual attainment.

This sublime religion is not a theological system, nor a set of dogmas or some rigid set doctrine. Yet, within its pervasive fold, it holds several different schools of philosophy and various theological systems, all coexisting and coming under the scope of Hinduism. They all get due recognition and a dignified place within the framework of Hinduism. So much so, that the great flexibility, the tolerance and the adaptability evidenced herein let a prominent ideologist to remark that Hinduism was not so much a single religion but rather a Parliament of Religions. Chief and most outstanding among these schools of philosophy are: the Absolute Non-dualism (also termed Monism) of the great philosopher and mystic Shankaracharya, who asserted that the Supreme Reality is ONE, NON-DUAL, AND INFINITE, that the Individual self is essentially

identical with the Supreme SELF, the world of appearances has no reality as distinct and separate from the Cosmic Spirit and that the way to attain Liberation is by association with the pure and the good, conquest of lust, anger, greed, philosophical inquiry, control of mind and analytical meditation.

Next is the qualified-Monism of another teacher and mystic, Ramanujacharya, who affirmed that the individual souls, while identical in essential nature with the Supreme Reality, or Brahman, were yet distinct in the sense of their being related to the Supreme Being as fragments or parts are related towards the whole, as sparks are related to a blaze, being emanations from Brahman. Also, as distinct from Shankara's purely rationalistic approach of metaphysical and analytical meditation, Ramanujacharya declared the path to be through surrender to the Divine, in the spirit of deep devotion. Repentance, inner conversion and surrender were salient factors in Ramanuja's approach to ultimate liberation. These brought about the descent of Divine Grace upon the striving soul and this grace alone was declared to be the ultimate factor in conferring

freedom from the trammels of phenomenal existence. Such Divine Grace as envisaged by Ramanuja, (whose concept of Brahman included the idea of a benign, all-loving Cosmic Being,) did not have a place in Shankara's philosophy. Because Shankara's view and vision of the Supreme Brahman was that of an impersonal absolute principle, nameless, formless, beyond time and space and supra-cosmic. Another point of subtle difference between the two was in their philosophical explanation of this changeful, temporary universe of impermanent things and beings. Shankara expounded the doctrine of Maya by which was implied a mysterious, inscrutable cosmic delusion, an inexplicable and indescribable power that deluded beings into mistaking mere insubstantial appearances to be real and made them forget the Reality, even as a dream experience deprives one of the awareness of the outside physical world of waking realities. But to Ramanuja, Maya implied an incomprehensible (that is, to the unilluminated human understanding) divine sport, a game of hide-and-seek, as it were, of the Supreme Being. Purity of conduct, compassion and loving service of all creatures, non-violence and refraining from

harming anyone, but giving reverence to all beings in general and to elders and devotees of the Lord in particular, these constitute the bedrock of Ramanuja's ethics in his approach to spiritual life and the striving for emancipation from the thraldom of earthly existence. The practical means prescribed and advocated by him for God-attainment laid emphasis upon devotional love, prayer, worship and ecstasy as distinct from Shankara's stress upon the purely rational and metaphysical approach through philosophical inquiry and discrimination.

The third distinctive personality is the great reformer and philosopher Madhwacharya, who propounded the philosophy of pure dualism as opposed to Shankara's absolute Non-dualism and as different from Ramanuja's qualified Monism. Madhwa's dualistic school of philosophy declared God to be eternally different and supremely superior to all the multitudinous numbers of created individual beings who were eternally distinct and different from God and separate from His all-perfect cosmic nature. Madhwa's concept and personal experience of God was that of a Personal Deity, an all-gracious cosmic divine

personality with a distinct form, which man could visualise for this worship. This personal God was a God of infinite love, infinite compassion, and Omnipotence and Omniscience. He responded to prayer, received worship, liberated from sin, and conferred beatitude. Transgression of His Divine Will occasioned divine chastisement for the correction and the benefit of the erring individual soul. Differences existed even between different types of individual souls in accordance with their propensities, pure or impure. Even after attaining supreme Liberation, the individual soul or Jivas ever retained their separate identities apart from God. The Supreme Deity, according to Madhwacharya, is the great God Vishnu or Narayana. His concept of liberation was a cessation of rebirth and abidance in an eternal state of joyful servitude of God in closest proximity in His Divine Personality. Shankara's liberation is transcendence of Maya through attainment of illuminated wisdom-consciousness yielding eternal satisfaction and perfect peace. It is a state of the total merging of the individual consciousness into the infinitude of the universal. For Ramanuja, liberation is an ineffable state of endless ecstatic blessedness arising from your

returning to the source of your being from which you had become separated due to Maya. Significantly enough, all the three have based their philosophies upon the Vedas and their three schools derive authority from that same source. It is in their differing interpretations of the Vedas that we find the explanation of these differing classical branches of Hinduism.

Now, within the area of the dualistic worshippers of the personal God in Hinduism, there are seemingly a number of different sects and sub-sects of the Hindu people. Prominent among these sects of Hinduism are the worshippers of Shiva, worshippers of Vishnu, worshippers of God as Power conceived of as the Divine Mother of the universe, of Ganesha, and lastly, the Sun-worshippers. These sects are prevalent in India today. Their central Hindu character remains intact. These different deities apparently indicate polytheism. But the curious fact is that each maintains that there is one and only one God. And that his concept of that Deity is a right and proper concept. The actual and factual Monotheism becomes evident only upon an in-depth scrutiny of the different scriptural

literature that has developed around each sect. Though they refer to God by differing names, yet very curiously, they all equate this seemingly particular Deity with the Supreme Almighty Being, the one and only cosmic divine Person. This equation must effectively remove the error of attributing polytheism to Hinduism due to a superficial examination of the faith, lacking in spiritual insight and serious study of their classical source scriptures. At this point when this part of my address is being completed, I must allude to a connected feature relating to this phenomenon, of differing schools of philosophy and numerous sects inhering within the Vedic religion called Hinduism. And that is the firm belief of the real Hindu in the essential oneness of all religions, the fundamental unity underlying divergent faiths. It is the declared stand taken by Hinduism that in the light and in the context of the ultimate spiritual experience, all the various forms of faith, belief, and worship which we term religion are equally valid and true. For they all constitute various and differing ways of approaching and attaining the One and self-same Divine Reality called by so many diverse names even as one self-same substance is called

differently in different human languages. As many rivers arising at different sources and flowing in diverse directions all reach the ocean waters, even so, do different religions ultimately find the one God when they move into the spiritual depth and dimensions of their inner life.

Our world and human society at this concluding quarter of the eventful twentieth century now face situations of crisis of grave nature and global scale. The magnitude of some of the crisis is so great that it brings men to the brink of despair in seeking solutions thereto. In this predicament, can the religion of man make effective contributions toward dealing with the prevailing state of things? Can religion make any contribution at all? Here, I would like to share with you a view I hold in my heart. I look at it this way, namely, that religion, the very phenomenon and institution of religion by itself, constitutes the contribution of the bygone eras of our human race and culture for imparting sensitivity, beauty, and stability to man's life in world society. The religious life of man became formulated, fashioned and developed by the wise ancients as a lasting gift to posterity, as a continuing heritage

down the corridors of time in the interests of commonweal, harmony in human relations, world peace, as well as inner peace of the individual. This is what religion, all religions, in fact constitute for the human race. This is precisely how we must look at religion and recognize it for what it is. True religion is itself the Solution. It needs to be evoked. It needs to be applied. Its practical application can and will solve problems and dissolve crisis. If the human predicament in today's world is dire and alarming, it is not in spite of religion, but rather, it is due to insufficient application of the dictates of religion in our racial and international life as well as our own individual and social lives. There is no dedication to religion in the vast majority of humankind. There is only lip loyalty to the teachings of religion. At most, a half-hearted adherence to some of its principles according to our convenience. There is no earnest commitment. Sometimes misapplied teachings of religion can themselves become a source of discord and even violent clash between man and brother man, as it is evident in current history unfolding before our own gaze. Real religion truly lived and earnestly applied will prove a solution where other solutions are not forthcoming.

WCRP would do well to project this accurate image of religion and promote this correct understanding and grasp of the role of practical religion in the pragmatic world of vexing human situations. Long have we treated religion as just one department of man's life. This is the grave blunder to be corrected. Religion is the whole of life itself lived in a perfect ethical way and purposefully propelled in a lofty spiritual direction. Religion exists to ennable human nature and bring love and harmony, truth and honesty, compassion and sympathy where there is hatred and discord, untruth and deceit, cruelty and harshness. Let me humbly urge this most august assembly, each and all of you, let me humbly urge the WCRP in its Building Beyond WCRP III Committee to awaken all of twentieth-century world humanity to this approach to religion which itself is the solution to man's folly, selfishness, narrowness, and greed that are the cause of all human miseries and sufferings. Man's nature must liberate itself and shed these anti-social characteristics if we must ensure peace and harmony in our human society. Religion can influence man to do this.

Religion is self-culture. Self-culture is the very essence of true education. Hence, education is inseparable from religion and religious unfoldment. We are what our education makes us. We cannot be what our education cannot make us. We shall remain what our education has made of us. Our education cannot make us what it does not itself constitute and contain. Therefore, the most serious and the greatest attention has to be given to this vital matter of education of the human being. Educational systems must contain character-building, culture of the heart and moral training. A sterile educational system devoid of moral culture and human refinement is a cause of disastrous consequences. I have no doubt that the WCRP, in its relevant commission and seminar of this momentous Third Assembly will take due cognisance of this patent fact and move the governments of all the nations in their relevant ministry to take adequate steps in the light of this situation. This solution is indispensable and urgent. Educate man to make him a better man, a humane person, a brother to his fellow men.

The Hindu religion has a most significant contribution to make in this connection. The life of

man in its first stage of youth and student period was required to be exposed to such a most ennobling and culture-oriented educational process which included the learning of secular arts and sciences, professional skills, vocational abilities to make a living; but all these unfailingly accompanied by study of the science of ethics, personal moral training, study of religious teachings, and daily spiritual exercises, both outer and inner. When the student emerged out of this educational process, he was an integrated being inspired by ideals, governed by principles, guided by lofty religious sentiments, and directed by spiritual wisdom. I commend this ideal of education for the serious consideration of this august assembly for its task ahead and its future on-going program in its noble endeavours for world peace, human dignity and justice, and better international relationships in the world of today and of tomorrow, for our children and their children. May the Almighty Lord grant success and fulfilment to this great task of this noble body, WCRP which is indeed a gift of God to a world going through the dark night of its soul. May this night end in a fresh dawn and a radiant new day with peace, love, sympathy and understanding

cooperation prevailing in and guiding life in human society all over the world.

Thank you, Lord, gratitude and thanks to Thee, O one God of our human family. Thank you one and all. May God's grace and the blessings of all His saints be with you today and always.

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

24th September 2016 marks the auspicious occasion of Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out one hundred booklets comprising illuminating talks of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

To propagate Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's gospel of Divine Life, Worshipful Sri Swamiji Maharaj travelled extensively in India and abroad and showed the path of divine life to countless seekers through his spontaneous and highly inspiring lectures. His lectures, in Sadgurudev's words, are the outpourings of his saintly heart, the revelations of intuitive wisdom.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of his hitherto unpublished lectures in a booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary. The present booklet 'FIRST KNOW WHAT YOU SEEK' is a compilation of his six inspiring talks, given at the sacred Samadhi Mandir during the year 1993 and 1994.

We express our heartfelt gratitude towards the inmates of the Headquarters Ashram for their loving service in transcribing, editing and compiling these talks.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—The Divine Life Society

Worshipful homage to Thee, O Supreme eternal Divine Reality, Thou who art beginning-less, endless, infinite and boundless, Thou who art the Ishwara-tattva permeating and indwelling all existence. Thou art tinier than an atom, Thou art mightier and greater than the universe. Countless millions and billions of universes exist in your vast infinitude even as grains of sand exist upon the shores of the ocean stretching as far as the eye can reach. Like tiny grains of sand exist in the vastness of the seashore, millions of universes exist in Your infinitude. Thou who art the indweller of the atom and the electron and the enveloper and the container of millions of universes, worshipful adorations to Thee! At this moment sincere seeking souls are gathered together in the spiritual presence of one whom you sent to remind mankind that it is not only the seen that is real; but the great Reality is the unseen. The seen is limited in time and in space. The unseen is

I Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 18/10/94

timeless and is beyond the limits of conceived space. You sent this great voice of Thine, this great awakener, to make the human society aware that what is seen is only a passing appearance, but that which is unseen is the Eternal Reality. May your divine grace enable all sincere seeking souls to pursue the quest after this hidden Reality. May you inspire them to pursue the quest for this unseen Reality which shines in the midst of the ever-changing and vanishing appearance of names and forms. May their life have its lofty and sublime aim to behold that which eyes cannot see, to experience that which is not the object of senses. '*Yato vacho nivartante aprapya manasa saha*' (Whence all speech turn back with the mind, not reaching It). The ultimate goal of human existence is to attain and experience that which human language cannot define, where speech and mind and thought process fall back, unable to comprehend it, unable to reach it. May that Reality reveal Itself to all those who sincerely seek It.

That is within the possibility of experience in that dimension of our inner reality which is one with it; the spirit can enter into and experience the spirit. Divinity can recognize and realise divinity. And knowing that man is essentially Divine Spirit, our ancients declared: "That is to be known

through your own innermost reality. To that end may life be gloriously utilised.”

Loving adorations to you O worshipful and beloved Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji. All humanity is under a deep debt of gratitude, for you have brought about a global awakening to the lofty divine mission of every individual human being. You have awakened mankind to its divine destiny. “You are not here to live for a little while and be snuffed out of existence by death. You are deathless. You have come here to make use of this earth existence and to realise that divine destiny and to know:

*Ahameva avyayo anantah
shuddhavijnanavigraphah,
Sukham duhkham na janami
katham kasyapi vartate.*

(I am That, the Infinite Being, Avyaya Ananta, of the nature of purest wisdom consciousness *shuddhavijnanavigraphah*, I have neither pleasure nor pain, neither joy nor grief, for I transcend both.) I shine in my own eternal blissful, self-awareness. These, all the pairs of opposites have no access to my transcendence. They cease to exist. I transcend them, I am above them. So neither joy nor grief can touch me. I am ever centred in the non-dual experience of absolute bliss.

Anandam brahmeti vyajanat. Aham brahma asmi. Sarvam khalvidam brahma. Ekamevaadvitiyam brahma. Put these together and work out its conclusion, see what it results in. This human status is given to awaken mankind to this great attainment.

Yesterday in the night Satsanga they have read the 16th chapter of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita. It tells, one who wishes to know this birthright of yours, this great experience of an untrammelled state of consciousness, free yourself from every limiting factor, become unlimited and attain that state of Moksha Samrajya. The 16th chapter gives a hint; all that is positive, all that is creative, all that is beneficial and auspicious will help you attain this state of eternal freedom. *Daivi sampad vimokshaya* (Divine nature is conducive to liberation.)

Gurudev wrote a book expounding this concept, this vision. ‘How to Cultivate Virtues and Eradicate Vices’. It is nothing but an extension, an elaboration of the 16th chapter of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita.

In a recent issue of the Divine Life, as filler in one of the pages, Gurudev says, “First know what you seek and then seek it. Unless you know clearly what you are seeking, your seeking will be a wandering through various experiments of what you think to be spiritual life.” Then alone your

quest will be effective. It will move in a right direction. Thus says Gurudev, “O seeker, first know clearly what you seek. Then your quest will be very purposeful and clear”. That all this is relevant, that all this is of value and significance, is very clearly stated by the Teacher who said, “Ask and it shall be given. Knock and it shall be opened unto you. Seek and you shall find.”

What more categorical assurance would any sincere seeking soul require to know, to be absolutely certain that his quest is not in vain? It is within the bounds of possibility of each and every sincere seeker for the simple reason that Divinity is your birth-right. You are already what you are seeking, and this human status has been given in order that you may seek and find and forever crown yourself with the highest blessedness. That is your purpose on earth. This is God’s plan for man and to this end one should live.

Thus may God grace each one of you that you may live for this lofty end. May God bless you with success in this quest. May Gurudev, beloved and worshipful Holy Master Swami Sivanandaji, make it possible through his ever-present help, his ever-present guiding light upon your path. May God speed you upon this glorious journey. And the prayers of this servant shall ever be with you. So be it.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage unto the eternal, beginning-less and endless, Cosmic Spirit Divine, the one source of all existence. May divine grace flow from that Divine Origin upon all beings. Loving adorations to revered and beloved Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji in whose presence you have all gathered. May his benedictions, may his glance of grace be upon all in general and be upon you in particular who are participating in this early morning spiritual fellowship in his Presence.

Bhagawan is Anugraha Swarupa; the Sadguru is Kripa Swarupa. The well does not withhold its waters to anyone. But then, we have to take the trouble of lowering a vessel tied to a rope and drawing it up again when it has been filled. They call this right exertion, they call this Purushartha. The flowing water tap does not withdraw or withhold its water from anyone. But then, one has to bend low, cup one's hand in order to drink. If you are unbending, your thirst will

2 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 30/12/94

remain unquenched. The fire does not withhold its comforting and life-giving warmth from anyone. But we have to draw near to it and remain near. It is also Purushartha, right exertion in the right direction.

The ancient Masters exhorted the seeker, “Arise, awake and attain illumination”. They exhorted the seeker to put forth right exertion, Purushartha. Therefore, the divine teacher of the Middle East said, “Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” It shall be opened, but on condition that you knock. Seek, and you shall find. Ask, and you will get. This is again an indication that we have to put forth right effort. Right effort implies exercising the power which God has given us, the power to think, to feel, to reason, the power to discriminate, to enter into a proper enquiry, the power to control the sense organs and to govern ourselves, the power to restrain the senses, restrain the mind, and the power to direct them in finite directions, self-chosen direction.

All these imply the exercise of a certain Shakti and exercising it in the right direction. The right direction is always positive, creative, progressive and constructive. The wrong direction is destructive, not creative, not upward, not Godward, not towards Divinity or spirituality, but in the opposite direction. In various ways the great wisdom teachings try to bring home to us the need

to exercise caution and direct our being in the right direction. The Srimad Bhagavad Gita hints at this process in the 16th chapter. The Kathopanishad tells us about the one that is good and the other which is merely pleasant. Here are two paths, the one that leads to your own highest welfare, Shreya Marga, and there is the one that will entrap you, entangle you, enslave you, the Preya Marga, which is merely pleasant and attracts you. Shreya Marg, Preya Marg.

Thus the wisdom of the ages, of all faiths and all the great religious traditions, they have this direction—think well, choose and move in that direction which leads to your own highest good. But keep moving. Always be positive, always be spiritual, always see that Divinity manifests through your thoughts, feelings, words and actions, through your sentiments and your motivations. To do this, educate yourself. To do this, take up a firm stand, ask direction from God within, exercise your will-power, think, reason, be wise, discriminate. This is the way to attain progress towards the Goal Supreme. Engage your entire being in a constructive, creative manner. Keep the goal before your vision, and make your life day after day a firm, committed movement towards that great consummation. Put forth right effort and let it take you in the right direction. And to this end ever be awake and alert. Enquire,

discriminate between that which takes you in the right direction and that which takes you away from the goal in the wrong direction.

This is continuous Sadhana in order to make a steady process of moving towards your divine destiny. Be awake to this fact and arise in response and move in the right direction from darkness towards Light, from the unrealities towards Reality. Thus should be your interior. See that it is a natural movement towards your highest good, towards your ultimate divine destiny, to your spiritual goal of life. This is wisdom. Therefore, may God grant that wisdom prevails in a pervasive manner in your entire life at all times and may Gurudev's blessing grant you success in this life propelled by awareness and wakefulness, propelled by wisdom and discrimination. God bless you all.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage to the great eternal Reality, that transcendental pristine, universal consciousness whom you call God or That which is beyond this ever-changing universal appearance of names and forms Not this, but That is the Reality. ‘Om Tat Sat’ thus the ancient ones declared, having known the Eternal. To that all-pervading Supreme Divine we bow in reverential homage at this moment when you have gathered in spiritual fellowship in the spiritual presence of worshipful and beloved Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj.

Loving adorations to him who is the light of our life, who has shown us the path that leads to supreme blessedness. May his hand of benedictions always be upon you. May divine grace accompany you all the days of your life.

Radiant Atman! Beloved blessed children of Light, Sadhaks, Jijnasus and Mumukshus, seekers after the Reality, devotees of God, Bhagavad-bhaktas, Dharma-premis, Satsangis!

3 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 5/11/94

At this morning hour, what is your state? What is your condition, outer and inner? For a while, total non-awareness had overtaken you. You were in a state, where the world did not exist for you, neither, Sivananda Ashram, nor your physical dwelling place which you call the body. All these were non-existent. There was no time, there was no space, there was no name, there was no yourself. You were not aware of anything. From that state of non-awareness, you emerge into a state of awareness. In that state of awareness you are present here in this moment. You are aware of other spiritual seekers. You are aware of a spiritual presence, you are aware of Light, and more than anything else you are aware of yourself. "I am here in the presence of divine Master. I am here in this hall. I am here in the company of fellow seekers." And each and every one of you was a little while back in a state of non-awareness, and now you are in a state of awareness. There is within you consciousness, awareness and they say, "You were asleep and now you are awake". But then, the power that kept you unaware, oblivious even of your own self, that is inherent within you unless you shake it off thoroughly by taking a bath or a dip in the Ganga or do some Pranayama, some Surya Namaskara; it still persists and can overpower you. That state tries to overcome you unless you are watchful to

ward it off, unless you are consciously making an effort to ward it off. You sit straight, then you bend without being aware, then you nod, then you go into a state of semi-awareness, which is also semi non-awareness.

Therefore you have not only to be awake, you have also to be alert; you are vigilant, watchful, that you may not go back into a state of slumber, even while sitting in this morning fellowship of the Spirit. So, there is a saying that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. Anything worthwhile does not come unless you are prepared to pay a price, forego something in return to something else. If you want to be free from slumber, from ignorance, from bondage of darkness, you have to be alert, you have to be vigilant. Wakefulness must characterise your mind, your intellect, your moral consciousness, your ethical sense and your relationship with your senses. Unless you are wakeful and watchful, senses become uncontrolled. You have to keep them under control by being alert and vigilant. This is the price of liberty. Know that this non-awareness is part and parcel of your nature, because Prakriti is Trigunatmika.

There is Sattva Guna in Prakriti, there is also Rajo Guna and Tamo Guna. Our ancients said, *Uttishthata jagrata prapya varan nibhodhata* (Arise, awake, having reached the wise, be enlightened!)

Attain illumination by ever being awake and alert, vigilant and active. No activity is possible in a state of slumber. Activity becomes possible only in a state of wakefulness. This is indicated in every scripture. Shankaracharya says in Vairagya Dindima, *Kamah krodhasca lobhascha dehe tishthanti taskarah, Jnanaratnapaharaya tasmat jagrata, jagrata* (Lust, anger and greed are the dacoits residing within the body to plunder the pearl of wisdom; therefore, awake, awake!)

O individual soul, you can guard yourself from thieves and dacoits and robbers that come from outside and try to come inside, but if they are already within your own house you cannot do anything but be vigilant.

In many hotels and lodging houses there are instructions in the room, "Take care of your own valuables. Do not leave your valuables unprotected. The Hotel management is not responsible for loss of your valuables." In a big hotel there may be 500 employees. They do not know who is what. Their only concern is that the person is active and dutiful and can do a job well; they do not make any deep study of the personality. And also they say, "An open door tempts even a saint." So one may succumb to a temptation and take away something valuable because it attracts. Therefore, they say, "We have to employ many people, but we cannot guarantee

the right conduct of each and every person. Therefore you better be careful. Take care of your valuables. We will not be responsible.”

Perhaps God says the same thing to us. I have endowed you with many faculties. You better be on the lookout. Be aware, be alert, be watchful. Within you there is hidden God, but within you also is the opposite. Light and darkness both exist within us. The potential for positive and negative exist within us. Both Kauravas and Pandavas of the Mahabharata field dwell within us. Shubha, Ashubha are within you, because you have got Tamo Guna as well as Sattva Guna. Therefore all scriptures, all saints say, “O man, be watchful!”

If you are slumbering and you are not alert and vigilant, then you lose this wonderful God-given opportunity of attaining highest blessedness. God is awake within you and you are slumbering, O man. Is this the way to show your devotion to God? Wake up! Even as God is awake within you, you too must be alert and awake.

The moment you have attained the state of a human being, the day has dawned for you. You are in a special state of awareness as no other species of living beings. You are consciously, intelligently aware of your existence. You are aware of so many factors around you and their meaning and your relationship to them. Animals are aware only of food, drink, what is safe for

them, what is unsafe for them; the instinct of survival alone prompts the action pattern of lower living beings. To think, to reason, to discriminate, to know the difference to select or to reject and consciously making an effort in a specific self-chosen direction—all these are the uniqueness of the human individual.

They say, “Man is a rational animal”. Other parts of our being, the biological, physical, sensuous part are part of the animal world. We have hunger, thirst, sleep, fatigue, sense urges. We share them with all animals. But then, the rational part is that which makes you a human being. The moment you attain the status, you are already awake, you are no longer in a state of slumber.

Human status means wakefulness. Therefore keep the wakefulness intact and be alert and vigilant, be active. *Uttishthata jagrata prapya varan nibhodatha*. That is the eternal message. Responding to this call and being alert, vigilant and moving towards a goal is the essence of the human status. It is the essence of life. Buddha Bhagawan says, “Who attains liberation, the great peace? That being who is awake among the slumbering, who is alert and watchful among the careless, who is active among the lethargic, to such a one indeed is Nirvana, liberation and to no other”. This is the exercise of the human status in

the right-manner. And Upanishads call you to do so.

Arjuna was downhearted, sunk in deep despair. Krishna says, “Get up, fulfill your great duty of overcoming unrighteousness and establishing righteousness within your own self, the kingdom of your heart”. This call to alertness, vigilance and active effort to attain the goal is the message of all scriptures to mankind on earth. It is the message of all saints, sages, and mystics through generations in this world of men upon planet earth. Those who respond to this call and live their life with alertness, vigilance and actively engage in pursuing this great quest of moving towards the Goal, they become liberated, they are the fortunate. Those who do not do so, even having attained the great good fortune but fail to make use of it, they lose and bemoan. You have to decide to which category you belong. That becomes your destiny. God has given to you the golden keys to your future. It is for you to turn it either in the right direction or in the wrong direction. If the key is turned in one direction it locks you and makes you a prisoner. If the key is turned in the correct direction, it opens the door and lets you into the daylight. You become free. What you will do with it will decide your future, and to make the right choice is the essence of

wisdom in human life. *Yat hechchhasi tatha kuru*
(act as you wish -B.G. 18/63)

God bless us all to take the right decision,
move in the right direction and turn this golden
key of life in the right way and thus become
claimants of our divine destiny. God bless you all.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage unto the Spirit Divine! Thou art beginningless and endless, eternal and infinite. Thou art the ever present Reality behind these ever changing and perishable names and forms that go to make up the phenomenal appearance we call this world. We bow to Thee in reverence. May Thy divine grace descend into the lives of those who mornings after morning come together with sincerity in the spiritual presence of their Holy Master, Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. May your grace lift them up from the darkness and slumber of self-forgetfulness and bring them into the radiant light, into the dazzling effulgence of their eternal spiritual nature. May thy grace divine bestow unto them Self-realisation. This is the humble prayer of this servant of yours at this moment.

Loving adorations to the silent source of benedictions and benign Guru-Kripa! May it remove the darkness of ignorance in the hearts of those who are in discipleship at thy feet. *Ajnana*

4 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 12/12/93

timirandhasya jnananjana shalakaya, Chakshur-unmilitam yena tasmai sri gurave namah—Thy benign grace as a Guru removes from their vision any obstructing curtain and grants to them the true vision, spiritual vision to behold. *Samam sarveshu bhuteshu tishthantam paramesvaram.* May this great grace be granted unto all who live in sincere discipleship to thee. This is the humble supplication of thy disciple and servant at this moment on behalf of all sincere seeking souls who tread the path of divine life that you have shown, who seek to fulfil the 20 Important Spiritual Instructions which you have left for the whole world as your legacy. Grant to them the inner spiritual strength to resist temptations, overcome obstacles; grant to them the needed will power to adhere to these important spiritual instructions that you have given to the Sadhaka world as the quintessence of the teachings in the 300 books that you have written.

Radiant Atman! Blessed seekers! Where does God reside? Does He reside in the Murtis? Does God reside in wood or metal alloy or the fine white marble shrines of the North Indian temples, or in shrines of black granite stone of South Indian temples, or in shrines of void, nothingness, of our Parsi brethren? For they have only a blazing altar of fire. So where does God reside? : *Ye yatha mam prapadyante tanstathaiva bhajamyaham* (In

xwhatever way men approach Me, even so do I go to them) That is a very significant Shloka. As you conceive of Him so the Being is to you. God is to you what you feel in your heart, your Bhava, your attitude, your vision of Him, your feeling for Him.

He is a non-principle. He does not exist in any manner that you know of, in anything of this universe; because everything that you know is only what is perceived through the senses and thought of by your mind.

He is beyond the subtlest of the subtle elements. Earth can be touched, water can be felt, fire can be seen, air can be breathed. Ether you do not know. You only know that there is something in which all things exist. There is something in which you move from here to there. There is something in which concord jet planes flying faster than the speed of light. So there is some element in which all things exist and move and they call it ether. You cannot touch it, you cannot smell it, you cannot feel it, you cannot see it, you cannot hear it. It is the vast silence of the outer space.

The Shloka that you repeat a hundred times says, *Vyomateetam niranjanam* You are that which is beyond space. Vyoma is space, void, emptiness of what you call sky. Because you look up, you call it sky. And the space inside the depths of the earth has some other name. And if you look all around,

you are surrounded by space from all the ten point of the compass. Vyomateetam, God is beyond space. What is He then? Nirguna, Gunateetam—One, non-dual, beyond and devoid of all qualities. Where does then He reside? It is what you feel, your Bhava.

Even so, as you live, what does each day mean to you? As it dawns, you wake up from sleep and stand up and start moving, what does it mean to you? Does it mean the start of a new activity, taking up pending work which you could not finish yesterday? Is it for doing work that God has given you for the day? God has given to man a day and a night—A night to rest and sleep and a day to get up and do what? Is it to continue yesterday's work? Or is it to take a bath, so that you may take breakfast, or is it to go to the toilet, or is it to continue to quarrel and to nurse the grudge that you have been nursing before you went to bed yesterday? Or is it to resume the folly of rushing into temptation and making a fool of yourself, the same folly that has been characterising your yesterday, your day before yesterday, the day before your day before yesterday? And so it will also be your folly today and tomorrow and the day after tomorrow and the day after the day after tomorrow. Or is it to continue the quarrel which you have not finished yesterday? Or is it to think, “One more day has been given to me so that I may

make my ego felt. See what I am, let the world know. I will show them what I am?" Is it to further continue in your folly and heedlessness, or is it to work for the Divine Life Society, for Sivananda Ashram, for Sivananda? If you do not work, Sivananda's work will come to a stop? Is Sivananda sitting in heaven, thinking, "Will they continue my work?" Is he concerned about his work, about the structure of the Ashram?

What exactly does a new dawn and a new awakening mean to you? Does it mean to you another round of eating, drinking and reading newspapers and gossiping and going to Rishikesh? What does it mean to you? Another 12 hours period of day-light where I can indulge in my senses, fulfill my desires, satisfy my sense appetites, my passions? What does each day that dawns mean to you? What do you see in it, how do you feel about it? How do you enter into it? What it means to the person sitting beside you to the right, the person sitting to your left, the person sitting behind you or the person sitting in front of you is not the point. Sivananda is not interested in that, he is interested in telling you what it should mean to you, what it should be for you - And how it should be lived, utilised. He is interested in that. And, therefore, he says, "A day has dawned, a gift of God is now before you. Therefore sit on Padmasana, Siddhasana, Swastikasana and do

Japa, meditate on God”, because you cannot do it once you start getting busy with your work, with your daily duties, with your Karma Yoga”.

Therefore, create for yourself a time when no duty, no Karma Yoga is present, when everyone is slumbering, there is no activity, the day has not begun. Create that time by getting up early. Then no one can ask you, “Why are you meditating, why are you doing Japa?” Because it is your time; you have created it. You have carved it out of your sleep hours. So you are the master of it. So first he is telling you how to create your own time, so that you can live your own life.

What is your own life, if it is not a life of seeking, of Sadhana, devotion, prayer, a life of God-thought and of meditation? Therefore, the great Master, your loving father and mother, your Guru, your God, Swami Sivananda, tells you, “I will tell you how you can make your own time. Get up early. The world has no claim upon this hour. You have created this time out of your own night”. And what does this awakening mean to you? Does it mean a fresh opportunity for Sadhana, of sitting in Asana and directing your mind and heart to God, a fresh opportunity to do Yoga-abhyasa, to do Brahma-vichara, a fresh opportunity to do meditation, Smarana?

If the day means this to you, then you are a seeker, then you are a Sadhaka, a devotee and a

disciple. You will go a long way, and you will become God. If it does not mean this to you, if it means anything else, then there is serious need for waking up and starting to take a second look at your life, probing your inside. That is a very, very serious situation.

He tells you what an awakening should mean to each sincere seeking soul, true Sadhaka. It should mean one more day given to sit in Padmasana, Siddhasana, Swastikasana and do Japa, do meditation, think of God, move towards God, engage in spiritual Sadhana. Each day should mean to you an onward progress, a Godward progress, an ascent into spiritual life. This he has said and we have it before us in his 20 important spiritual instructions, the ladder to illumination and enlightenment, a blueprint for an ascent unto divine perfection and Moksha. We have his precious 20 important spiritual instructions. This is your hope and your sure guarantee that your life will not go waste, your life will not end up in distress and confusion. It is your hope and guarantee that life will merge into light, into supreme peace, joy, fulfilment, exaltation, glory. Now you know. Do something about it!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage to the Eternal Reality, the beginningless and endless Cosmic Spirit Divine! That Being pervades and envelopes within its infinite magnitude countless billions of universes and has been addressed by our ancients as ‘Anantakoti Brahmada Nayaka’. May His divine grace be upon you all and grant you success in your inner life! Loving adorations to worshipful and beloved Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in whose spiritual presence and proximity we have gathered here. That we are gathered together here is a proof of his Guru-kripa working in your individual lives. It is a proof that his hand of benediction is upon you. It prompts you from within to start your day with this hour of silent spiritual fellowship so that you may enter into a day not wrapped up in the covering of Ajnana, Avichara or Aviveka, but with an awakened spiritual awareness, Sakriya Vichara. Even as the physical body emerges from sleep into

5 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 13/7/94

wakefulness of the Jagrata Avastha, even so your psyche should do likewise and keep up with the physical state of awareness and wakefulness. Your Antahkarana, your Sharira, your Koshas also should come into state of being spiritually awakened, Sakriya Viveka and Vichara; For this alone will guard you against the lure and attraction of the passing appearances that make up this world of Prakriti, the world of Maya.

In this world names and forms drag the attention of the Jivatma outside and hold it in a state of bondage. Everything attracts and the Jiva succumbs, the mind and the Indriyas succumb to the attraction of Prakriti outside. The Kathopanishad explains this situation of the Jivatma in the midst of the world appearance. The great Teacher, YamadharmaRaja who has the secret of the state of the Jivatma beyond physical death, clearly tells Nachiketas, the ideal Jijnasu and Mumukshu, that the vast majority of heedless human beings regard this external world as being the sole Reality. Thinking thus, taking the appearance to be real and not being aware of the presence of a greater Reality, they rush headlong into this world of Nama, Rupa, Rasa, Shabda, Sparsha and Gandha and get caught in the net of Maya. They are of little understanding, O Nachiketas, they are childish and puerile in their behaviour. That would not be serious, O

Nachiketas, but due to this childishness they come again and again into my widespread net. Regarding this alone to be real, due to this Avidya and Aviveka, they get caught into my widespread noose and weep and wail and come again and again in endless reincarnations into this Samsara of Janma, Mrityu, Jara, Vyadhi, Duhkha (birth, death, old age, illness and suffering).

Therefore, for the one who is awake, alert and vigilant, who does not slumber, it is not enough if body awakes into Jagrata-avastha, it is indeed necessary that the Antahkarana also must awake day after day as long as there is breath in the body. You must wake up to the Truth each dawn, and this is being achieved by your spiritual fellowship and proximity to this centre of knowledge, this centre of '*Uttishthata jagrata prapya varan nibodhata*'.

Come, come be a Yogi! Life is short, time is fleeting. The goal of life is God Realisation. Be up and doing upon the path of Yoga, and crown yourself with eternal blessedness. That is the admonition, the central teaching, the great call to divine living by Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. And you fortunate souls respond to this call and gather together here each morning, not only in a state of physical wakefulness, but also in a state of spiritual wakefulness.

I am the witness of the three states, the ever aware Sakshi-Chaitanya-Svarupa-Atma-Tattva, behind the three states Jagrati (waking), Swapna (dream) and Sushupti (deep sleep). Thus you waken yourself up to the Pratahsmarami Stotra day after day. In this state of wakefulness you commence your silent meditation at 5:15. The three Pratahsmarami Stotras bring to you an inkling of your inner state, and in this state of awakened spiritual awareness you go into meditation.

There is a Nachiketas in each one of you, and these great verses are like the ever present Upadesha of the great World Teacher. You are that Being who knows every day, three Shlokas—the three states, waking, dreaming and deep sleep. Every day you know the three states, you are neither waking, nor dreaming, nor sleeping, you are the *nitya-buddha nitya-mukta atma-tattva*, *nitya-shuddha nitya-buddha nitya mukta atma-tattva*. It is an indication of how our ancients wanted us to be—not only in a state of physical Jagrati, but inwardly also in a state of spiritual Jagrati—For that is your birth-right, and that is the great call to lead the divine life.

Live with divine awareness and be effective and successful in bringing a divine quality to prevail and pervade your daily thoughts, words and actions day after day, to the very end of your life. This is the only true life. We are more dead than living if we go through each day in a state of inner slumber. The slumber of Avidya is spiritual death. And the great call of the Upanishad is Jagrata. May we respond to this call and crown ourselves with the supreme blessedness of Kaivalya-moksha-samrajya, not in some distant future but in this very life, through this very body. That is the prayer of this servant at the feet of the Supreme Reality as well as at the feet of beloved and worshipful Holy Master on behalf of each and every one of you. May this prayer also continuously arise in your own hearts and go to the feet of Guru and God, so that your life becomes a journey an ascent unto liberation and everlasting bliss, peace, freedom and the fearless state of Kaivalya-moksha. May God and Guru enable you to succeed in this sincere endeavour. God bless you all.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage unto Thee, Thou eternal all-pervading Reality, Thou who art the Cosmic Spirit Divine, the Universal Soul Supreme, Thou who art the one unchanging Reality behind and beyond these ever-changing names and forms that appear before us as this world, to Thee who art the source, substratum and the centre of all things, who pervadest and indwells all. May Thy grace be upon all who seek Thee with sincerity and make earnest efforts for attaining Thy vision in this rare and golden opportunity called life.

Loving adorations to worshipful and beloved Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in whose spiritual presence we have gathered together at this early morning hour. May his glance of grace and hand of benediction bestow success to all your endeavours to lead a good life, to help yourselves and to help others, to be a true representative of the spiritual ideal that the ancient sages and seers have placed before us.

6 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 17/8/94

We are here to worship God and do good unto His creation. We are here to fulfill the divine destiny of our life, to attain divine perfection in and through a process of manifesting Divinity in all our thoughts, words and actions day by day. From the moment we wake up in the morning until we retire again into sleep, our great privilege, our great Sadhana is to be what we are; our Sadhana is to know that life is our great Sadhana and to make it a continuous process of manifesting the truth of our real being.

When the person has not clearly seen or clearly understood that life and Sadhana are not only co-existent but they are co-extensive, it is in vain. The whole of life is to be known and recognized as Sadhana. And Sadhana is something that pertains to the whole of your life from morning till night. One who knows this, his Sadhana will be devoid of any conflict, any self-contradiction, and it will move forward smoothly to its fulfillment.

Where this central truth is not recognized, and life is regarded as something and Sadhana as something else, as only constituting some part of life, their life will run into rough weather. It is ever in danger, because some parts of life will be with Sadhana, some parts of life will be devoid of Sadhana. Then all those parts of life that you regard as non-Sadhana, they will become like so

many holes in a pot or vessel. Anything you try to fill into the vessel will drain away; it will become empty. Even as you try to fill it, it will go on getting empty.

Thus it is a very wrong conception that Sadhana is only part of life; this wrong notion will be a great risk, for all that is carefully accumulated during our so-called special time of Sadhana will be draining away. If Sadhana is to be unhampered and progressive, then it should be not only co-existent with, but co-extensive with life. There should be no part of life from waking up till going to sleep devoid of Sadhana or different from Sadhana. This is a central truth of life and has to be understood and applied, and in this light you must make your total life a process of Sadhana.

All life should move towards God. It should be engaged in one process. Any part of life which is not moving in that direction will be a hindrance, will create a dichotomy. That is why Gurudev said: "Live a divine life. Let no part of your life be devoid of Divinity, contrary to Divinity, other than Divinity." This then is to be deeply reflected upon, grasped and applied, so that Sadhana and life should mean to you the same thing. They are co-existent. They are co-extensive. They are identical; life should be lived as Sadhana, and Sadhana should pervade the entire life. This is the

great fact. All places are places of Sadhana, all moments are moments of Sadhana. Everything that is engaged in is part and parcel of spirituality, of Yoga and Sadhana.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

24th September 2016 marks the auspicious occasion of Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out one hundred booklets comprising illuminating talks of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

To propagate Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's gospel of Divine Life, Worshipful Sri Swamiji Maharaj travelled extensively in India and abroad and showed the path of divine life to countless seekers through his spontaneous and highly inspiring lectures. His lectures, in Sadgurudev's words, are the outpourings of his saintly heart, the revelations of intuitive wisdom.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of his hitherto unpublished lectures in a booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary. The present booklet 'YOU ARE WHERE YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS IS' is a compilation of his six

inspiring talks given at the sacred Samadhi Mandir during the year 1993 and 1994.

We express our heartfelt gratitude towards the inmates of the Headquarters Ashram for their loving service in transcribing, editing and compiling these talks.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—The Divine Life Society

Worshipful homage unto Thee, Thou all-pervading Eternal Presence Divine, who art the beginning-less and endless Cosmic Principle. Thou art the Reality, the one unchanging eternal Fact. May Thy light shine upon all those who turn their gaze and face Thee, wishing to approach Thee and to attain Thee.

Loving adorations to Shri Gurudev, beloved Swami Sivanandji Maharaj, who is the light and guide of our life. May your glance of grace be upon all aspiring souls. May your hand of benediction be upon all those who strive to emulate your selflessness and fiery state of service.

Radiant Atman!

There is a famous verse about the great primal teacher Dakshinamurti. It says, “The discourse of this great primal world teacher was silence. By his presence he imparted whatever had to be imparted.” It is said his discourse was

I Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 7/8/94

silence and the disciples who sat around him had their questions answered and their doubts cleared.

They say Diksha is of various kinds, Karma, Sparsha, Drishti and Sankalpa. Diksha is by uttering a word into your ear, Diksha is by mere touch with a hand, and Diksha is also by mere glance. The Guru glances at the Shishya and the Shishya becomes immediately elevated, inspired and enlightened, doubts are cleared; peace floods into his being by mere glance. And the fourth Diksha, they say is Sankalpa Diksha. By willing, “let him be enlightened, let him be awakened”, by having an intention regarding the devotee, the saint imparts his teaching to him in a mysterious way.

Just as you may have a bank account in Muni-ki-Reti, and someone in Nagpur wishes to benefit you for some special occasion by presenting you with some amount of money. He need not write or post a cheque. He may just go to his bank in Nagpur and tell them, “Your branch in Muni-ki-Reti has an account in the name of so-and-so. Here is the money. Transfer it.” Or he may even just say, “You have my account, out of my account please transfer”. He just makes his intention known to the bank. They take down the details and after some days your account is

credited by a sum of so many Rupees. So there is no outer transaction at all. Nevertheless, the person's account has been enhanced by a certain amount of money—all behind the scene, silently without any outer manifestation. If you put something into the central master computer, then all computers connected with it automatically get this data.

Even so the intention of the Guru is put in the Cosmic Mind which is the connecting link between all minds; all lives are connected with Hara or Isvara. Sankalpa Diksha happens according to the intention of the Guru.

Even so, it is the inner state of your being that makes the content of your experience, what you are, what you feel yourself to be within your innermost centre. We hinted at it in one way. If you feel that you are living, moving and having your being in God, no matter where the body is, what you are engaged in, you are in God. That is the truth. Your identity is the content of your consciousness. You may be living in an Ashram with 300 inmates, but if your identity is confined to the four walls of your room and the things in it, then in spite of the fact that you are in an Ashram of 300 persons, you are living alone; because you have created an invisible limitation in your consciousness. However, also being in the

Ashram, sitting in your room, if you are constantly thinking of the welfare of the Ashram, the entire work of Gurudev in Bombay, Hyderabad, Delhi, Orissa, Calcutta, then being in the Ashram, yet you are not in the Ashram. If you think of yourself being here, but think also of what is happening in Rishikesh or Muni-ki-Reti or to your neighbour, so if necessary you can enquire and send some help, then you are a resident of Muni-ki-Reti, not merely of Sivananda Ashram. If you feel for India, you are a citizen of India, not merely a resident of Muni-ki-Reti, Rishikesh or Uttarakhand. When you feel for what is happening in the world, you feel the suffering of all, then you are a cosmopolitan, a member of the whole world, and the world constitutes your family. You are a universal being, if your consciousness is centred in the globe, in global humanity. You identify yourself with the earth and you regret the cutting down of the trees in the forest and in the mountains, you regret the pollution of the rivers with chemicals and the dying fish. If you regret the pollution of the seas with oil spills and the slaughter of submarine species for making money for commercial purposes, then you enter into the earth-spirit. You become one with the earth-spirit. You are a citizen of the world outside, if you vibrate with the conditions of planet Earth created

by the greed of man, by the exploiting approach of man towards the earth.

So your consciousness is what decides in which state you are.

Jyotisham api tajjyotiḥ tamasah

paramuchyate

Jnanam jneyam jnanagamyam hrīdi sarvasya

vishthitam (B.G. 13/17)

(That, the Light of all lights is said to be beyond darkness: knowledge, the knowable and the goal of knowledge seated in the hearts of all.)

If you are intensely aware of the Lord who shines with the splendour of a million suns in the core of your consciousness, in the centre of your spiritual heart, then you are not a creature of the earth, you are not a dweller on this planet earth, but you are living in God, you are in the realm of the Divine, you are in Brahman, the supreme realm of Brahman. Because you have centred your consciousness upon That and you are intensely aware of the indwelling Divine Being, *Eko devah sarvabhuteshu gudhah* (God Who is one is hidden in all beings), *Isvarah sarvabhutanam hriddeshe arjuna tishthati* (God dwells in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna!), *Ahamatma gudakesha sarvabhutashayasthitah* (I am the Self, O Arjuna, seated in the hearts of all beings.)

And thus your consciousness takes you where you make it take you by your inner awareness. Your consciousness makes you what you are. If you are intensely aware of the Supreme Reality, shining within you as the bliss, shining within you as peace profound, then you are eternally a dweller neither of your room nor of the Ashram nor Muni-ki-Reti, nor India, nor this world, nor planet earth, but you dwell in the realm of eternal sunshine, Satchidananda-Brahma-Puri. You live, move and have your being in Brahman.

This then is the important truth about human experience as well as the human status. What is your experience? What are you? No one makes it. You make it. Others can help you to make it. The Guru can help you to make it. The scriptures can help you to make it. Shravana and Satsanga can help you to make it. Company of illumined people may help you to make it. They can give, but ultimately it is you who makes it.

Mother can cook food and place it before you. The cook, your friend, your host can cook food and place it before you. They all can bring food right in front of you. But the eating of the food neither the mother nor the host, nor your friend, nor the cook can do for you.

Therefore be up and doing, knowing this fact. Do not be indolent; do not be lazy or indifferent. Everything is in your hand: imperfection, perfection; bondage, liberation; hell or heaven; darkness or light; earth or the divine realm. The sky is the limit, and the opportunities are endless. Every day, each hour, each moment is an opportunity for you to elevate your consciousness into the highest supreme state of Divinity. There is nothing holding you back; nothing is in your way.

That which belongs to the Father verily belongs to the son. Thus it has been said and thus it is, and thus it is now being said to you, so that you may be aware of your true position, your true good fortune, your true ability.

The highest state of supreme blessedness is within your grasp. It is but one step from you if you wish it, if you will it. That is why they said “Nothing is withheld. Seek and you shall find. Knock and it shall be opened unto you. Ask and it shall be given.” Only, it is not that you do not ask. We ask, but for something else, something lesser. We wish for many, many things, we ask for many, many things, except for the one Thing in Itself! That is the drawback. Beware of this truth and crown yourself with supreme blessedness.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage unto Thee Thou all-pervading Eternal Presence Divine, Thou who art the beginning-less and endless Cosmic Principle, the Paratpara Tattva, all auspiciousness, Beauty of beauties beyond the concept of human imagination. Thou art the Reality, the one unchanging eternal fact, Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram. May Thy light shine upon all those who turn their gaze to Thee, may Thy light shine even as the rising sun shines upon all creation and all things.

Loving adorations to revered and beloved Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, who is the light and guide of our life; may your glance of grace be upon all aspiring souls, upon all those who seek to follow in your footsteps, who seek to fulfill your teachings in their day-to-day lives. May your hand of benediction be upon all those who seek to make themselves the instruments of your teachings, of your sublime selflessness and service unto all life

2 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 12/8/94

around them. May it be upon all those who seek to embody in themselves even 1/16th part of the tremendous devotion you had for the Divine, to make themselves the channels of the great Bhakti-bhava you enshrined in your heart, in the great Kirtana-prem which you demonstrated in your ardent love for singing and chanting the glorious Divine Name. May your hand of benediction be upon all those who strive earnestly and diligently to control their senses, conquer their minds and practice unfailing regular daily meditation even as you did in your days of spiritual Sadhana across Divine Mother Ganga in Swarga Ashram, in those years of your upward ascent towards illumination, the years between 1924 and 1934. May your hand of benediction be upon all who thus seek to make you and your spirit of meditation relive in and through their own life. May your hand of benediction ever be extended upon the heads of those who strive to keep alive a keen philosophical enquiry into the nature of things, into the purpose of life and who make themselves centres of active Viveka and constant Vichara. Thus may they make your spirit re-live in and through them. That indeed would be the most effective means of connecting their lives with your life, connecting themselves with your grace and benedictions. It would be the most effective way for obtaining your grace, bringing

about a descent of abundant Guru-Kripa upon them. May your glance of grace and your hand of benediction be extended upon all those who are striving diligently for honesty within themselves and truthfulness with all those with whom they come into contact day by day. May they strive to become embodiments of compassion and kindness towards all beings and to live up to the sublime ideal of ethical purity in thought, word and action. This is the one thing needful to contact you, to draw near to you and to become recipients of the constant flow of your grace.

Radiant Atman! Within the context of the ancient Vedic religion the concept of God is an infinite mass of all auspicious and blessed good qualities. Ananta Kalyana Guna Ghana is the expression they used to indicate their experience of the Supreme Godhead. There is no idea of an angry God, a punishing God, who is enthroned upon his creation. Far, far from it. Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram was their experience of the ultimate Reality. It is Reality or Truth, Auspiciousness and Beauty. Their experience of God is that the Supreme Reality was a perennial source and centre of all that is good, beautiful and blessed.

Therefore, they called upon all, “Come, attain this and you will be forever blessed”. There was no room for anything destructive or negative,

anything that is to be feared or regarded as angry or revengeful. On the contrary, you don't have to cringe. Boldly you can go, even as Nachiketas went before Lord Yama. The Upanishad says, "Anything that you fear, anything that you cringe from, all will be nullified, if you but turn towards the all-auspicious Reality. He is the consumer of anything that might threaten you. He is the destroyer, the swallower of anything you may be afraid of, and being with Him you become fearless."

People fear death. But the Upanishads say, "Come, come. You have in you your greatest friend. He is the death of death. Death trembles before Him. Death is to Him like a pickle for His daily breakfast. Death is to that Being an empty nothing." That is the expression the Upanishad uses. He is the consumer, the swallower of death. He is the death of death for those who turn towards Him. In the presence of that divine all-auspicious Reality all fear vanishes. One is filled at once with tremendous courage and strength. 'Maa bhih' (don't be afraid), it says. This assurance is brought out in the form given to the Sakara Saguna Brahman, the personal God, who has always one hand raised in granting the boon of fearlessness, Abhaya. That is your God in Satya Sanatana Vedic Dharma; that is the God that was declared by our beloved and revered Holy Master, Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji. That is the God of

the Upanishads. That is the God who ever dwells in you, as you, the shining centre of divine awareness within your spiritual heart. That is the God who surrounds you everywhere. Wherever you go, He is already there and infolds you in infinite love, unutterable divine love.

Contemplate that God, and forever be blessed in the sharing of this morning. Blessed is this day when I have had the great privilege of sharing with you this fact of the all auspicious and blessed nature of the Supreme Deity, when I have had the opportunity of sharing with you the experience of your ancestors, the experience of the ultimate Reality being Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram, the ultimate Reality being a source of Ananta Kalyan Gunas, a source of infinite love, compassion and grace.

So every Sadhaka with perception has reason to rejoice and to move forward with great enthusiasm upon this sublime path that leads to blessedness, the path of Yoga Vedanta.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage unto the supreme Almighty Being, the Cosmic Spirit Divine! Worshipful homage to that one Eternal Reality, beginning-less and endless, that is Existence Absolute, Consciousness Absolute and Bliss Absolute. Being infinite, being all-pervading, being ever-present; therefore, all that exists, exists in it, all living beings live in it, all activity, all movements take place within it. This great truth is ever to be pondered and its implication needs to be grasped. And on the basis of this understanding life would spontaneously become beautiful, good, auspicious, blessed and divine, for we will feel that we are rooted in Divinity, we are surrounded by Divinity, we are moving in a divine dimension. Nothing else but this truth can prevail, for the experiences of our ancients had established that all that exists is pervaded by the one supreme non-dual Divine Principle that people call God. All the mystics—ancient, medieval, modern—all the mystics of the orient

3 Talk at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 17/10/94

and the occident have again and again relived this experience and confirmed that the Supreme Reality is an ever present Reality. Therefore, the ancient prophets spoke to God as they spoke to an individual in front of them. They talked with God, they walked with God and directly received His instructions. In and through nature, God manifests and reveals His glory and talks to man. One poet described this living experience of God's presence by the mystics in these words, "They see sermons in stones and read books in babbling brooks." God speaks to them even from stones and flowing water.

For those who recognise the importance of this truth will no longer treat it as part of a scripture or something that is to be studied in a book, spend a little time with it, close the book and put it away, and by this act keep the truth also away. "When I am studying Srimad Bhagavatam, the Bible, the Upanishads, the lives of the saints, well that is the truth, I know it and that is enough." The truth remains in the book, and we go our way. That is why our life becomes impoverished, deprived of light and devoid of divine inspiration, because we do not go beyond the step of having a nodding acquaintance.

This is the most important truth in this universe, the most important fact that prevails in our life. But we have not cultivated the correct

relationship to the greatest of all facts that exists in this creation of God. God created this universe and entered into it. God created man and breathed His spirit into man. There is no truth greater than this truth. There is no truth more vitally necessary for human life than this truth. If this truth is not recognized as such, we give it the go-bye and fulfill the adage, "Water, water everywhere, not a drop to drink." And we fulfill the fact which made Kabir to marvel, and he did not know whether to laugh or to weep. Kabir said, "I laugh when I see that fish in the water are suffering from thirst!" '*Jala mein meen pyasi, dekha Kabir hasi*'.

We go blind surrounded by light, we go hungry in the presence of abundant nourishment. We suffer from weakness and insufficiency, living in the midst of a supreme power. Mahatma Gandhi spoke about God as an unseen power—the power of which all other powers and forces in this universe are faint reflections. Therefore mystics call to us, "Live in the truth, abide by the truth!" And it is this truth that the Bible declares will set you free. This truth is not something vague, not something theoretical or elusive; it is like a granite rock, it is a living fact. It is a here and now Reality. It is a fact stronger than anything else, more solid than anything else in this entire universe, and the only truth that never

changes, that ever prevails. To turn away from this truth would indeed be a great loss. Thus has it been declared, and thus has worshipful and beloved Holy Master Gurudev declared it again for our benefit in this twentieth century. He has declared it again and again and yet again for our benefit and for our contemplation and for our supreme blessedness.

Therefore, we daily offer our loving adorations to worshipful and beloved Holy Master for having enriched our lives with this great truth. Therefore, this truth is to be heard about, to be reflected upon and to be deeply contemplated and meditated upon. This truth should be made the foundation of our spiritual life. *Tat shrotavyo mantavyo nididhyasitavyo*' was not meant for someone, sometime far in the past; it is meant for everyone who is sincerely and earnestly pursuing the spiritual life even today and in the future. It will never vary, it is an eternal admonition, an eternal instruction, Nityopadesha, Shashwat-Bodha.

It is Shashwat-Bodha for the whole spiritual world, for all times. May we see this clearly and bless ourselves now and always. May God bless you.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage to the supreme Eternal Reality, the one non-dual Cosmic Being, transcendental and absolute, never changing, eternal and infinite, pervading everywhere, indwelling all things and the sole support and ultimate fulfilment of all existence. To that Divine Principle, to that Universal Spirit we offer our worshipful homage. May His divine grace be upon you all. Loving adorations to revered and beloved Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj into whose presence the Cosmic Being, out of His infinite grace, has brought us all in spiritual fellowship in their dual proximity. That is our supreme good fortune. May we avail of it. Let us come together and sit in spiritual fellowship, meditation, prayer, chanting and glorifying and praying for the peace of the whole world, for the welfare of all beings morning after morning, all the mornings of our life, no matter where we are. That is the heart-felt prayer offered at the feet of Gurudev and God by the one who shares these thoughts with you at this moment.

4 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 24/8/94

The one thing needed is to forget about the Nobel Prize and go on serving humanity, go on being kind and compassionate, selfless, relieving suffering, serving the distressed, bringing succor to the needy and serving everybody and not think of Nobel Prize. Forget about Ph.D., but study hard, day and night, reading all the reference books, taking down copious notes, acquiring knowledge and mastering the subject upon which you wish to write a thesis. Do not think of Ph.D., but concentrate upon earnest, persevering study which ultimately brings you the Ph.D. anyway!

The one thing needed is to practice day after day, exercise and fulfill all the disciplines and not to go on thinking about the championship of the world, whether it is chess championship or whether it is swimming championship or whether is racing, sprinting championship. The one thing needed is to practise, practise, practise with strict self-control, discipline, obeying all the rules that your grand master who is your teacher is giving you. Concentrate upon that and work hard without thinking about the gold medal or championship. If you constantly think about the gold medal or championship and neglect your practice, the gold medal will go to someone else. If you constantly keep thinking about Ph.D. instead of working hard and burning the midnight oil, then someone else will get the Ph.D. Your thesis will be rejected. If you constantly go on thinking about the Nobel Prize and neglect plunging into social service or national service, forgetting

everything, totally concentrating yourself, instead of doing that, if you constantly think of something else, it will go to someone else.

The one thing needed is to forget about Self-realisation, God-realisation and concentrate upon leading the divine life. The one thing needed is being good and doing good, striving hard to be an ideal person and not to fight and quarrel, to be angry and arrogant. Do not think of God-realisation, do not think of Mukti. Who wants Mukti, who wants liberation? You should lead a good life, you should be divine people. It is necessary to concentrate upon being divine and not to concentrate upon imaginary God-realisation. God realisation, let it come or let it not come. But what are you now, and what is your life? That is the vital question. What is the most important thing in your life? The way in which you are living your life, the way in which you are utilising this unique priceless gift of God is important. If you give it the go-bye and think of some Self-realisation, whatever may happen, you can be sure you will never get Self-realisation. If you give the go-bye to life which God has given to you to attain perfection and liberation and instead constantly think of some far off figment of your imagination, you do not do what is necessary to be done. You only want the fish and loaves, but not Jesus or His word or following Him.

One thing necessary therefore is to leave Self-realisation in the hands of God and to lead

the divine life with all sincerity, all humility, all tenacity, all regularity, all absence of vanity and with full dedication to it. Be true to your Guru, true to your Guru's teachings, true to the scriptures and true to the great sages and saints who led the divine life and showed us how to do it. We should be true to Lord Rama, who showed what we have to be as a human individual and then be true to the teachings of Lord Krishna and then set about becoming like Lord Rama, becoming like Lord Krishna, and becoming like the ancient sages and seers; God-realisation will come by itself. One need not run after it. It comes after you, if you have fulfilled the condition.

God bless you all to realise this simple truth. Life is the most important thing you have. Live it in a perfect manner, day after day, not in theory, not sometime somewhere, but live it here and now. That is the most important, the vital business. What can be more glorious than living your life in a divine way, hour by hour, in everything you say, do and think, in every way you relate yourself with other lives around you. The other lives are nothing but God facing you. At any moment you are facing God, you are dealing with God. Realise this and lead the divine life. That is the one thing needed. God bless you all to realise this and do it, do what is to be done!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage unto Thee, O supreme ever-present Divine Reality, beginningless and endless, infinite and immeasurable! Thou art the very life of our life, Thou are the eye of our eyes, the ear of our ears, the heart of our heart, the breath of our breath. To Thee who art the one common consciousness dwelling within all beings, to Thee who has brought us into Thy Presence in the morning hours we offer worshipful adorations. May Thy grace be upon all sincere seekers.

Loving adorations to Gurudev's spiritual presence, in whose proximity we are in this spiritual fellowship of Sadhana and meditation. May his glance of grace ever be upon all those who are sincerely pursuing the path of divine life, who are earnestly striving to adhere to truthfulness, purity of personal life and loving kindness and compassion towards all creatures. May his

5 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 7/12/93

abundant grace and blessings be upon all those who are pursuing the path of selflessness and service, devotion and worship, discipline, meditation and aspiration of Self-realisation. Grant that they may all live together harmoniously in this holy Ashram of Thine, that they may dedicate themselves to serving this holy cause by living a sublime divine life and sharing their insights with those whom the will of the Divine brings into contact.

O worshipful Gurudev, grant that your Ashram might become a centre of dynamic spirituality, a centre of determinedly pursued spiritual life. May each one who eats of your salt be an embodiment of divine life, a Sadhaka, a devotee of the Lord, a lover of righteousness in the practice of Dharma and Seva. This is my earnest prayer in thy presence at this early morning hour. May your effort and activity ensure a glorious future for this institution which you have set up in this forest and where you have resided during your time. Auspiciousness and blessedness has sprung up in this forest where people did not dare to come after sunset. You have brought about Mangal to that which was a jungle once upon a time. By your transforming touch you have enabled this place to impart a transforming touch to all those who have come and made their lives here. May they be shining examples of the

divine life ideals of Satyam, Ahimsa, Brahmacharya, Seva, Bhakti, Jnana. This is our supplication in thy presence at this moment.

Radiant Atman! Beloved Sadhaks and seekers, Jijnasus and Mumukshus, Yogis and Bhaktas, Dharma-Premis and Satsangis! A person becomes strong through exertion and exercise. Muscles develop and become firm and hard by exercise, by using them, by bringing them into activity. Such it is with spiritual muscles and also with moral and ethical muscles! Goodness, Daivi-Sampada, virtues, positive qualities in one's nature will become weak and flabby and useless, if they are not actively exercised, if they are not put to use every day, not just one or two days, or upon some special occasion, but always, always, always!

A person eats daily to nourish the body. A person studies daily to expand the mind. And it is the exercise of virtue that makes a person a virtuous person. Failure to exercise virtue in an active, dynamic and purposeful manner will open us to the invasion of temptations, expose the Sadhaka's psyche, mind, heart, intellect to the depredation of the attractions that surround us in this world of Maya. Not without reason did they sound a call, '*Jagrata* (awake) *Uttishthata* (stand

up)', and be active till '*prapya varan nibodhata*, having reached the wise, become enlightened by continuously exerting to attain Jnana'.

Uttishthata jagrata prapya varan nibodhata. May you always therefore be Abhyasis. An Abhyasi is one who is engaged in practice, who does not keep quiet, who is actively pursuing the path of Sadhana; to put it in popular terminology, he does not allow the grass to grow under his feet, he does not rest on his oars when he is rowing his boat of life across stormy water. He keeps on advancing upon the path that leads to the ultimate destination, he never rests. And this is the condition for succeeding laid down by the great teacher Lord Krishna in the 6th chapter of the Srimad Bhagawad Gita. The seemingly impossible becomes possible, O Arjuna, by one who is persistent and persevering in his practice. If at all there is a key word in today's sharing and serving it may be 'success comes to one who is persistent and persevering in his practice'.

One overcomes all obstacles and hurdles, reaches the goal, if one is persistent and persevering in one's practice that is propelled with determination, with a resolute will and a mind bent upon achieving the goal. This is the hallmark of a true seeker and a true devotee of the Lord. A true devotee is not a weak person. He is as strong

as a Yogi or Sadhaka or any other type of spiritual aspirant.

Prahlada was a devotee, but he was stronger than his mighty father. Dhruva was a little boy, but he overcame all obstacles and attained the vision of God through his resolution. Savitri was a lady, supposed to be the weaker sex, but with her determination and her unbending will she succeeded in getting the life of her husband back from Yamadharma. Mira was a gently, delicately nurtured princess of a noble family. But when she had to face severe persecution, great opposition, much resistance from her elders, she never lost the inner strength and determination.

It is of such stuff that true Sadhakas are made of. Bharata has become immortal in the Indian religious literature and history, because he stuck to his vow of living in a little village on the outskirts of Ayodhya; as the servant of Rama he governed the kingdom on behalf of Rama, determined never to arrogate to himself which he was convinced did not belong to him but to the elder brother. These are all forces behind such great personalities that determine the resolution, persistence in practice, perseverance in pursuing the ideal, the spiritual ideal. Diligently we should cultivate these qualities to back up our spiritual

life; most assiduously we should cultivate these resources to support our day-to-day Sadhana.

And we should not rest upon our oars. We should leave no stone unturned. We should not allow the grass to grow under our feet, and we should attain success by being persistent and persevering in the pursuit of our ideal day by day, morning, forenoon, midday, afternoon, evening, night. This should be your nature, this should be how your life moves in Sadhana. Then you are on the way to supreme blessedness. You are a candidate for immortality, divine perfection and liberation. There is no doubt about it. But the key is in your hands: there is no other factor, only your mind, your nature, your stoutness of heart, the resoluteness of your heart.

Therefore be what a real Sadhaka and seeker ought to be. Then no power on earth can deprive you of your deserved success. May God bless you all.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage unto the eternal, all-pervading and indwelling Reality, the one non-dual supreme transcendental Being! It is the origin and the source, the invisible support and the ultimate fulfillment of all existence, the one Reality behind and beyond the phenomenal appearance of vanishing names and forms. May that Eternal Reality that indwells you and indwells every atom, that sleeps in the stone, that breathes in plants and trees, that moves in all living creatures and that feels and reasons within you as your human nature—may that ever-present Reality make Itself felt within the innermost core of your heart. To remember It and to be aware of Its being within us as consciousness, that is life. To forget It and live in a state of unawareness is death even while you are living. May divine grace from that eternal source of infinite grace ever fill your being.

6 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 8/11/94

Loving adorations to revered Holy Master Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in whose spiritual presence we are all gathered here in his holy Ashram on the sacred banks of Divine Mother Ganga in this sanctified region of the Ganga and Himalayas. May his grace ever be extended to us, may his living touch be upon us, and may his benedictions keep us in a constant state of awareness that we are living, moving and having our being in the Divine.

Radiant Atman! Beloved and blessed children of the Divine, spiritual aspirants, seekers and Sadhaks engaged in spiritual Sadhana! Yogis ever persevering and pushing onward in your chosen path of Yoga that will bring you into an eternal state of abidance in the Self, the Supreme Reality. Devotees of the Lord, lovers of righteousness, Dharma-Premis. Ever be in a state of awareness that your real life is rooted in the Divine. Your physical body, Annamaya Kosha, may be living and moving in this gross material world. Your psyche, your mind, intellect, emotions, sentiments, your thoughts, your memories, your imaginations, your fancies, your desires, and schemes and plans—all these may be actively engaged in this temporary market place in which you are a passing pilgrim. You have come alone into it and one day you depart from it as certainly as the sun sets. Everything else in this world and

in your life may be uncertain, but this is certain that one day your pilgrimage will end. You will no more be a member of the global human family. You will no more be a member of your own little family, nor a citizen of your country or planet earth. One day physically, psychologically you will cease to be. Each and every one of you sitting here and listening to this servant of the Master, even as you came alone one day, so you must go. This is an old, old fashion that started when life started on earth and it has endured through millennia, ages and generations. If there anything common the world over, it is the cemetery, it is the graveyard, it is the crematorium, it is the common destination of all physical bodies. Therefore this physical body may be a citizen of this physical world, but psychologically it is your mind that is engaged in this temporary phenomenal world, the market place, in this world you are passing through.

The Antahkarana Chatushtaya, i.e. Mana, Buddhi, Ahamkar, Chitta and all its functions and activities, as projection into the future as imagination, planning, scheming, or dwelling in the past through memories and reminiscences or active in the present like what shall I do, what shall I eat, what shall I wear, how shall I be comfortable, in what way shall I speak to someone, in what way shall I react, in what way

shall I make my presence felt, in what way can I gain something. Thus constantly your mind, your psychological self is going on.

But consider, where are you? You were not here a while ago and you will depart soon. Hence you are the eternal spirit indwelling this non-eternal, perishable human body. You are a part of that Light of lights beyond all darkness, that Light which shines forever. You are a part of that Light which shines where the sun does not shine, nor the moon, nor the stars, nor lightening, what to say about this earthly fire. Because That shines, all these shining things borrow their effulgence from It and they appear to shine. You are a radiant ray of that eternal Light of lights beyond all darkness, the one Reality, the one cosmic radiance. In its imponderable infinitude millions and billions of universes arise, subsist for a while and subside back into Its un-manifest magnificence, in Its immensity. Your earth planet is a grain of sand on the vast seashore of the Cosmic Being. But this is your status, this is your glory that in the midst of it all you are a part of that great Light of lights beyond all darkness. You are a ray of that Light that shines and shines and shines, and you neither move through phenomenon nor live in this gross physical earth. You live, move and have your being in Him. Divine you are, and divinity is your origin and life. "I live

in the Light, the light is within me. I am the Light". Thus the sincere seeking souls of today affirm this truth. To be aware of this fact is to live. To forget this fact is to cease to live.

An Indian mystic said: "Good fortune is not good fortune. Misfortune is no misfortune. Misfortune is forgetfulness of God. And good fortune verily is abidance in God, remembrance of God.

*Sampado na sampadah, vipado na vipadah
Vipad vismaranam Vishnoh sampad
Narayana smriti*

Let us be aware that it is the fact of our being. We do not live in this world. The body lives in the world and also our temporarily acquired Upadhis—mind, intellect, memory, ego-sense. They do not constitute our reality. They do not constitute our essence. You are beyond this little 'I', this agitated, fighting, quarrelling, laughing, weeping, smiling 'I'. You are the grand, glorious 'I' which the good Master Jesus declared as being one with His Father, "*I and My Father are one*".

Therefore claim your birthright. Assert your divinity. Manifest your divinity in thought, word and deed in every action of yours. May it be a grand expression of what you are, may it be the real and authentic life, not a spurious, counterfeit

life, something else than your Reality. Now refuse to manifest from within you anything that is contrary to your divinity. For that would not be the truth. It would be false.

Therefore live in the highest sense the adage '*To thine own-self be true*'. May your life be what you are, a child of God, a radiant ray of that Light of lights beyond all darkness. You are divine, you are part of that supreme Cosmic Perfection, the wholeness, Purnam. Be that Purnam. By thus living, you will be a centre of benefit, of inspiration, of help, a centre of all that is true, auspicious and beautiful. This is your mission on earth. Live to fulfill it and be blessed.

May this be so. May divine grace enable you to fulfill your divine mission. May the benedictions of Master and all the saints grant you success at each step. Thus progress onwards until the last breath of your physical body. Thus live and be. God bless you.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

24th September 2016 marks the auspicious occasion of Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out one hundred booklets comprising illuminating talks of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

To propagate Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's gospel of Divine Life, Worshipful Sri Swamiji Maharaj travelled extensively in India and abroad and showed the path of divine life to countless seekers through his spontaneous and highly inspiring lectures. His lectures, in Sadgurudev's words, are the outpourings of his saintly heart, the revelations of intuitive wisdom.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of his hitherto unpublished lectures in a booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary. The present booklet 'Indian Ideals of Life' is a compilation of a series of three inspiring talks, given at the Sangeet Kala Kendra, Kolkata in 1999. We express our heartfelt gratitude towards

the inmates of the Headquarters Ashram for their loving service in transcribing, editing and compiling these talks.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—The Divine Life Society

Radiant Immortal Atman! Beloved and blessed children of Light! Spiritual children of that great Reality beyond all manifestation, that eternal, infinite Cosmic Spirit Divine: beginningless, endless, limitless and boundless! Your ancestors of this great land of Bharatavarsha realised it as Existence Absolute (That which ever IS), as Consciousness Absolute (luminous Consciousness—Chidghana, Chinmaya) and as Pure Bliss; they called it Sat-Chit-Ananda, Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. That transcendental Reality—Ekameva Advaita Brahma Tattva—is experienced as Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. You are heir to that Great Being—you are His children.

That Being which is One Absolute existed prior to creation, alone with no second—Ekameva Advitiyam. In the 6th chapter of the Chhandogya Upanishad, having only 4 Shlokas, the 3rd Shloka says: “That Being wished or willed: ‘May I multiply; may I become many. So that creation may commence, ‘many’ may be created.’” He wished for progeny, and that this process may go on continuously: ‘*Tadaikshat bahusyam prajayeyeti.*’ If that is so, then whatever has come

into manifestation is from that great mass of pure Consciousness. God is the divine source of all that exists. Therefore, in nature you are the same as that Great Being. We can only refer to that Great Being in the present tense (historically we may refer to it in the past tense), but the Eternal has no ‘was or shall be’ - It is, always It is! And therefore, bearing from That Being, you are of the same quality, and divinity is your essential nature. And from the human point of view you are the highest in God’s creation, endowed with the unique ability to think and to reason.

In the introductory talk a good friend mentioned: “We are on the threshold of a new millennium, and Swamiji will give us much food for thinking.” So you are called upon to exercise that privilege of your human status. Think deeply over life:

We have lived upto December 1999 in a certain way. Now, on January 1st, the year 2000 comes. Are we to continue the same humdrum monotonous pattern, or will we have some new radiance spreading into our life, helping it and making everything shine as it did not do previously? Are we not to enter into this new century and new millennium as different beings, because the poor 20th century has seen a great deal of heaviness of heart, travail and tragedy: two great wars, much destruction, atom bombs, and

begun international terrorism, RDX bombings, shootings, assassinations, mass killings. Someone gives an order in some nation and someone else carries it out. Yet at the same time there have been great marvels of scientific research, advance of technology, new inventions: the ‘Concord’ that flies faster than the speed of sound, England and Europe are linked up with the cross-channel tunnels. There are cables across the Atlantic, from America to U.K., the hydro-coil skipping on the surface of the water. These are all marvellous inventions. And the medical science, antibiotics and so many life-saving drugs. Now everything in the house is done by a mere pressing of a button: cooking, baking, dishwashing, washing and drying the clothes—everything. And answering machines that take messages, so when you come home you know who all called—everything is there for you, almost like a miracle and magic.

But with all these changes in everything around us, we too should not be left behind. The human individual should also show and demonstrate a change for the better in his nature, his character, conduct and his dealing with people. The time has come when one cannot side-line it and be engaged in some ordinary pursuits. The change is to be made, and the time

has come for that change. We all have to become transformed beings to populate a new world. And to that end, if these 3 days of sharing would contribute, even to a little extent, and help you in bringing about that great transformation which the spirit of the times expects from all of us everywhere, then you will have not only to ponder whatever is placed before you, but you will have to actually respond to this expectation!

Because you are all my Bharatiya Atmabandhus, we are all children of this great country, of this sublime culture, therefore, it is a sharing in a spirit of fellowship. But this time the sharing should not be merely for acquiring some more knowledge, that phase has passed. You are all intellectual people, Buddhijivis. Now, you will have to think in terms of ‘implementing’ whatever you have heard and received. Your actions must bear testimony to your understanding, your wisdom and your idealism! Through your actions people must be able to infer the contents of your heart. Is it iron, is it silver, is it gold or is it gold plus diamonds? The time has come to make manifest your knowledge!

And the second reason for my emphasising this is because perhaps there may not be another occasion for me to come and address you. Time is fleeting and life ebbs away! Therefore, you have to ask yourself, “When I go into the ‘new’

millennium, into the ‘new’ century, how long am I going to be there?”

The entire religion and culture of this land is derived from that great mass of wisdom called the Vedas. The quintessence of the Vedic wisdom has been given to us in a dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna in the Srimad Bhagavad Gita. He says a peculiar thing at the beginning of the second discourse which seems very, very paradoxical. The Lord speaks in the same breath both of death as well as immortality. While rebuking Arjuna to abandon his cowardice and arise and fight, ‘*Kshudram hridaya-daurbalyam tyaktvotishtha parantapa*’, Lord Krishna says, ‘*Jatasya hi dhruvo mrityuh*’ “Certain is death for those who are born.” And the next moment He asks Arjuna: “Why are you saying ‘I will not kill?’ Who can ‘kill’ whom? And who can ‘be killed’ by whom? No one can be ‘killed’ because the Being is unborn, eternal and indestructible! Weapons cannot cleave It, fire cannot burn It, water cannot wet It, wind cannot dry It; unborn, eternal, permanent is that imperishable Self—Avinaashi Atma.” So, while stating that death is certain for the one who is born, He stresses that immortality is the truth! Seemingly paradoxical – but that is the great Reality! He gives us a very valuable insight: “You have an aspect, a dimension within you which is Immortal Being. Although one day

you have to perish, yet you have within you as your reality, as your true identity, the Immortal Imperishable Being. This body is Nashavan but you are an Avinashi Tattva! You are beyond time and space. You have neither birth nor death. You are unborn, eternal!"

Bearing this great truth in mind, our great religion, our grand culture has stated thus; "O Man, this human birth is a very rare and golden opportunity presented to you. You have not come here to fritter away your days in this 'passing show', in this carnival around you. You are born with a mission, and that mission is no less than to know your Self, to experience the reality of your Being." Then you have conquered death! The moment you have understood your true nature, there is no return into this wheel of birth and death, you attain liberation! This is the ideal placed before the Dharma-purusha.

Recognising the basic needs and cravings of a human being, the sages of Hinduism have given a fourfold ideal to be striven for by everyone. They called it the four Purusharthas or the ends to be striven for in life. Of these the Parama Purushartha, the highest striving is the attainment of liberation through the realisation of your essential nature, your Nija-svarupa. Through that experience or Anubhuti, you attain Kaivalya Moksha, the state of eternal bliss! The

others are all ‘lesser’ goals, but the supreme goal is to attain Kaivalya Moksha. That is why you have taken a human birth. Of all the gifts the Creator has given to His creation, the gift of the human status is the highest. Hence, you are the most fortunate ones; remember this and do not delay, because “*time and tide wait for no man*” as the saying goes.

The great Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya, in his own inimitable way, gave in a brief manner the quintessence of this wisdom in the ‘Bhaja Govinda’. He said:

*Dinamapi rajani saayam praataah
shishiravasantaun punarayatah,
kalah kreedati gacchatyayuh
tadapi na munchatyashavayuh.*

(Days, nights, evenings, mornings, winters and springs are coming again and again in a cycle. Time is dancing; life is slowly departing. Even then the chain of desire does not break.)

How vain and foolish is man? How unthinking? With every sunrise and sunset life is ebbing away and soon the life span allotted to him will be finished. Daily he witnesses the whole world being continuously devoured by the jaws of death, and yet he is forgetful of his real mission, being engaged in frittering away his time and energy in futile miscellaneous things!

In another verse he says:

*'Ka te kantaa kaste putrah
samsaro'yamativa vichitrah
Kasya tvam kah kuta ayatah
tatvam chintaya tadidam bhratah'*

(‘Who is your wife, who is your son? Strange indeed is this Samsara.

To whom do you belong? From where have you come? Dear brother, consider well what is the truth!’)

Ponder thus, “*Kastvam koham kutaaayaata*” –Who are you? Who am I? Where have you come from? We take it for granted because we are caught in a conveyer-belt-like routine day after day, week after week, month after month; years have passed. We are trapped in this Samsara, and we have no time to think deeply about life. We must ensure that this pattern will not continue. Therefore, wake up and think! And what little time is left, live it with such awareness that your way of life becomes the means to your liberation. Death is certain for this body. Your true nature, I say with great certainty, is immortal, beginningless, endless, imperishable, indestructible! Only you can realise this Reality! No other form of life can realise this Reality.

Therefore, be up and doing. Purify yourself. Make your mind subtle so that you are able to gain

insights and grasp these truths. Endow yourself with such qualities that they may gradually awaken your consciousness until it is transparent and luminous and is able to directly reflect the Divinity which shines in your heart. We are all moving temples of the Supreme Eternal Spirit, and That Eternal Spirit is the “Light of lights beyond all darkness” which shines in the hearts of all beings. It is Satchidananda. It is all auspiciousness, all radiance that abides in each one of us. So a transformation from the human to the divine is to take place. And not somewhere in Svargaloka or other Lokas after you pass away! The transformation of your consciousness into divine consciousness is to take place right here and now!

How you can bring about this transformation has been given in the Bhagawad Gita. In fact, the Gita contains practically everything as it is the quintessence of the Upanishads, and the Upanishads are the source of the highest knowledge. A hint is given in the 16th chapter, the Daivaasura Sampad Vibhaga Yoga. The more you develop divine qualities and become God-like in nature, the nearer you will draw to Divinity. There are divine qualities as well as the opposite because the human being is a mixture of opposing factors. There is that which is positive and that which is negative, that which is creative and that

which is destructive; that which we can call a very good quality and that which is its opposite, which deserves to be plucked out and discarded. A fierce determination must be present!

In the 16th chapter He tells us which qualities will gradually grant us liberation from the confines of our human nature, and these He calls ‘divine’ qualities. Attain these qualities, and you will be liberated, *‘Daivi sampad vimokshaya’*. He states very clearly and categorically to Arjuna, “These divine qualities of Mine will grant you liberation. They are conducive to your liberation, Moksha.”

You must have the determination that no matter how much the mind pulls in the wrong direction, you will not succumb. In every human mind the thought current flows in two streams. Sometimes it flows in the right channel, when you get all types of good intentions, good thoughts. Sometimes the thought current starts going in a non-desirable direction. When this is observed, you should set to work upon yourself. As long as the thought current is moving in an auspicious and good direction, encourage it and keep it going. But if you find that the thought current changes, do not keep quiet, do not allow yourself to be swayed in that direction. You must tell yourself, “No! No! Error!” and immediately withdraw the mind from that channel and sublimate it to once

again move in the right direction. Only then will you be safe. This should be a continuous and ongoing process.

It calls for great perseverance! You must have the perseverance of the royal Rishi Bhagiratha. He said, “I will not take a defeat. No matter how many obstacles present themselves, I will persist and persevere in the effort until I succeed and get what I want” That is the ideal we have inherited from our great culture. In pursuing a high principle of living or in going after a worthy goal, we must never give up our efforts—Akhandaprayatna, ceaseless effort! Rishi Bhagiratha’s perseverance, termed 'Bhagiratha-prayatna' has become a byword in our vocabulary. You must cultivate such fierce determination. Rishi Bhagiratha demonstrated steadfast perseverance. Time and again all the efforts he put forth became frustrated and fruitless, ‘Nishphal.’ But he did not give up.

As the story goes, Bhagiratha’s ancestors had been reduced to ashes by the wrath of the sage Kapila. The only way of their spiritual redemption was to bring the celestial river Ganga from Svargaloka or heaven and make its waters flow over these ashes. Though successive kings tried to do it, they failed. Finally it was Bhagiratha who succeeded. First and foremost, he did great penance in order to propitiate ‘Svarga-gamini Ganga’. She became propitiated and agreed to

descend to this earth. He then performed very severe austerities to please Brahma, the Creator, who appeared before him and advised him to solicit the help of Lord Shiva who alone could arrest the torrential flow of the river Ganga and slow her down. Bhagiratha did Tapas or penance once again and appeased Shiva who agreed to do so. Thus Ganga descended onto Shiva's Jata, his matted locks; but the river felt so cool and agreeable to Lord Shiva that she remained in His locks. Bhagiratha again had to do Tapas and request Lord Shiva to release her from his locks. Finally Ganga emerged as a stream and followed Bhagiratha. While flowing through the hermitage of sage Jahnu, she flooded it, thereby provoking him to swallow the river. Then, at the earnest entreaties of Bhagiratha she was allowed to emerge from the ear of the sage. Hence, she got the name '*Jahnavi*'. She finally flowed over the ashes of Bhagiratha's ancestors thereby granting them spiritual redemption. This was possible only because of the tireless efforts of Bhagiratha.

In our culture we have another great ideal, and that is 'Pativrata Savitri' who was utterly resolute and determined to revive her husband Satyavan from death. When the Lord of Death, Yama, appeared with the noose to take Satyavan's soul to the abode of death, she absolutely refused to accept widowhood, Vaidhavya. Because of the

power of her chastity, Pativrतya, she was able not only to see Yama but also to follow him. After much argument, in spite of Yama's persuasive efforts to send her back, she succeeded in so impressing and pleasing Yama with her steadfast devotion to her husband that Yama was forced to revive Satyavan and grant him a long life as well as other boons that she had asked for. Such was the intense and extraordinary determination of this holy lady Savitri!

And in the same way, we have yet another great ideal – that of Markandeya! Destined to die at an early age, the young Markandeya fervently worshipped Lord Shiva to transcend death. Just as Yama approached him with the noose in hand to take him away, Markandeya clung to the Shivalinga he was worshipping. The noose fell over both the boy's head as well as the Shivalinga. Immediately, Lord Shiva burst forth from the Shivalinga, blazing in radiance with trident in hand, to save his devotee. He thus prevented Yama from taking away the boy and bestowed on Markandeya a long life of fourteen Kalpas duration. So Markandeya's 16th year was never completed. He became a Chiranjeevi, one of the Immortals. Such was his intense devotion and faith!

These are three of the great ideals we have inherited from our glorious past, and if we

diligently try, even to some small measure, to cultivate these ideals and become personifications and embodiments of them, our life will move in the right direction and will not be in vain! Bhagirata's perseverance, Savitri's determination and Markandeya's absolute trust and faith in God!

God bless you.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Radiant Immortal Atman!

Beloved and blessed children of the Divine! Wayfarers upon this journey called life! There is no wayfarer who does not have a fixed destination; that destination should also be a destination worth reaching. It must be something unique, something lofty, sublime, great and glorious!

This is precisely what our ancients have charted out for us in connection with this journey called life. They have charted for us a journey in such a way that ultimately it culminates in the destination called total divine perfection, which lies in each one of you in a seed form. A tiny little seed which you hold in the palm of your hand has the potential to grow into a towering tree with wide spreading branches, full of living force, laden with flowers and fruits and home to many birds. But when it is in a seed form, all this is not visible. It is potentially there, and given the right conditions, tending it with care and patience, this self-same seemingly insignificant seed can give shade to an entire picnic party in the garden! You can put chairs and tables under it, have a leisurely afternoon with a cat or dog and rest in its shade during a summer day. And who knows, one day it

may become the rafters of a beautiful hall like this, it may become pillars, doors and windows; maybe a cradle for a baby, cots for us to sleep on, chairs and tables—it becomes everything! This potential lies within this seed! Similarly, divine perfection lies dormant within you because it is your true nature. It is your true destiny! That potential has to be fully activated, unfolded, developed and made manifest!

There is a great destination you are heading towards. Your life should be lived in such a manner that it is not only favourable and conducive but actively helpful to that great attainment. It is to this end that our wise ones and our country's grand culture has placed before us lofty ideals to be inspired by, lofty ideals to live up to, so that our life takes us to those sublime heights!

In the tenth chapter, called Vibhuti Yoga, of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita the Purna Avatara Lord Krishna declares to Arjuna how He is manifest in this creation. He is immanent in this world, if only we had the eyes to see! He is gloriously manifest in all the best things of this world, the best of each species! The glories of the Lord are termed Vibhuties. For example we say "Oh! Sri Ramana Maharshi, Sri Aurobindo Ghosh, Sri Swami Sivananda etc., they are all Vibhuti-Purushas. In

and through them we see manifest the glory of God!

Thus, in declaring His glorious Vibhutis – the formative forces or spiritual powers which give to each object its essential nature—Lord Krishna says, “Of horses, know me to be Uccraisravas, of collections of water I am the ocean, of mountain-peaks, I am Meru, of immovable things, I am the Himalaya and of rivers I am Jahnavi or Ganga; of the generals I am Skanda, (the second son of Shiva and Parvati). He continues to describe at length His divine forms: He says in the 26th verse, “Of all trees, I am the Ashwattha, of divine seers I am Narada; of the Gandharvas I am Chitrarathah and of the perfected ones I am Kapila the sage.”

There is a great pilgrimage place in Ganga Sagar where a shrine is dedicated to Kapil Muni. He was a celebrated sage, considered as the fifth incarnation of Lord Vishnu. He was the brother of Arundhati (wife of the sage Vasishta) and the only son of Kardama and Devahuti. He taught spiritual wisdom to his mother Devahuti. This part of the Bhagavata is known as the Kapila-gita. This teaching contains not only the Sankhya philosophy but also Ashtanga Yoga and Bhakti Yoga. The Sankhya Darshana (the Sankhya Sutras) is attributed to him. And in the great ‘Itihasa’ it is said that King Sagara of the Surya

Vamsha (Solar Dynasty) once performed the Ashwamedha Sacrifice. The sacrificial horse was stolen by Indra (the king of the gods), who left it in the hermitage of the great sage Kapila, in the Patala-Loka or nether world. Sagara's sixty-thousand sons while looking for the missing horse found it in the hermitage of the sage. They tried to attack him thinking that he was the person who had stolen the horse. They thus incurred the displeasure of the Sage Kapila and were reduced to ashes. There was no one there to do Kriya-Karma (last rites) for them. After many generations Raja Bhagiratha, a descendent of Sagara, pondering the fate of his ancestors, determines to bring the celestial river Ganga down and make her flow over these remains so that the souls of the ancestors would be redeemed and they gained salvation or Sadgati. Thus was mitigated the curse of the great Kapila Muni, a Siddha Mahapurusha. Therefore, Lord Krishna says, "Among the Siddhas I am Kapil Muni".

Lord Krishna says, "Of divine seers I am Narada." Narada is a well-known figure featuring in all the Puranas; there is no Purana without Narada. He was the spiritual son of Brahma the creator. A great ascetic, he led his life according to the principles of Dharma. He moved among the three worlds in order to propagate the Lord's name and preach devotion to God. Hundreds of people

who came in touch with him took to the path of religion and devotion. Sometimes, he corrected and brought round people by encouraging them to quarrel! He is a divine messenger because the Lord identifies Himself especially with Narada among the divine sages. He moves freely in the three Lokas—Asura-loka, Manushya-loka and Swarga-loka—the world of demons, the world of men and the world of celestials. None can touch him; the Asuras and Devatas both give respect to him.

Among his wanderings in the different Lokas he often heard the praise of Anasuya, the Dharmapatni of the great sage Atri Mahamuni. Anasuya was a paragon of wifely virtues and chastity who served her husband with intense devotion and love—a Mahapativrata. Narada had a keen desire to see this wonderful lady. He descended upon the earth and went towards Atri Maharishi's hermitage. Atri Mahamuni had gone for his bath and Sandhya—his personal austerities. Anasuya was husking the paddy and was completely absorbed in her work. Sage Narada announced himself by uttering “Narayana, Narayana, Narayana.” At that time, Anasuya had lifted her hand to bring down the pestle. When she heard “Narayana” she left the pestle in mid-air and immediately went to welcome him with due respect. Meanwhile, the

pestle was hanging in the air, where she had left it! Sage Narada stared in wonder and thought, “Truly my visit has not been in vain. She is not an ordinary woman. She is an extraordinary Pativrata Nari.” He asked her, “What is this miracle?” She replied, “It is not a miracle. It is all due to my husband’s blessings. Taking the name of my husband, I asked the pestle to remain where it is so that I could come and receive you.” Narada replied, “Indeed! It is something which I have never seen in my entire career!” And when he went back he praised the great Pativrata of Anasuya to Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva. The three deities came to test the chastity of Anasuya. They came as Sadhus with matted hair, ochre robes, Kamandalus and Danda and asked for alms, “*Bhavati bhiksham dehi*”. As soon as Anasuya hears this she comes out and welcomes them with due respect. But they insist on ‘Nirvana-Bhiksha’ (Nirvana-Bhiksha means to be served without any clothing). Anasuya intuits that she is up for a severe test. She concentrates on her husband and says, “Certainly! As you say, so it shall be.” She takes a palmful of water from Atrimuni’s Kamandalu and prays to him, “My Pativrata is in your hands, O Patidev. It is you alone who can safeguard it.” She then comes out and sprinkles this water upon the three Sadhus who are sitting there as her guests. Within a

moment they become three little infants and start crying. She goes inside, takes off her clothes and

breast-feeds them! Thus, she passes the test. The gods are so pleased that they grant her a boon. Being childless she asks that the three gods remain with her in the form of a child. She is granted the boon, and a child with three faces and six arms wielding the symbols Shankha and Chakra of Vishnu, the Kamandalu and Mala of Brahma and Trishul and Damaru of Shiva is given to the couple. So a new Svarupa of Bhagawan was the result of the Maha-Pativratyā of Anasuya.

This is one of the great ideals our culture has given to those in the Dampatya-grihastha-jeevana in the Manava Loka. The majority of people live the householder's life. The world is maintained by them. The world is not maintained by Sadhus who are living isolated in the Himalayas! Though the Hindu scriptures have eulogised Sannyasa, they have also boldly declared that the Grihastha is the pivot of the whole society since the members of the other three Ashramas depend upon him for their sustenance. The central government, state government, the airlines, etc., are all manned by the people who are in the world, who are in the Grihastha-ashrama. If there is no Grihastha-ashrama, there will be no continuance of lineage. Because they have progeny, generation after generation are kept up. Therefore, it is the

Dharma of the Grihastha to create progeny so that they contribute for making the next generation. And if one is without progeny, the Shastras enjoin that the Grihastha must take a second wife to have children and possibly a son, so that the family lineage is kept up.

And so, the great ideal before us for all times is Pativrata for the Nari and Eka-patni Vrata for the Sad-grihastha.

And the highest ideal of Eka-patni Vrata is that of Maryada Purushottama Bhagawan Sri Ramachandra. When Lord Rama, Sita and Lakshmana were in exile in the forest, the sister of Ravana, Shurpanakha, comes across the Lord. Struck by his princely radiance and charm, she takes the form of a beautiful damsel and appears before Lord Rama and entreats him to take her as his wife. Lord Rama stoutly refuses her pleas on the grounds that he already has a wife and that he strictly adheres to the ‘Eka-patni-Vrata’. Thus Bhagawan Sri Ramachandra stands as the great ideal for all husbands; and for all wives it is that of Maha-pativrata Anasuya, one of the most celebrated women of Hindu mythology, who forever stands as a model of wifely virtues and testimonies that the power of chastity can bring nature under ones control.

The second great ideal that we have received is that of keeping one’s word—‘*Raghukula reeti*

sada chali aayee prana jaayi para vachana na jaayi.' Once we give our word there is no going back on it. One may lose one's life, but never shall the word be broken. And in the same way Lord Rama says, "If anyone should come before Me and says, 'I surrender to you', that person I can never reject." "*Tava asmi iti*"- if he says, "I am yours" no matter who he was before, a Parama-shatru, an Asura, I will never turn him away. I will give him shelter." This was the case with Vibhishana, the brother of Ravana, who repeatedly beseeched Ravana to desist from his unrighteous behaviour lest he will land in dire consequences and will have to face the Lord himself. He falls at Ravana's feet in open court and begs him not to be adamant. But Ravana gives him a kick and tells him to get away from his sight. Thus, downcast and determined not to be allied with evil Vibhishana turns his back on Ravana and goes to Rama to seek refuge. Hearing his story both Lakshmana and Sugriva are suspicious that he could be a spy from the enemy camp, and they strongly advise Rama not to concede to his request. But Rama says, "No! He has come in a state of surrender, I shall not turn him away." Such was his adherence to his word!

And then another great ideal that has come down to us from our wonderful past is the truthfulness of Raja Harishchandra. In the Hindu

religion and society, the name ‘Harishchandra’ has become synonymous with Satya or truth, so much so, that he is called ‘Satya-Harishchandra’. When I think of Harishchandra, I always think of Mahatma Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi once declared, “We are told that God is Truth. But I say, ‘Truth is God’. I am the worshipper of Truth, and as long as I live, I will not leave the path of Truth. *Satya hi hamare liye divyata hai, Bhagawan hai. Mein Satya ka pujari hoon. Satya par mera atal vishvas hoi. Satya ko kabhi bhi mein apna jeevan se bahar nahin nikaal sakata hoon.* If I utter anything, it is 100 % true, otherwise I keep silent. I will not utter anything which is not the truth.” That is why he was held in such esteem by everyone including the British government with whom he crossed swords. Even they said that they had the highest reverence for Mahatma Gandhiji.

Harishchandra is an immortal figure in our history and due to his truthfulness even the great Gods revered him. Sage Vashistha had declared that the king Harishchandra of the solar dynasty was the most truthful person on earth. Hearing this, Sage Vishwamitra decided to test king Harishchandra in order to disprove Vashistha’s statement. With his malicious imagination he employs Shani to the task. Shani can bring even the person of the highest fame and greatest prosperity to the most abject state of

disrepute and misfortune. If his shadow comes into one's horoscope, one goes through a very bad period (Shani-prabhav). So Vishvamitra sends Shani and soon Raja Harishchandra loses his kingdom and wealth, is banished and forced to go to Kashi. There he sees no other way but to sell his wife, Chandramati and son Rohitashva to a rich man to pay his dues to the sage. In a state of abject poverty he seeks employment under the caretaker of a crematory and to deposit the requisite cremation fees with the owner of the crematory. One day his son Rohitashva is bitten by a serpent and dies. The erstwhile queen Chandramati, who was reduced to work as a domestic helper, has no money for the cremation of her son. When she takes the body to the cremation ground, Harishchandra recognises her and is shocked to see their son dead in her arms. She tells him that she has no money and pleads with him to cremate the child but he does not relent and insists that he can only cremate if she can pay the fee. He says, "I have promised my employer that I will cremate the bodies only after receiving the fee, and so I cannot go back on my word". Even in this tragic and dire situation he sticks to his duty and his truthfulness—he does not budge from his Dharma and Satya. She says, "I have nothing with me to give as a requisite fee." Harischandra replies, "But you have that

Mangalsutra (the auspicious thread or ornament worn by married women, usually worn hidden to other's view and only known to the husband)." She suddenly realises that he is none other than her husband Harischandra because she is a great Pativrata and there was no way that he could know about her Mangalsutra. She lays the child aside and falls at his feet, and they both face each other but he still persists in telling her to either pay the fee or take the child back. At this point, pleased by his strict adherence to his Dharma of Satya, Vishwamitra is forced to concede defeat and the gods and sages appear on the scene, bring the child Rohitashva back to life and restore the kingdom to Raja Harishchandra and bless him saying, "The world shall never forget that such great beings like you have come and sanctified this earth by your presence!" This high ideal of truthfulness is also a bestowal of our culture. It serves as a guideline in our life.

Such lofty ideals actually lived by great ones in the past teach us that we can make our life sublime. They have gone before us and set footprints in the sands of time. Even if we cannot become just like them, we must still try to emulate them. If we try to emulate these great examples, then our life will not be ordinary; our life will be lived upon a much higher plane and will not be in vain.

I wind up by mentioning two more names of great ones. One name is that of Raja Shibi Chakravarti. He is a prince from Rajasthan, belonging to the Rana family. And the other is of Raja Dilip. Dilip and Shibi and the two great ideals which they exemplified in their lives we will take up for tomorrow morning's consideration. Until then, thank you for your presence and thank you for your patient listening. God bless you all.

Hari Om Tat Sat.

Radiant Immortal Atman!

Beloved and blessed children of the Divine! Mumukshus and Jijnasus, devotees of God, Bhaktas, Sadhaks and Yogis engaged in doing spiritual Sadhana in your chosen path of Yoga.

The main purpose of my being amidst you for these three days and giving these talks in the spirit of sharing is that you may start applying as many of the truths that you can in your day to day life from today onwards. It is not merely for imparting information, for increasing your knowledge or giving you a fresh look towards things that you already know, but mainly and solely that they will become a part of your character and conduct.

Cultural ideals are to become living expressions manifesting through you. Cultural ideals may fill pages of books, but then they have no relation to human life and human society which are dynamic, growing and progressive. Everything should move towards greater wholeness, towards complete perfection in everything—not merely in the deepest and the highest sense of your true spiritual identity – Nija Swarupa, the ultimate spiritual dimension. But

you are all born to not only move towards the attainment of divine perfection, but perfection in every other dimension of your life also.

If you are a citizen of a city, the city must be richer and benefitted for your being in that city. And as a son or a daughter of Bharatavarsha your presence should be of a positive benefit to your Motherland. Your Motherland is not only in Delhi or Calcutta, but it is from the Himalayas to Kanyakumari, from Arunachal Pradesh right up to the western-most corner of Gujarat. This is India. Everything you do should directly or indirectly leave a beneficial effect upon this India. And at the same time India is where you are. The person who is sitting next to you in a bus or a train, who is shopping in a store where you are purchasing something, that person also is India for you because he is your Bharatiya Atmabandhu. There is a brotherhood between you and every other citizen of India. You must feel, "I am not a stranger here. No one is a stranger to me. Everyone is mine. I am always moving amongst my own brethren. It is our Mother India that unites us all into one great national brotherhood."

There should be no feeling of difference between people of your province and those elsewhere. This feeling of unity has to be nurtured and made to grow. In the beginning of this century due to a lack of today's modern means of

communications, large portions of India were unknown to the rest of India; our tribals became alienated, we never gave them a thought, we did not even know that they existed—the Adivasis, Girijan, and the Vanavasis. Due to the neglect of Indians by Indians, it became possible for alien cultures and religious systems to enter into that area of India to such an extent that the Adivasis started to think of themselves as not belonging to India at all but instead maintained their loyalty to the West. Now we realise that it was a mistake to have neglected our own kith and kin, and we are forced to admit it and make amends.

Recently many organisations have started to set up new relationships with the original, native inhabitants of our jungle lands, and sometimes, this positive and very desirable process is being vitiated by the poison of politics. However, no matter how much politics may try to divide and separate, there is one thing that has always knit us together as a whole, and even now is a powerful force and will always continue to be a powerful force of oneness, and that is our great culture and our cultural ideals.

Two cultural ideals have always been dominating our national life. One is the great ideal that man should not live for himself alone; man should live to benefit others. Through that only, your nature will evolve and expand, your heart

will become generous, your vision will be broadened, and your hands will not try to grab for yourself. “Let me give to others; the hands are meant to give.”—Parahita Paropakara has always been a dominant note in the unfoldment of Indian history, so much so, that the great colossus Veda Vyasa Maharshi, whom the other great ones equated with God Himself, ultimately declared: “I have brought into being these 18 Puranas mainly to tell you two important things: “The highest which a human individual can perform is to do good to others, to benefit others, and the worst crime that one can ever commit is to harm any creature in the creation of God”—Recalling this great utterance of Veda Vyaasa, many millennia later, Sant Tulsidas confirms this in his saying, *“Paropakara sama punya nahin bhai, parapeeda sama nahin adhamayee”*—“Oh brothers listen! This is what I have to say—There is no greater merit, there is no greater good act in the eyes of God than that of benefiting others.” Paropakaar is doing good to someone from whom you expect nothing, whom you do not even know, whom you have never seen in your life before and perhaps will never see. This act of Paropakara has been raised to the level of a sacred act which our great ones have handed down to us as our cultural heritage.

Long ago in the Upanishadic era the students, after having imbibed knowledge from a teacher in a Gurukula, were told upon completion, “Your stay with me is over; now you have to go into the world, enter into active, social life and become a householder. Whatever you have learnt here, you must practise and apply in your householder life and elevate it to a sublime and noble height.” He would thus give the final parting instructions to the group of students or graduates as it is done in the Universities today. This is the ancient version of the modern University Convocation Address in those forest universities or the Gurukulas. As parting advice, the students were told, ‘Matri devo bhava, Pitri devo bhava,’—“Honour your mother as God; honour your father as God.” This we can understand because during the most helpless period of our life, when we are totally helpless after birth, it is the mother who gives her whole life: day and night, sacrificing her rest and sleep to look after the child, protecting it, nourishing it, loving it and making it comfortable as it is a newcomer to a strange world. Therefore, the mother being the first experience of comfort, protection and nourishment of the new Jivatma is the first benefactor. Then the father, being the giver of your life—you are an extension of him—enables the mother to devote all her time to

you. By his exertion and hard labour he brings home the food and keeps the pot boiling in the kitchen and mother is without any worry and able to look after the child. Though it is indirect activity, it is the Seva and exertions on the part of the father that makes everything possible and therefore ‘Pitri devo bhava.’

Thirdly, the distinguishing factor between other forms of life and the human being is intelligence, the mind. But then, even though endowed with this faculty, if nothing is done to unfold it, develop it and feed information into it, one becomes an illiterate fool. If no education is given, if the intelligence and mind remain the same, then one is no better than an animal. If you are illiterate, if you do not know even to count or sign your name, the potential of the faculty of intelligence remains dormant. It is to be unfolded and made dynamic and active, and it must grow and progress. That is done by the teacher (the Acharya) in the school or maybe the Moulvi in the Madarasa of the Muslims. This academic instruction is important and man is made a real man through the faculty of thinking and knowing things. Therefore, ‘Acharya devo bhava’ – ‘Regard your teacher as God’ who has made you a real human being through knowledge. These three things we can understand—*Matri devo bhava, Pitri devo bhava, and Acharya devo bhava.*

But then, the fourth which is ‘*Atithi devo bhava*’—‘Honour the guest as God’ may sound strange! Someone who unexpectedly turns up at your doorstep without prior intimation is to be regarded as God. Maybe an unknown wayfarer on a journey or pilgrimage who has been walking past midday without food or drink and suddenly presents himself at your door expecting your hospitality. If he is an unknown person, then you must go out and receive him and ask, “What can I do for you, brother?” because in terms of the global human family, he is your brother. The word ‘Atithi’ means he is an ‘uninvited guest’. An ‘invited guest’ is expected. But this person is an unknown and unexpected person at your doorstep. Therefore, he is called an ‘A-tithi’ or one without an appointment. ‘*Atithi devo bhava*’. Regard a perfect stranger also as God and do everything that you can for him. This is our concept of Paropakara which should not only be towards the people related or known to you, but even to those absolutely unrelated and unknown. As we are fortunately born in Punyabhumi Bharatavarsha, there is no greater Punya or merit for us than being of benefit to others -“*Paropakara sama punya nahin bhai.*”

There is an example to illustrate this. Once a great famine stalked the land and people were dying. There was no food at all. A very well to do

and respected family was impoverished due to this famine. If there is nothing to eat, one is helpless. Money cannot appease hunger. Once this family managed somehow to go into the jungle and get some little root and fruit and made a meal. Just as they were about to eat, a beggar came and said, "Please give me something to eat. I have not eaten anything for many days. I am very hungry." The husband said to his wife, "Look here! Our children are young. They require your care. They are closer to the mother, so you please eat. I will give my share to this man." And so, he gave away his share and the beggar went away. The devout wife said to her husband, "Let the children eat their full share. But you cannot expect me to eat my share while you are hungry. I give half of my share to you. Please accept it." When they were about to commence their meal a Chandala or untouchable approached them and said, "I have lived my life by hunting, but now due to starvation, I have become so weak that my eyes are blurred and my head is reeling, and I am not able to see my target nor do I have the strength to pull my bow. Please give me something to eat." The couple further divided the food which the wife wanted to share with her husband and she said, "Let us give this to this man and let the children eat. We can somehow bear our hunger." And so they gave the food away to him. The Chandala

with tears of gratitude took it and went away. Then just as the children were about to eat, a hungry dog appeared before them looking emaciated and eagerly eyed the food. The husband looked at his wife; the wife looked at the husband and said, "Look! The dog is also the child of some mother even as our children are from us." They approached the children and asked them to share their food with the dog. The children could not understand why their mother was asking them thus when they were hungry and about to eat. But they unquestioningly obeyed. They gave a little portion to the hungry dog and were happy to see the dog gobbling up the food. It comes to pass that the last piece of food left in the hands of the children was taken by a crow. Ultimately they end up sacrificing everything to appease the hunger of others. Great is the glory of this act because there is no agony worse than hunger for any living creature. It is said that the Gods themselves appeared and blessed them.

Sacrificing oneself for the good of others has always been considered as a great virtue in Hinduism. One of the greatest examples in the Puranas is that of king Rantideva. He was the son of Sankriti and belonged to the Chandravamsha or Lunar race. He had performed many Yajnas or Vedic sacrifices. Once he was doing severe austerities in a forest along with his family. As a

part of this, he fasted for 48 days. on the 49th day he received divine food, just enough for him and his family. As the family was getting ready to partake of the food, a few hungry guests came one after the other. Rantideva gave away all the food including the meagre drinking water. Then these guests, who were none other than the Trimurtis—Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva—appeared before him as they were well pleased and asked what boon he wished. Rantideva paid them humble obeisance, but did not ask for any boon! The Gods then blessed him and his family with the highest spiritual wisdom.

What is the meaning behind these examples? We are all one, we belong to one family—‘*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*’. When I experience pain, I understand the pain of others, and when I experience satisfaction by eating food, I understand the hunger of others and that a hungry man should be fed. Thus identifying oneself with the joys and sorrows of others is “Paropakara”. ‘Paropakara’ is not Para-upakara’, meaning I am serving or benefitting ‘others’. There is no “other”. In fact, I am benefiting myself; I am giving to myself, because the “other” is myself in another form.” This is a grand vision and truth. This is the great ideal.

A great emperor named Shibi Chakravarti was the king of Kashi. He had taken a vow that he

would protect anyone who took refuge in him. Once the Gods Indra and Agni decided to subject him to a severe test. Indra took the form of a hawk and Agni that of a pigeon. The hawk started pursuing the pigeon to kill and eat it. The pigeon managed to approach King Shibi and sought his protection which he instantly promised. The hawk too approached him to give him the pigeon which was its rightful food and prey. Shibi struck a compromise saying that he would give from his own body as much flesh as the pigeon weighed. Thus he was fulfilling Dana, Dharma and his Kartavya as a king. Dana means the charity which he made to the hawk; Dharma means one's moral duty—the protection of the helpless, as in the case of the pigeon; and Kartavya or kingly duty which was to satisfy all the beings under his care which he did to both the hawk and the pigeon! when he started cutting his own flesh, the two gods revealed themselves, blessed him by making his body whole again and granting him several other boons. This blazing example of King Shibi Chakravarti's single act of adhering to his duty as a king, giving protection to one who sought shelter from danger and at the same time, satisfying one who had asked for charity, stands out as a great source of inspiration for all times.

Another ideal that has come from our culture is the ideal of compassion. Tulsidas says, "*Daya*

dharma ka mool hai”—All Dharma or righteousness is rooted in compassion.” One who feels for others, one who is compassionate towards all creatures, he can never commit anything wrong. In human conduct ego is a Kalanka or a black spot, and it leads to inappropriate actions. So Tulsidas says, “*Daya dharma ka moola hai, paap moola abhimaan, Tulsi daya na chhadiye, jaba tak ghata mein pran.*” Tulsi says, that the root of Dharma is compassion and the root of sin is the ego; do not give up being compassionate towards all creatures until your very last breath.—Be kind, be compassionate, be soft-spoken. Be a source of solace to those in distress, cheer up those who are sad, give hope to those in despair. These are all manifestations of compassion in various ways.

Raja Dilip is said to have been one of the most righteous and chivalrous emperors of the Suryavamsha or Solar Dynasty. Due to an inadvertent omission on his part he was cursed by the divine cow, Kamadhenu, to be childless. To negate the ill-effects of the curse, the king was advised to worship the divine cow Nandini who was the daughter of Kaamadhenu and thereby earn her goodwill. The king faithfully served Nandini for twenty-one days. He slept where the cow slept and ate when the cow ate and washed the cow and took very good care of it. On the

twenty-second day, when the cow was grazing in the field, a lion suddenly appeared and pounced on Nandini. The king tried to kill the lion but could not because the lion happened to be a servant of Lord Shiva and he cast a spell on King Dilip that made him motionless. The king wanted to protect the cow but could not do anything except speak. He begged the lion to spare the cow and eat him instead, and he bowed before the lion. Seeing that the king was willing to sacrifice himself to save her, the cow was very much pleased. She revealed that the incident was actually a trick played to test his faithfulness. As he came out victorious, he was blessed by the divine cow and soon begot a son and heir to the throne, who was called Raghu. This supreme sense of self-sacrifice, what a lofty ideal!

Another lofty ideal is perseverance! Lord Buddha struggled with his mind and overcame the conflicting thoughts that were pulling as harsh strings: memories of his young wife, memories of his little child Rahul, and the thought of all those wonderful enjoyments that he had as a young man when he was surrounded by all sensual attractions, naturally all this put his mind in a turmoil. Thus tormented, Lord Buddha takes a vow that he will not stir from his seat until he attains illumination: “The flesh may shrivel, the skin may dry up and fall, all my bones may

crumble into dust, but Siddhartha will not leave this seat unless he has attained illumination!” Such was his firm resolve and determination! He became an illumined Muni and a sage!

We’re most fortunate to have such grand ideals as part of our heritage from the sublime culture of Bharatavarsha. We have considered them during these past three days. May we be inspired to live a life of idealism and be an asset to our nation and through such an ideal life may we make our spiritual Sadhana also fruitful in God-realisation. May God and all the saints bless us to attain success in this worthy endeavour!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

24th September 2016 marks the auspicious occasion of Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out one hundred booklets comprising illuminating talks of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

To propagate Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's gospel of Divine Life, Worshipful Sri Swamiji Maharaj travelled extensively in India and abroad and showed the path of divine life to countless seekers through his spontaneous and highly inspiring lectures. His lectures, in Sadgurudev's words, are the outpourings of his saintly heart, the revelations of intuitive wisdom.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of his hitherto unpublished lectures in booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary. The present booklet 'Methods of Meditation' is a Spiritual Talk given at the Yoga Sadhana Mandir, Keedysville, Maryland.

We express our heartfelt gratitude towards Moo Briddell, Mary Dean, and the inmates of the Headquarters Ashram for their loving service in making this printing possible.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—*The Divine Life Society*

Blessed and beloved seekers upon the path to God Realization, seekers on the path of Yoga, devotees of the Lord and Yogis upon the upward ascending path of Yoga Sadhana. Welcome to our sharing in the name of beloved and worshipful Holy Master, Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, the prophet of Divine Life and messenger of practical spiritual living in this 20th century. This is dedicated to him and to you all under the auspices of the Yoga Sadhana Mandir.

Today's theme, Methods of Meditation, is intended more for the purpose of bringing about clearness in your ideas regarding the subject of meditation and its methods and less to provide you with any new information and instruction. It is intended more to clear up misconceptions and set right your thinking upon this subject and less to provide special or additional information upon the subject. Certainly, it is also to bring certain new insights precisely with the intention of removing misconceptions and clarifying views.

I say this because today, the subject most written about, talked about and taught more than

any other in all countries of the world is that of meditation. Maybe it is second only to diet—eating: what to eat, how much to eat, what not to eat, eating fads. Meditation has got a close challenger in the subject of diet!

Go to any part of the world, in all countries you will find people talking meditation. It is hip everywhere. It is a mod subject. People want to talk about meditation, to hear about meditation, to discuss meditation and to do meditation. It is a very good sign. It shows that one of the most important things, in fact, the most important thing for which man has taken human birth, is now pervasively present in the mind of man in human society everywhere.

Old people meditate, as they ought to, as they are at the end point of their lives and nearing the exit. Young people meditate, children meditate (I have seen two books by the same author where meditation is specifically taught to children.) University students meditate, business executives meditate, men and women both meditate. In America, Canada, England, Germany and other European countries, Australia—everywhere there are meditation centers. Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Zen, New Age, Yoga, Tantra, Kundalini—all have Meditation Centers.

How much more today than ten years ago, I don't know, but I travelled throughout Europe to Spain, Belgium, Germany, Austria, France,

Switzerland, then to Lebanon and the Arab countries. Prior to that I went to Canada and North America, to Venezuela, Trinidad, Uruguay, Chili, British Bahamas, to the Fiji Islands, New Zealand, Australia, Philippines, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Ceylon, Everywhere people are meditating and doing Yoga.

In Sidney, Australia there is a ten or fifteen minute Yoga class on TV every day given by a well known senior Yoga teacher who came to India and took Sannyas who is called Roma Blair (Swami Nirmalananda). So 365 days a year, there is ten or fifteen minutes of Yoga on Sidney TV.

Bookshelves in bookstores are filled with books on meditation; every type of book in various languages of the world. This being the case, there seems to be little that people do not know about meditation and that is precisely why I believe that this talk is necessary. If you get to know thoroughly one type of meditation then you are in a fairly good position. You know what you have studied. You know what you have to do and you start doing it. But when there are hundreds of books about all types of meditation and you start getting into the study of all of them, you don't do any of them. It is like the great teacher Ramakrishna said—You start digging for water ten or twelve feet in one place then you go to another place and start digging there, then you leave off that place and go to another. You will never get water. You have to keep at one place and

dig deep enough, then you are sure to hit water. What happens, there being too many ways of meditation publicized through bookstores and publications, the reader gets confusing and conflicting ideas about the subject. He becomes more puzzled rather than getting a clear cut idea of the process.

As I said, among the popular subjects on which thousands of books have come out in recent decades, meditation takes a prime place. In this profusion of books on meditation, there are some very good standard books which address themselves to and take up the task of expounding the time-honoured and well established classical methods of meditation, thus bringing more light by explaining them in a clear, detailed and practical way. This is certainly valuable additional knowledge upon texts that have existed for hundreds of years. Many other new types, that is, original brands of meditative techniques, copyright brands which are the sole monopoly of certain teachers, are also abundantly evident today. This sometimes causes a great deal of uncertainty and confusion.

However, there is no denying the fact that meditation is the most important of all inner processes. Meditation is the most important process in the attempt of man to transcend his present state of consciousness and to attain a higher state of spiritual consciousness. Meditation still remains the most important of all

practices, the key to blessedness, the portal to higher consciousness, the doorway to illumination. Its importance cannot be overemphasized, it cannot be exaggerated. From time immemorial all great scriptures have tried to tell us precisely the central place meditation occupies in the practical spiritual life of the seeking individual soul. It is the technique *par excellence* for transcending earth consciousness, body-bound consciousness and attaining the state of supramental spiritual consciousness.

It is a significant fact that the science of Yoga is also referred to as the Science of Meditation (Patanjali), because in the ultimate context all the varied Yoga processes are nothing but preparation to take the practitioner to the state of meditation; training him, making him fit to engage in meditation. All Yoga leads to meditation. All the disciplines of Yoga are so many preparations; guiding the practitioner to sit steadily, withdraw his mind, still the thoughts, concentrate the mind upon one focal point and merge it into intense, deep, one-pointed meditation. “That which is cognized by the Yogis in a state of meditation, He whom the Yogis perceive in a mind that has been lifted up to a state of meditation, that Being I adore.”

Master has written an entire book called “Concentration and Meditation”. Another knowledgeable book is simply called “Meditation by Monks of the Ramakrishna Order”. All the

different monks are senior people well-established in spiritual life, well-grounded in knowledge of the scriptures and the practice of meditation. A more recent publication culled from various utterances and sayings of the great Swami Vivekananda of hallowed memory has been compiled into a book, "Meditation and Its Methods", by Swami Vivekananda. I have no doubt that all of you here could benefit immensely by making a study of these books. At least whatever information is given in them should be your background, your basis upon which you can add a little knowledge of recent trends. But these books will give a sound basis of what you should know about the subject.

Meditation in its simplest general form means an attempt of the mind to stop thinking of multifarious things; to stop its constant, restless movement of flitting from one thought to another, and trying to think about a single thing. It is an attempt to unify thought, so that the almost ceaseless restlessness of the mental waves is calmed and made to subside and there is in the mind a lake of certain stillness. In that state of stillness, mind attempts to hold onto a single idea. This is meditation.

As a pure exercise in mental discipline this one idea can be anything you find is easy to fix your mind on; it may be a beautiful flower; it may be your visualization of the full moon in a calm placid night sky; or it may be a star in the heavens; or a point of light—whatever is pleasing

to and attracts the mind and enables the mind easily and spontaneously, without effort, to focus itself. That is chosen as the focal point. This is an exercise, a discipline for the mind, gradually to give up its constant tossing about and to remain stationary.

It is natural for the mind to dwell on whatever it likes, whatever is appealing to it. Therefore the object is left entirely to the choice of the individual meditator who is trying to train the mind to become one-pointed. Classically, meditation always means trying to fix the mind on the Eternal, on the Great Reality; that which does not change, that which does not pass, that which is eternal and imperishable, that which is permanent and indestructible, the beginningless and the endless.

For you must recognize that meditation is the Science of Religion, the practical aspect of the inner content of religion, whose outer form may vary from religion to religion, but consists of certain ways of worship, ceremonials and rituals. Though the outer form may vary, the ultimate inner content by which man seeks to make his religion the means of attaining the goal of life is the same. It is that which makes his religion the means for accomplishing the mission for which he has come into this world, of realizing his true nature and attaining a state of liberated consciousness, transcending all sorrow, pain and suffering and becoming established in a state of

joy! joy! joy! The peace that passeth understanding. A state of fearlessness and freedom. A state of supreme divine exaltation. This is the mission of the individual soul, and meditation is employed as the highest method accomplishing that mission.

In this case, the focal point of meditation becomes the Great Reality—becomes God—the Universal Soul, the Cosmic Being. So, as a spiritual process, being the ultimate inner quintessence of the Science of Religion, meditation is always upon the Divine Reality which is your eternal source, origin and abode. It is where you belong. Meditation means fixing your mind and getting absorbed in That. But as a discipline and training technique, it is the focusing of the mind on anything upon which the mind can easily be focused. It may be upon a candle flame, upon a dot on the wall, the symbol OM or a crucifix. Or on a personal form of Deity—the child Jesus, Buddha, Rama, Krishna, Mother Mary. Or it may be the merging of your mind in the sound OM. All these different objects of concentration train the mind towards the state of one-pointedness to the exclusion of any contrary ideas.

Meditation requires a subtle mind. The vast majority of people have minds which are very gross, because they are constantly engaged in thinking only of gross things, material objects, physical experiences. Naturally mind assumes the

state of that level of thing upon which it is settled whereas, the Supreme Reality, the Cosmic Being, Universal Soul is a transcendental principle more subtle than the subtlest, beyond the perception of the five senses. We cannot see it, hear it, touch it, smell it or taste it. It is different from the mind and mental processes, because they are all confined to time and space. They are limited and finite, and they function upon a relative framework of cause and effect, whereas the Great Reality is an Absolute Principle, non-dual, not limited to anything, infinite, not confined in time or space. Thus meditation upon this transcendental, subtle, supramundane principle whom we call the Cosmic Being, the Eternal Reality, requires a subtle, purified, very, very refined mind, because it is abstract.

This is a well-known hurdle, a great difficulty that man is habitually thinking only of things created, upon objects in this physical world with name and form, shape and colour. It is very difficult for him to engage his mind in thinking of something with neither name, nor form, nor colour, nor any dimension. The great ancient masters explained to us another aspect of the Supreme Reality which is equally valid. It is the impersonal absolute, but is also the personal Divine Being, the Deity, God that is concerned in creation as its Creator, Sustainer, and its ultimate Dissolver, as that aspect of the Supreme Being pervading all creation. They explained to us that

there is this other aspect of the Supreme Being besides its transcendent, abstract, non-dual aspect. There is also the Deity as Cosmic personal being to whom you can pray and who lifts you up to a state of cognizance of the impersonal Reality. Therefore, let not this hurdle deter you or turn you away from an attempt to realize God. It is not necessary to straightaway jump into the heights of the absolute, nameless, formless, transcendental Being. You can approach It by that which is tangible to you in the form of a personal Deity.

Thus they have given us methods of relating ourselves to the personal God through faith and devotion of the heart. Commence your training for meditation by sitting steadily, withdrawing the mind and visualizing before you the radiant presence of the personal Deity in the form of your choice. That is the wonderful uniqueness of the Vedic religion called Hinduism, that in order to provide a suitable focal point for a wide ranging variety of human temperaments and capacities and tastes, the One Indivisible, non-dual Supreme Reality has been given in numerous idealistic divine forms. It is not only a single stereotyped concept of the personal God that we have as substitute, in case of inability to think about the formless. No, even in the substitute they have given a wide range of variety, so no matter where you are, whatever your particular taste and temperament, you find a certain suitable concept,

an aspect of the personal God for your own meditation, to which you can easily relate. Thus

we have the concept of Vishnu, or Narayana, or Siva, or Blessed Mother, or Rama, or Krishna.

This is not superstition or polytheism or idolatry. The great masters of the ancient Vedic religion were practical people. They were not satisfied with a religion which implied only faith and belief, but they wanted a religion that could be lived and practiced; ultimately to attain the deepest personal spiritual experience. They wanted to give actual practical techniques, and in the context of the needs of various types of seeking, individual souls that come into this area of the scientific practice of religion, they expounded the presence of numerous aspects of the manifestation of the One, non-dual Divine Principle (God, Brahman). There are innumerable manifestations of that Divine essence, and they are all an answer to a felt need.

To enter into a great building, a vast complex of offices, you can have a hundred different doors, but all give access to the same interior. Each particular concept of a personal Deity constitutes a door by which to enter that Brahmic experience. It is due to this knowledge that the followers of the Vedic religion are not too perturbed by charges of idolatry levelled against them. They maintain their peace, they do not try to justify or defend themselves, because they know that what appears on the surface to the superficial observer to be

something barbarous or cruel is nothing but a commonsense situation to answer felt needs, to provide for the necessity of practitioners of the inner and not outer content of religion. Therefore, the method of meditation may take the form of a steady dwelling upon a certain aspect of personal Deity (Rama, Vishnu, Siva, Narayana). They went even further. They not only gave these different names, but even with a single name like Rama, said that you can meditate on different forms. If you wish, you can meditate on Rama as a youthful Prince, or as a monarch sitting upon a throne, or upon Rama clad in bark cloth, holding only a bow and arrow in a forest background, or upon Rama the child, the baby Prince in the palace courtyard. So a single aspect of Deity may be worshipped in different ways.

The same with Vishnu. Some worship the child Krishna, some the youth Krishna, some the warrior Krishna, some the Jagatguru Krishna, World Teacher, who expounded the Gita wisdom to his disciple Arjuna. Some worship Krishna as a transcendental Being, apparently with form but nameless, formless, all pervading, indwelling all beings, as He who holds infinite universes within Him, Krishna, Satchidananda, Ocean of Bliss.

They are Incarnations, they came upon the earth and illumined the earth, and during their lifetime, they passed through various stages which any human being passes through: infancy, youth, prime of manhood, middle age. So as your

temperament pulls you, you can approach Him in any form. Even so the Divine Mother is given in many varying forms. Some seek to worship her as Lakshmi. Some as Durga or Kali. Some worship her as Saraswati, or as Parvati. But the essence of the meditative technique is the same, whether the method you employ is the method of the personal God or the abstract concept.

It is the stilling of the body movements, keeping the body in a state of poise, and withdrawing the mind from its outgoing tendencies distracted and wandering amongst many objects, and stilling the thoughts within, dwelling with the indrawn mind in one-pointed concentration upon God. It is the same with the worship of Krishna, Vishnu, Rama, Siva or Devi. It is the keeping out of contrary thought; unifying the mind upon one single flow, moving towards the concept behind this idea or thought, towards what it implies, what it connotes to you. This is the inner content of the form taken by meditation, no matter what kind it is.

In this process, you repeat over and over again the name that most happily and appropriately denotes the object on which you want to fix your mind. This repetition of a term which indicates that object is very helpful. It helps to keep up the continuity of thought, because without this external aid there come breaks in the thought flow because of the oscillating tendency of the mind. Mind swings away from the central

thought for a moment and goes to some other thing, then comes back again. But if it is hedged in, as it were, by the repetition of a certain name or term while simultaneously it is thinking about that which you are repeating, then the mind current, the stream of mental thought, being hedged in on both sides like a river flowing between two banks, cannot overflow and go off in diverse directions. Even so, the repetition of a name and listening to the sound becomes a channel for the thought stream to flow toward the object. This is a great help. Divine Name! Not any name, but Divine Name because it implies to you the meaning of the object upon which you are trying to focus your mind.

At the same time the subtle movement of is remotely associated with the breath that goes in your nostrils. By the regulation and control of your breath, the subtle movement of also becomes influenced, regulated and controlled. By this remote control of, the mind through activity and being interconnected, this regulation and control in inner becomes very helpful in keeping the thought flow unhampered and concentrated and flowing in the desired direction. Therefore, when you are sitting and trying to meditate, and the mind is trying to attain steadiness; at that point try to restrain the breath for a little while, without any feeling of pressure or discomfort. There should not be pressure, because then the very

object with which you move the will become thwarted, will become nullified.

The whole purpose and aim is that this temporary cessation should add to and supplement the stillness you are trying to bring into the mind by dwelling upon the object of your meditation. That stillness is aided by bringing about stillness in inner subtle, which is brought about by temporary cessation of the breath at the right moment. A little bit of breath control at the right moment aids in arresting the inner Pranic activity. And that aids the concentration of the mind. In this great method of meditation, physical stillness, the stoppage of the breath and resulting stillness in Pranic activity, temporarily all bring about a stillness of the mind. At the time of this state of stillness of the mind there should be keen, alert awareness of what you are meditating upon. You should not fall into a mood of forgetfulness. That would not be meditation, but a gentle unconscious drowsing.

With the body seated in a comfortable pose and in a state of quiescence try to still the thoughts. Temporarily there is stillness of thought and you experience a certain sense of absence of restlessness. In that quietude the tendency of the mind is to go into a gentle drowse, if there is a lack of sharp awareness of the thing upon which you are meditating. That acute awareness is the essence of meditation. All the other conditions are for making it possible. That acute awareness is a

condition of Sattwa, through the subduing of Rajas. And if that acute awareness is lost, Rajas is subdued but Sattwa also disappears. Then what will be the state? We call it Tamas. There is a gentle state of forgetfulness and drowsiness. Pleasant, but it will not pay you in the path of Yoga. By all means this should be avoided.

Those who try to meditate upon the Impersonal Absolute, the formless Brahman, beyond name, form, time and space, the unmanifest, employ methods that are exactly opposite. With the Personal dualistic meditation the mind is made to dwell upon a certain concrete form according to the Deity visualized, a very definite scientific form and appearance, but all of them are full of grace, of divinity, of luminosity because they are not material, gross forms, but spiritual forms. They are non-material, made up of pure Satchidananda. These forms are characterized by a luminosity and brightness, beauty and divinity. Though they differ, these are their common characteristics, no matter what the form is.

In the Impersonal Absolute those who do Advaitic Vedantic meditation, for them there is no form, only the visualization of Parabrahman as a state of light, of existence in infinity, of eternal being, of luminous consciousness, boundless, an ocean of consciousness, a state of impersonal pure bliss. This is the method of meditating upon the absolute Brahman, where once and for all you

drop all thoughts of name and form of this external universe, this relative world, where you go beyond name and form and dwell upon the nameless, formless Reality: the unmanifest Supreme Reality. This is Vedantic meditation upon the Impersonal Absolute.

But some Vedantins employ a different method of meditation. They do not so much dwell upon the external reality, but rather they prefer to meditate upon their own innermost Self as the Eternal Reality. "I am myself that Eternal Reality. I am not this body, not this mind, not these senses, not this intellect. I have no name and form. I am not an individual being. I have no bounds. I am eternal. Infinity. Unborn. Deathless. I am the supreme all-pervading Reality."

They mediate not upon Parabrahman as described in the Upanishads, they mediate upon their own innermost Self as non-different from the Eternal Reality. They are pure Vedantins. They deny even their separate personal being. They reject the human personality as being a myth. They equate it with the person whom you dream about when you see yourself in a dream going to various places, doing various things, as you see yourself in a dream at night. That you in the dream, when you wake up you know it did appear to exist but it did not have a factual existence that it was only for a short time a projection in the dream. When you wake up it disappears; it is no more. Even so they declare that this present state

of consciousness is only a temporary projection and you will wake up into a reality consciousness, eternity consciousness, infinity consciousness, then you suddenly realize that it never was, it does not exist. This ‘I’ personality does not exist. And meditating upon themselves as infinite eternal being, they seek to enter into a consciousness of non-dual, pure identity with the Supreme Being. “I and my Father are One.” “Aham Brahma Asmi”, “Soham, Sivoham”.

This is not the meditation of devotees, those who prefer to keep a dualist consciousness of worshipper and the worshipped, of lover and beloved, adorer and adored object. This is not the method for such people, but rather for the pure Vedantin, who wants to become established in a non-dual state of consciousness where there are no two, no meditator and meditated object, only One beyond all distinctions. Followers of Shankara’s Absolute Monism meditate upon the affirmation, “Aham Brahma Asmi, I am the Supreme Reality. I am neither body, mind, senses, intellect, none of these changing finite factors. I shine as the eternal reality. I myself am without name, form, without body.” That is a different type of meditation altogether. It is called the pure Advaitic meditation, and it goes a step beyond the nameless and formless Being, a ray meditating upon the sun. But here there is no ray, no drop, no individual being.

Follow Sattvic diet and the careful avoidance of distracting activity that is avoidable and unnecessary to you, and keep a serene interior, unagitated by negative feelings, allowing things to be without being upset by the state of things outside yourself. Do not allow yourself to be too much agitated by the world's condition, but take a philosophical attitude. The world does not owe you a certain standard of behavior. Take the attitude that I am not a school teacher and the world my classroom, it was there before I came. I may owe a certain type of behavior to the world, but the world owes me nothing. It will continue on after I go, so let me take it as it comes and let me live it without grasping.

This does not mean becoming heartless and callous towards things which are brought to your notice, such as suffering in the world. It does not mean that you should not bother about it. It means not bothering yourself about things which you cannot change, about things with which you have no concern, but being positively concerned about things which come within the area of your own immediate obligations and duties; by doing the right thing by it and then forgetting it; by not being overly involved. You must know how to do the right thing in a situation, yet be detached. Stand back and know "I have not done it. Ego has not done it. God has done it. He knows more and

better how to deal with it than I. Who am I? A grain in the seashore of life."

Thus, being fully aware that in the ultimate context it is God that is controlling the world, don't allow yourself to become too upset and agitated by things. Carefully steer clear of negative attitudes about people and things, thus keeping the interior serenity as untouched as you possibly can. Keep out of your life avoidable distractions which are not necessary for you. Avoid the company of such people who make you restless, who make your mind agitated, who create disturbances in your mind. You should not keep such contact if you want to have serenity and peace, if you want to be able to meditate.

Thus, wisely use your commonsense which is given to you by God. As an intelligent human individual, wisely and cautiously keep out of such associations, such company, such situations and occupations which needlessly disturb and distract your mind. Try to bring into your life factors that will help to stabilize your mind: dispassion, detachment, discrimination, philosophical attitude, the refusal to react violently to outer stimuli, contentment and satisfaction, control of desire, surrender to the will of God. Always hold onto a certain background of thought in the midst of distracting things.

Employing all these methods will gradually build up an interior that is suitable and fit and capable of entering into a meditative state. It is only with a fit instrument that you can do a very specialized procedure. You cannot pare your nails with a blunt pair of scissors; you cannot shave yourself with a blade that has rusted. If that is so in an ordinary procedure, how can you hope to meditate with a mind that is always upset, full of distraction, and involved in things which cause restlessness. At every step one has to be cautious. At every step one has to use commonsense. At every step one has to draw from one's own previous experience. You have lived in the world long enough. You know what situations upset your mind, what brings in disturbances and confusion. You have learned enough and experienced enough, so you are expected to keep out of situations which are likely to lead you again into an undesirable state of mind.

That is why God gives you experiences. You are expected to remember them, make use of them, and become wise, and not once again get into the same net by which you have been caught hundreds of times. Then whatever method of meditation you employ will be effective and progressive. Apply the lessons you have learned from previous experiences because your mind is yours. You are the only person who can manage your mind. The physician cannot take the medicine to cure the patient; he can only

prescribe it for him. I am prescribing now, but the medicine will have to be taken by the meditator because the mind belongs to the meditator and the life of the meditator also belongs to the meditator.

The outer life and the mind of the meditator are closely connected because of the simple fact that your outer life is also lived with the same mind. You have to think and get involved in situations with the same mind. You have to relate to other people with the same mind. And with that same mind you are supposed to do Yoga and meditate and attain Samadhi. So you don't have two separate minds; one for functioning in this world to be put aside when you go into the meditation room.

Therefore: the need for being wise, for using commonsense, for always remembering past experiences and applying them to present situations so that the mind is not in any way disturbed and rendered unsuitable for prayer and meditation. If you are always cautious and live in the light of past experience and wisely avoid pitfalls and do not create situations likely to upset and disturb your mind, then your interior will keep its spiritual state to carry on undisturbed prayer, contemplation and meditation.

These then are the three different methods of approach to meditation:

1) The method of identity, where you reject your personality altogether. "I do not exist. There is only Existence. Whatever there is, that is what I am." It is a non-dual state of meditation, where your identity merges with the ultimate Reality.

2) This is a lesser type of meditation where you feel yourself as the individual soul, like a river moving towards the ocean. It has no form, no name, no shape, it is not a person. This is meditation upon the Impersonal Absolute, Satchidananda. Here you still retain your awareness as the meditator.

3) The third is the method of meditation upon a personal Deity, in which you relate to Him with devotion, divine love, spiritual emotion. You meditate on the form of the deity which is favorite to you, on that all-perfect, divine personality who can hear your prayers, who can bless you, grace you, respond to your prayers. Relate yourself in a specific way as to a divine father, divine mother, as your guide, protector, and friend.

These three methods more or less generally sum up the content of all meditations whether it be in the context of Christianity, or Islam, or the Hebrew, Judaic religion, or Zoroastrian religion. They are either the non-dual state of meditation, or the Impersonal Absolute state of meditation, or the pure personal state of meditation. These three classes cover in a broad way the entire range of

meditative methods within the context of the different living religions of the world.

Specific techniques may differ. Zen meditation is an attempt to approach the Impersonal Absolute but it employs a heroic method of trying to confront the relative mind with an almost insolvable paradox, so that it goes on struggling and attempting to solve an insolvable thing, and bashing its head against the wall as it were, until it falls back exhausted, almost broken, devastated, and in the state of near self-destruction. Suddenly the consciousness goes beyond the mind, to the state of No-Mind. But that is a very strenuous and violent technique. Very few are suited for it. It requires great powers of endurance. The weak-minded become crazy or have a nervous breakdown. In a classical Zen technique as practiced in Japan (I don't know about here in the United States), it is a very difficult discipline. Fifteen to eighteen hours in each 24 hour period, sitting continuously for twelve to fourteen hours, in the Zendo. As I told you, few people here are suited for it. It is not easy. It is almost traumatic, and it is meant to be. The mind is blasted as it were by the overwhelming obstacles against which it tries to pit itself. That is Zen meditation.

At the same time there is another class of Zen meditation, where the people do not meditate at all. They say everything is meditation; we are always in a state of meditation. Be here now. Be in

it. Whatever you are doing, be fully in it. Lose yourself. So you have the Zen of drawing, the Zen of cleaning Motorbike, the Zen of entering into whatever you do, so totally and completely that you are no more there. The consciousness becomes uplifted out of its narrow confines of the self, and you are aware only of pure consciousness, aware only of awareness. That, they say should be a continuing thing. It should be the very flow of your life. The Zen of normal life. The Zen of being. Pure You, in the most natural pristine state, at all times, in all situations. That also requires a certain unification of attention though not as strenuous as classical Zen which is a science, a technique. Here it is an art. The natural flow of consciousness and total attention is an art mastered by continuous practice. It does not come in a day.

As I told you I am not going into the various specific techniques. There are a hundred techniques. TM had its day and then it was converted into the Science of Creative Intelligence. That will have its day because America always wants something new, something modern. It tires of the same thing which goes out of fashion, like changing cars every year. So, after some time, the Science of Creative Intelligence also will give place to a third thing. But I have given you the broad methods of meditation within the classical religious frame.

Within this frame of classical religion, meditation always means an attempt to meditate upon God, upon the ultimate Reality. But this technique can be used for various things. If you want to get rid of a very bad temper, you can meditate on peace, on Lord Jesus, on Buddha, on Mahatma Gandhi, all of whom were devoid of anger. You can meditate upon the disadvantages of anger, and meditate upon one of these glorious beings who were the very embodiment of angerlessness, passionlessness. Then meditate upon yourself as already in possession of this anger less state, fully and completely free of anger and full of joy. Meditate upon yourself as already in the state of perfection.

This is also a method of meditation that can be used in order to overcome a specific negative quality, and to grow into a spiritual quality. It can be used to overcome fear, as we are always full of fear. Meditate upon fearlessness, the advantages of being fearless, the disadvantages of being timid and full of fear. Then meditate upon some fearless being, like Joan of Arc, or any other fearless person. Meditate upon yourself as already possessed of absolute courage. In this way meditative techniques can be used at different levels. If you want to master a subject, you can meditate upon that subject.

What I have given you is the classical spiritual meditation, which is the inner content of practical religion of all the major religions of the

world. I have given you three broad methods: (1) personal dualistic meditation; (2) impersonal non-dualistic meditation; and (3) the absolute monistic meditation of identifying yourself with the Absolute. And I have told you the important factors that are directly connected to successful meditation. Upon the basis of these ideas, which you have received today, you must further build up very clear ideas about meditation.

There must be a hundred different types of meditation, but that does not mean anything to your toil. You must know what is the suitable thing for you, adopt it, and stick to it. There are various things which do not necessarily have relevance to you. There are many people, so different meditation techniques are necessary. Textbooks are necessary because there are Buddhists following Buddhism, Christians following Christian meditation. There are books describing the meditations of St. Ignatius of Loyola, meditations upon the passion of Christ, the stages of the Cross. This is necessary because there are devout Catholics who want to meditate.

TM also is necessary because there are people who do not want self-realization or God realization or spiritual illumination, but they do want to get rid of tension, they want to sleep well, to have a calm mind and to calm their emotions. They want inner poise and freedom from tension, so they need no tranquilizers or sleeping pills. Also they want to develop memory; more attention and

powers of concentration. If you are a lawyer, a student, or a businessman all these things are going to pay rich dividends. That is all right. They go to TM and they get what they want. Maybe they get a lot more inner relaxation and freedom from tension and pressure, so that also is necessary. They all have their place and answer certain specific needs.

But as a seeker, you must decide for yourself what you are seeking. What is the ultimate experience that you wish to attain? What type of meditation is meant for you? Then you must adopt that and go along with it. 'Concentration and Meditation' by the Master contains invaluable disciplined technique in order to help you bring about concentration of the mind and to banish distraction.

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

24th September 2016 marks the auspicious occasion of Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out one hundred booklets comprising illuminating talks of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

To propagate Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's gospel of Divine Life, Worshipful Sri Swamiji Maharaj travelled extensively in India and abroad and showed the path of divine life to countless seekers through his spontaneous and highly inspiring lectures. His lectures, in Sadgurudev's words, are the outpourings of his saintly heart, the revelations of intuitive wisdom.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of his hitherto unpublished lectures in booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary. The present booklet 'Meet Your Destiny' is a

Spiritual Talk given on 26th October 1979 at Leisure World, Maryland.

We express our heartfelt gratitude towards Moo Briddell, Mary Dean, Jan Goldberg and Pru Kestner and the inmates of the Headquarters Ashram for their loving service in making this printing possible.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—*The Divine Life Society*

*(A talk given on 26th October 1979 at Leisure World,
Maryland)*

Almighty Lord, Father of mankind, blessed God of love and grace. All the activities of my entire life, the words of my tongue, the thoughts of my mind, the reasoning power of my intellect and the spontaneous expression of my innermost nature; all these activities and movements I offer unto Thee as my adoration and worship. May all people in this universe attain happiness. From unreality lead us to the eternal Reality, from the darkness of ignorance lead us to the Light of Supreme Divine Wisdom, from death and mortality of earthly life, lead us into immortality and everlasting life in the Spirit. Peace, Peace, Peace. Shalom, Shalom, Shalom.

Salutations and adorations unto the Supreme Cosmic Being, the Eternal Divine Reality, the God beyond and behind all religions, the Eternal One, the Universal Being who exists endlessly and who is the substratum, the basis, the source and origin of all existence. Adorations to that Being who shone resplendent in His own

light even before this world was created, even before mankind came into being, even before any religion existed, even before any prophet or messenger of God had appeared on earth. Adoration to that Transcendental Being behind and beyond all religions, who is the God of all religions, who is one without a second, the non-dual Eternal Being.

Salutations to that Being called by various names by the followers of the various religions, all paths leading to that One, non-dual Being, that one Being glorified in all scriptures of the world. Adoration to that one Being who, even though One is addressed variously by His children who follow diverse ways to approach Him. Salutations to that one God, our eternal Reality in whom we find our oneness in the Spirit, the Cosmic Spirit in whom all His children, the entire human family, find their spiritual oneness. May that one God of all religions shower His divine grace upon each and every one of you seated here at this moment; for verily, we are gathered here in His presence. He is all pervading and omnipresent, everywhere present in the Spirit.

We are gathered here in His presence. May His divine grace shine upon every one of you, may His countless, choicest blessings grant you good health, long life, success in your undertakings, inner peace and spiritual joy. May He grant you

the supreme inner riches, the spiritual treasure of a firm and abiding faith in His existence, deep devotion and a keen aspiration to adore and worship Him, to meditate upon Him, to know Him and to experience Him in the depths of your own Spirit. May His grace grant you the spiritual illumination of God experience. May He grant you health, long life, joy, peace and illumination. May He crown your life with the supreme blessedness of His vision, of coming face to face with Him, so that your life may become a thing of joy and peace and light. That is my prayer at the feet of He who is present among us now in the Spirit, more subtle than the subtlest, beyond name and form, the unmanifest Reality present everywhere, within and without. *May His face shine upon you, may His light illumine your hearts, so you may feel His presence within you and be aware of His omnipresence.* With these prayers, beloved Immortal Souls, my beloved brethren in the Spirit, I have great joy in visiting this retirement community and in meeting you all and spending this hour on this beautiful, sunny morning in saying, “How do you do” to each of you, and in trying to share with you in the spirit of love and service whatever insights I have about our moment on earth, our life.

Why were you sent here by God? Why did you come into this world at all? And now that you are here, before the time comes for you to bid goodbye

to this world and return back to that realm from whence you came (and that moment must surely come) what can you achieve with the God-given faculties of your bodies and minds, your intellect, your innermost spiritual life? How can you use these faculties which God has given you as gifts, as instruments, as truth? What can be attained and achieved in the time that is left for you? Is there some attainment which may be with you always, some achievement which is not temporary in time but which is a forever, a permanent gain and everlasting reward, an attainment that is for all time, so that when you go, you do not go empty-handed?

You have to admit that when your earth mission is done and your life in this world comes to a close, there is nothing that belongs to this material, physical world; there is nothing from this dimension of yours that goes with you. Not even your own body to which you are so attached, which is so important to you and for whose comfort and convenience you go all out and are prepared to do anything so that it may be comfortable and without pain. You look after it, you serve it, you care for it, you nourish it, but even that body you have to leave behind for it does not belong to us. It is a gift from God, and nothing else, not even a rusty needle or a pin can accompany individuals when the time comes to leave this earth plane and return to that plane

from which they came. Also, neither brother, wife, husband, daughter, son or relative, no one we call

our own, neither parent nor friends whom we love very much who have been with us as our companions, none of these, nor anyone within our family circle can accompany us when we leave. Alone we come and alone we go, empty handed, with none of the goods of this world which we have accumulated to accompany us. All is left behind and we go alone. This is the actual fact that we have to admit. Nevertheless, we have to see things clearly, and this is the truth that must be faced. But then it is for this purpose that this servant of the master, at whose feet I lived for twenty years and at whose feet I had the privilege to learn, my beloved and worshipful spiritual master, Swami Sivananda, is here today to share this message with you.

Swami Sivananda was, in the truest sense of the term, a cosmopolitan citizen of the world. He identified with mankind, the whole of humanity. He did not feel that he belonged to any particular place or nationality, or country, or race or religion. He felt himself to be the friend of all, the servant of all humanity. He lived and worked until he passed on, physically speaking, in the year 1963. He lived and worked to bring about an essential inner awakening in modern twentieth century mankind. He sought to open their eyes to the fact that they were not merely earth creatures alone.

They were not merely citizens of this physical world only, that while they were still here in the physical body in this world, they also were citizens of an inner, subtle spiritual realm devoid of the shortcomings, limitations and imperfections that

characterize the outer physical world.

So, we are citizens of an inner world that is perfect, which is all beauty, which is of the spirit, which belongs to God, which is of the realm of the Divine. We also participate in citizenship of the outer physical world because we are embodied at the moment as physical beings in a physical body. We work in this phenomenal, external universe of changing things, and we are, therefore, in this universal phenomenal process created by God, where change is the salient feature. At the same time, we are also rooted within. At the innermost center of our being, we are rooted in a realm that is changeless, where death cannot enter nor touch, where there is no change, no decay nor destruction. That is the eternal realm of the spirit, the Kingdom of God. In our spirit, we dwell there, even as bodily and mentally, physically and psychologically we live in this material world and function in this phenomenal process. At the same time, simultaneously, there is a depth within you, a deep inner center where you are immortal, birthless and deathless, where nothing can touch you or change you. There fire cannot burn you, water cannot wet you, wind cannot dry you, and

weapons cannot injure you. You are unborn, eternal, permanent and indestructible. That innermost center wherein you abide as the eternal spiritual Being, which is your Reality, is your true identity. That is what you are always, whether you recognize it or not, whether you are aware of it or not, whether you have temporarily forgotten it or

not, slumbering in a state of non-awareness, a state of self-forgetfulness. Yet the fact does not change. The truth is not affected by someone knowing it or not knowing it.

You are an eternal spark of Divinity. The image of the Divine is not physical, it is not linear; it has no features or form. It is a spiritual image. So, it is the spiritual nature of God. He breathed His spirit into man at creation. Therefore, He entered into man in Spirit, and that innermost Self of your being is this part of God. It is the God-nature within you. It is that God which shines at the center of your being. That is your real identity, that is the truth of you, and in that 'you,' there is no imperfection, there is no sorrow, there is no restlessness, no fear of death. Nothing can touch you, though; in this dimension you may be a stranger on earth, a passing traveller, yet you eternally abide in God.

All other relationships will terminate one day. Even while living on earth, relationships terminate. Your own children, whom you have

loved with all your heart, sometimes have no more use for you. They do not care. They may turn into enemies. Brothers fall out and drag each other into the courts and fight. Friends fall out. Husband and wife become foes set against each other. So, even while you live, human relations with parents, children, husbands and wives, brother and brother, friend and friend, all can terminate. And, finally, ultimately, all relationships terminate when you take your leave of this physical, mortal world and go beyond. Then there is an end to all relationships, but there is one relationship that never ends, which is forever. That is your relationship with your Cosmic Parent, the source and origin of your being. He is the very ground in which you are even now rooted within. Your relationship with the Divine Source of your being is eternal, for you as an individual soul are an inseparable part of the Universal Soul. Man's relationship with God does not alter or come to an end because it never began; it is always there. It is an eternal relationship. I want you to live in the light of this relationship. It will help you triumph over the vicissitudes of outer life as you hold on to this great truth that no matter what the physical condition of the body or no matter what the mental state of mind, you abide in God in your innermost being. Say, "I am rooted in God. From Him I derive my sustenance. I derive

my peace from Him and I access joy which nothing can touch or alter.”

The great master taught me that my inner Divinity is the unchanging permanent fact of my being in the midst of all the changing, varied experiences that life makes me go through. It is a golden thread that runs as an unbroken stream of inner awareness, an awakened inner consciousness. Through all the variegated conditions that the body and mind experience, hold on to this truth. Be rooted in it; be centered in the truth, the fact of your Spiritual Being. Be ever in a state of awareness and wakefulness to the fact of your eternal relationship with God, who is all peace, all joy, all wisdom, and all light. He is the Beauty of beauties, the Light of lights. You are ever one with Him. In His name, I have the great privilege to come to you beautiful people, to you noble souls who live in this peaceful place. I do this in order to share with you this insight, to give to you an inner impulse of awakening, a stirring of the innermost center of your being, of bringing the light of inner awareness into you so that you will know the truth. Then you can say, “I am more than this name and form personality; more than this Mr. or Mrs. So and So people think I am. I am something in relation to my God. I am not something only in relation to other people in this world, but I am something in relation to the Universal Cosmic Being. I am His home. I am His

beloved. I am a part of Him. I am a ray of that great Light of lights. I am a wave on the great ocean of Eternal Existence. I am the child of the Divine.” This is a tremendous treasure, a wealth to which nothing on earth can compare. That is the recognition of your relationship with God, the recognition of your inseparable relationship in Spirit with the Divine.

Make that truth the basis of your consciousness. Make that the center of your innermost consciousness and, from that center, act serenely. Act with strength and with an unalterable poise that nothing can affect with a serenity that nothing can touch. Go through the ups and downs of life as a melody or song. Let there be added to your up-till-now, hitherto consciousness this new feature, this enriching element of spiritual awareness. Say, “Yes, I am here in this world in this body. I am in this community, but also I am in God, for God is here and now. God is everywhere. The kingdom of Heaven is within. Therein I dwell, even as my body and mind dwell in this passing, changeful universe. As a spiritual being, I dwell in the Divine. That part of me which is only temporary dwells in this physical world, this outer universe, but part of me, where I really am, what I changelessly, forever AM, ever dwells in that Divinity, in God.”

What is religion after all? It is made of two Latin roots: ‘Re’ (again) and ‘ligare’ (to bind back). ‘Religare,’ means to bind ourselves back once again to God with whom we have lost contact. Our oneness with Him has somewhere been missed. Now we know ourselves only as beings connected with the outer world, and our relationship with the Supreme has been missed. To reconnect that relationship in spirit, to once again bind ourselves back with that Cosmic Being, with His peace, joy, wisdom, perfection and fullness, is religion. It is man’s religion, not any particular religion. It is the relationship of man, the dweller on earth, and his eternal companionship with the Divine. It is the aim of all religions to bring man back to God, to bring the human back to the Divine, and to bring the individual once again into a link with the Cosmic Being. This is so that man may partake of that feeling of infinitude, not this little cramped individual consciousness, but the unlimited freedom of infinite consciousness, which partakes of that state of illumined infinitude, infinite fullness and fearlessness.

It is the aim of all religions to bring man back to God, who is an ocean of auspiciousness and blessedness, wherein all the problems of mankind are solved, wherein all doubts disappear and all questions are answered. The state of being with God is a state of perfection with its central aim and purpose in life the regaining of that lost

consciousness even while you live. This is so that when the moment of departure comes, you are full of joy and you know you are going back to your home, merging back again into that ocean of bliss. It is not losing something, but rather, after a period of temporary loss, of gaining everything. Through the portals of this phenomenon that you call death, you enter into an all-perfect, eternally light-filled realm of total blessedness and indescribable peace and joy. Once you have this awakening within, you begin to feel that here in this state of embodied consciousness you are imprisoned and bound, where as you wish to regain your freedom. This is the mission of the individual being in life, to once again reconnect your relationship with God, to practice it, to enter into it and to become established in oneness with God-experience. It is like the prodigal son returning to his father's house from a life of suffering, deprivation, and sorrow, to once again live a life of comfort, plentitude, opulence and love. This is the goal pointed out to man on earth by all religions, by all the messengers of God, by all the prophets who have come since the dawn of creation. "*Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven.*"

Yoga is an ancient science of religion that is the inner practical aspect of religion as distinct from the outer structure of rituals, ceremonies, various ways of worship and prayer, as distinct from these outer forms and processes. This is the

inner spiritual contact which helps you to once again bring about an essential awakening in the depths of your being where you become aware that you are Divine, that you are Immortal Soul. You become aware that you are never apart from God, that you are always living in that state of '*oneness*,' but you have forgotten. Then you can start your inner journey. The science of Yoga helps you start this inner journey towards Divine perfection, toward God-experience. Start your inner journey to the fulfillment of your purpose and mission in life. The goal of life is God-consciousness. The goal of life is God-realization. The goal of life is Self-realization, where you realize in the innermost depths of your being your spiritual self and suddenly you become aware that this spiritual Self of you has always been a part of God, partaking of His eternity, immortality, infinity and blessedness. God is bliss. God is peace. God is perfection. God is the state of illumination. And you are that, for you are a part of Him. You are His child and that which belongs to your father is your birthright. To claim this birthright is Yoga.

Yoga is the commencement of the practical inner process of claiming your birthright. It is seeking, knocking and asking in a practical scientific way. It is the technique of seeking the Divine, the technique of knocking at the door of God. The technique of saying to God, your Father,

“I am before you. Give me that which is mine for I am Thy child, heir to Thy glories. I ask for my heritage and I know it shall be given.” The doors shall be opened and you shall find that which you are seeking. What a travesty we make of this wonderful gift of God, this glorious human life, by wandering away from this luminous path of fulfillment. In ignorance we ignore it, not knowing it. We neglect to listen to the words of Jesus, for example when he said, *“Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven.”* But do you do this? That is why we suffer. We wander and stumble; we fall groping and weeping, instead of abiding in the knowledge that we are heirs to Eternal Infinitude. But we see that last. It does not have top priority on our list. It is put on the bottom. Therefore we muddle through life. If only we gave it top priority, and together with our buying and selling, eating and drinking, loving and hating, fighting and quarreling of earth life, we also had this dynamic inner quest within. Then in the midst of sorrow, we can have joy, in the midst of pain we can have bliss, in the midst of disappointment, we can have fulfillment, in the midst of all that is imperfect in this world, we can still participate in a state of inner perfection. If we had only listened to that one injunction and put this quest as the top priority on our list of things to be done on earth! And Yoga brings us back to its place by saying that the goal of life is God-realization, that there is

within you an infinite mine of blessedness, an infinite center where God's perfection is inherent in you.

Turn your gaze within. All the while our minds pull us outward so that we are only thinking of things: we are only aware of the outer world; we are always preoccupied; our lives are hectic with so many things to do; to see, to taste, to touch, to smell and to hear. We are in contact always with the outer world. All our life, our senses pull us outward. The mind goes out and is scattered among things. It is restless. There is no doubt about this, and no wonder. Pause for a while. While this situation may not be avoidable, do not make it your end-all and be-all. Remain inside. Turn the gaze within. Still the thoughts. Quiet the outgoing clamor of the senses. Hold them in check. Hold them on a leash. Let the senses be hushed, let them be quiet. Compose yourself. Sit with an easy posture of the body. Keep your back straight. Breathe evenly, harmoniously and regularly without haste, without hurry. Let there be harmonious, rhythmic breathing. Be relaxed. Withdraw the mind from all externals. Drop all outer thoughts. Take the mind within. Turn your gaze to the center of your being. Gently repeat, "God, God, God. Existence Absolute! External Existence, everlasting Consciousness Absolute! Existence Divine. Peace, Peace, Peace. Perfect peace and joy. Bliss, Bliss,

Bliss! God is bliss. God is peace. God is wisdom. God is infinitude. God is eternity. God is all-full! God is the Light of lights, the Beauty of beauties. God is the center of harmony. He is the Great Silence. He is the profound depth within me. He exists with me in that inner depth and in that silence. I partake of the peace of God. Peace, peace, peace! Joy, joy, joy! Om.”

Cultivate this habit, for this is your real nourishment. This is your manna from heaven. The same manna that God rained down in the wilderness. And here, where you are, is the biggest synagogue, the most sacred church, the holiest mosque, the greatest temple ever built, wherein abides the living God. Silence the senses and the mind. Turn the gaze within. “Be still and know that I am God.” Practice this. Feel this. Gently wean the mind away from its lifelong habit of ceaselessly going from object to object in the outer world, constantly dragging you out, never leaving you in peace. Do not identify yourself with the mind. Think, “I am different and distinct from the mind and different and distinct from the intellect. I am spirit, whereas mind and body are material. The body is gross matter and the mind is subtle matter. I am non-material. I am eternal, deathless Spirit.” Refuse to cooperate with the mind and gently wean it from its lifelong habits, turn it within. Withdraw it from the outer and

center it upon God within. Feel it, and experience the deep silence.

Do this at least twice a day, in the morning before you start the day and in the evening. If you have a weakness for a cup of black tea, all right, allow yourself a concession. It does not matter. Get up in the morning, wash your face and freshen up. Splash some cold water into your open eyes. Make yourself a cup of tea. Afterwards forget the world, forget everything. *Feel yourself in that state of being in which you were before you were born to your mother, before you had a name and form, a human identity in a body.*

What was that state in which you were before you entered into this world? Feel yourself to be in that state with God, alone with Him. That is the only truth, start the day with a period of deep, intense inwardness, a deep abidance in God. Refresh yourself by activating your inner spiritual awareness. Enter into that peace, joy and silence, the bright light. Abide in it for some time. Repeat gently to yourself some affirmation that seeks to bring about this inner awareness. Take it from some book or make it up yourself. It does not matter. Let it come from your heart. Use affirmations that help you. Energize from the inner communion with the universal Being who is nearer to you than the nearest object and dearer to you than anything else in this world.

Arise refreshed and strengthened spiritually and then serenely go through your daily activities. At the end of your day, after all your activities are over, once again bring yourself back to that Center and forget everything in this world. Forget your own body and mind. Be Yourself. Abide in God in that serene silence with intensity. Let your inwardness be filled with the light of a million suns, a great brilliance, because the awakened Spirit is a center of great dazzling light. Enter into that state of light, that state of ineffable peace and great joy within. Abide in that silence. Draw spiritual strength and refreshment from within. Thus let your day end. As you practice you will begin to feel a change in your consciousness, a transformation. A new light will come into your life as you progress in this process.

This is the art of Yoga, the coming into living contact of a conscious communion with the Divine within. The Divine is a transcendental principle, supra-mundane, supra-cosmic, all-pervading, and at the same time, an indwelling principle, too. It is farther than the farthest, nearer than the nearest. It is imminent in all creation. It fills every speck of space. It is present in every atom of matter. In everything that you see in this universe, God abides. In the grass on the ground, in the blue of the sky, in every plant, beast, bird, tree, butterfly. In everything that you can see, touch, taste, smell or hear. In all the names and

forms that make up this universe, God abides as their very existence. Thus they reveal Him; they do not hide Him. They proclaim His presence as the maker and creator and messenger. Behold the world, therefore, as a symbol revealing the presence of God. Feel Him in the innermost depths of your own being, in the center of your heart.

As you progress in this spiritual awareness, consciously try to link the two terminals of morning and evening by a constant, unbroken undercurrent of God-remembrance, by a constant, unbroken, ceaseless flow of God-thought in the innermost depths of your being. Even in the midst of your activities, no matter where you are or what you are doing, whether it is recreation, business or office work, or in the midst of a crowd, continue to feel this companionship with God. If you practice this Yoga of meditation and contemplation of God throughout the day with an awareness of His presence everywhere, in all things, if you remain in a constant state of being unified with God, then when the time comes for your departure, you will not go alone nor will you have to go empty, for you will be rich beyond measure, rich with the inner spiritual wealth which is incorruptible, which nothing can alter or take away from you. You will not be empty, but you will be rich with joy and fearlessness and a sense of freedom. You will not

go alone because you will have the companionship of your Eternal Companion. You will be aware that you live, move and have your being in God. "I abide in God and He abides in me. I am with Him and He is with me." That is more than any companionship of this world of human society because He is to you father, mother, friend, relative, well-wisher and companion. Your all-in-all! He is all this and more. So when you have Him as your companion, it is a total, perfect relationship. When you have this treasure of God-awareness, you have joy, peace and bliss. You lack nothing. How perfectly the Twenty-third Psalm hints of this. When you have Him, you lack nothing for He is everything.

This is the ancient science of Yoga of being consciously aware of your inseparable connection with God in the Spirit. This is the Yoga of daily linking and connecting yourself to Him in the depths of your being with intense concentration of heart and feeling. This is the Yoga of continuous remembrance of God even in the midst of daily activities. This is the Yoga of becoming aware of His presence in all things, at all times, in all places, in the midst of all conditions, in all circumstances. It is an unbroken flow of God-remembrance, of God-thought, and awareness of Divine presence in this universe, and it is the regular unfailing daily inner meditation upon the Divine.

So, my beloved friends, blessed children of the Divine, let us awaken, let us arise, and let us go forth towards the great, grand and glorious goal of Divine awareness, of spiritual illumination, of God-experience. That is the highest duty of each individual. All other duties, obligations, tasks and works are secondary for this is the most important task of all. The art and science of life is to know how to bring about the balanced blend of them both, even as you discharge your duties in life and participate in outer activities. While performing your obligations in human society, simultaneously, be active and progressive in your inner ascent towards God.

To do all your duties and obligations in the world and to neglect your duty to God is not wisdom: it is not proper; it is not right. To strike a balance, to harmonize both and to make your life a blend of faithfully discharging your obligations to human society in the outer world and resolutely fulfilling your great commitment to God is most important. This is the art and science of life, the art and science of Yoga. The ancient science of Yoga is the guide for harmonizing the body, mind and spirit. Harmonising of the outer and inner life takes place, so that even when you are involved in outer life, you are not away from God. You discharge all obligations and duties and engage in all activities by being aware that in whatever you are doing, you are living, moving and having your

being in God. "God is present here and now, and I am aware of His presence even in the midst of my activities." Thus the inner communion continues and becomes Yogic activity. Your entire life becomes spiritualised.

Always hold on to this beautiful, divine, spiritual awareness of your true identity, of your real life. That is the "*pearl of unsurpassing price*." It is a great treasure, the supreme wealth of wealths. Thank-you and I am grateful to God that I have been able to do this sharing today. God Bless you. Peace be with you and the joy of the Lord now and forever, all the days of your lives. May you be bathed in light every hour of every day, Om, Shanti, Shanti, Shanti. Shalom, Shalom, Shalom. Peace, peace, peace.

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

24th September 2016 marks the auspicious occasion of Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out one hundred booklets comprising illuminating talks of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

To propagate Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's gospel of Divine Life, Worshipful Sri Swamiji Maharaj travelled extensively in India and abroad and showed the path of divine life to countless seekers through his spontaneous and highly inspiring lectures. His lectures, in Sadgurudev's words, are the outpourings of his saintly heart, the revelations of intuitive wisdom.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of his hitherto unpublished lectures in a booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary. The present booklet '**GAUTAMA BUDDHA**' is a compilation of his four inspiring talks, given at the sacred Samadhi Mandir.

We express our heartfelt gratitude towards the inmates of the Headquarters Ashram for their loving service in transcribing, editing and compiling these talks.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—*The Divine Life Society*

Worshipful homage to that great Reality, the one supreme eternal and infinite non-dual Spirit Divine. Worshipful homage to that Great Being, who about 2500 years ago, as a young prince with great determination and firm resolve sat in meditation and vowed that unless he realised the great Reality, he will not get up from that seat, even if the body perished. He must realise the eternal imponderable Reality, and through such firm resolve Prince Siddhartha realised the Reality and became Buddha, the illumined, awakened, enlightened. We pay our worshipful homage to that great Reality which he realised. May His grace be upon you.

Loving adorations to revered and beloved Holy Master Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj! Though of our times, he manifested the same grim determination that Prince Siddhartha manifested during his Sadhana, Tapasya and deep meditation period. For Gurudev also it was a do or die situation. He came with that absolute finality that he must realise, and the saga of his intense Sadhana, the great renunciation, the great determination, the same firm resolution and deep meditation he went into, they

I Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 18/5/2000

characterise Gurudev's Sadhana period. He also rose from that Sadhana an illumined being. Now his name is a byword all over the world for spiritual realisation. Ceaselessly he worked that the bliss and the peace of that great realisation should be obtained by all. He did not realise for himself, it looks. He realised in order to share his realisation with everyone in this very life, in very close similarity with Buddha.

There is one point about Gautama Buddha's renunciation. Of course he was one of the greatest examples of renunciation known in the world. He was a prince. Soon after he was born, an ascetic visited the house of his father, King Shuddhodana. The King receives him with great courtesy, gives him honoured seat and says, "My whole clan is blessed that you have come; it is an act of God it seems to me, for I have just now been blessed by an heir to my throne. God has sent you to bless him. So please come along with me and bless the child." And he sends word to the queen that he is bringing a holy man to bless the child.

And so he is taken into the inner chambers by the king, and in the presence of father and mother the newborn baby, luminous and with a shining aura, is seen by this ascetic. He blesses the child and tells the father before departure, "I see signs of greatness in him. One day he will become the highest. But there is a sign that says he will become either the greatest of rulers, an emperor with immense powers, lording over everyone, or he will be the greatest of ascetics - either of these he will become."

When he king hears the first half of the prediction, he is very pleased. But when he hears the second half, he says, "Oh no. I should never allow this second alternative to happen." Immediately he orders his ministers to prepare and arrange pleasure gardens where nothing but enjoyment, pleasure, sports, games and companions are provided. The growing child is surrounded with everything that is beautiful and happy and pleasant. He does not allow any mishaps or tragedy to be seen by the prince. And so the prince grew up into a handsome young lad, never knowing what sorrow is, never knowing what suffering and what pain is. He never even knew that there was such a thing as sorrow or pain or suffering in this world, because he did not see the outer world. Then he was married to Yashodhara and they had a child, a boy called Rahul.

One day some Prerana (prompting) from the Indweller comes to him, a curiosity to know what is there outside? An old charioteer who had been pensioned off by the king had taken a kindly interest in the growing prince, as the king had told him, "Look after him. I have trust in you." So this charioteer was a special guardian as it were. Then the prince persuades the charioteer to take him out into the city, though King Shuddhodana had forbidden that he should go out of the gates of the vast enclosure. But Prince Siddharta presses him very much, and the charioteer is so fond of the young prince that he cannot refuse. But no one should know.

And so he goes out, and on the first day he sees an old man tottering with a stick, bent and weak. On the second day he sees a sick person lying on a bed in front of his house, all

his relatives fanning him, giving him water. On the third day he sees a dead body being taken to the cremation ground, stiff, motionless, like a log of wood. On the fourth day he sees a monk sitting under a tree, serene, full of bliss, full of peace. And thus he comes to know the existence of sorrow in this universe. And also he comes to know through the charioteer that these things happen to everyone who is born. Sorrow, pain and suffering, old age, disease and death are universal. No one is exempt from it. Then he realises that the world is full of pain and death. Gurudev has said in his ‘Song of Govinda’

“This is the world Govinda, pain and death Govinda”.

With the realisation that the whole world is sunk in sorrow, comes a great compassion in his heart. His heart is flooded with unbearable grief that people are all sorrowing and suffering. What a pity! He thought, “I had never known what sorrow was. But now I am told that it is the lot of everyone to be subject to this inescapable, inevitable sorrow, pain and suffering.” His heart became heavy. And he said, “This is no good. Man sorrows and suffers. I must find a way out for all mankind. I must find a way out of for everyone in this world.” That is the basis of his renunciation—to find the way out of sorrow. Not for himself, but for all mankind.

Prince Siddhartha left wife, child, palace, gold, wealth, the royal status, everything. He became an ascetic in a forest. And that is the special point, his nobility. His renunciation was not out of Vairagya: “There is nothing in this world, it is empty. Senses delude you, sense objects dupe you, deceive you.” No, it is not the classical dispassion developed out of

discrimination that brought about renunciation. Vichara, Viveka bring about Vairagya, and through Vairagya one does Tyaga. That is the classical tradition, but in the case of Buddha it was not like that.

It was not through the realisation of the painful nature of the world, but it was through realising that all people are suffering, and therefore to find a way out of sorrow and then proclaim it to the world. He left the palace luxuries. He said, “In this world I must find out and proclaim to all mankind the way out of sorrow and misery, the way to obtain happiness.” For the sake of others and due to his great compassion Buddha renounced; that is the distinctive nature of his renunciation. Not due to Vichara, Viveka and Vairagya, not due to dispassion generated out of enquiry and discrimination, but by pondering life, learning from what he saw, he developed dispassion. Seeing is believing. No one could convince him anymore of the contrary, because he had seen it himself, he had the first-hand knowledge.

Thus nearly 2500 years ago Buddha discovered the way out of sorrow. He first of all realised the four great noble truths—the existence of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering and the way to the cessation of suffering. All these things he realised, existence of pain, the cause of suffering, the possibility of bringing about the cessation of pain and the way of bringing about the cessation of pain and the ultimate experience of transcending and becoming established in a state of great realisation. He proclaimed the right path, the path to go beyond sorrow; he

expounded it in his Noble Eightfold Path, all through the intellect and the mind.

His teachings might have been lost for us, but his great follower, the glorious Emperor Ashoka, carved all the teachings of Buddha and what he had learned from Buddha for his subjects and for all mankind upon great rocks and pillars. They are called the rock edicts of Emperor Ashoka. And they can be seen even today. They are ancient historical monuments preserved by Government of India Archaeological Department.

The life of Buddha and the teachings of Buddha and his lofty example is one of the greatest treasures we have inherited from our ancient past, long before Mohammed came, long before Jesus came. Before the era of the New Testament, Buddha came and went. And when he came, the Vedas already existed. That is the great soul whose renunciation was based upon compassion, the feelings in his heart for his fellow human beings. Such is the great one to whom we pay homage today, the birth-anniversary of Gautama Buddha. May his example be a shining light before you. May compassion and kindness be the driving forces that make you live and act for the welfare and happiness of others. God bless you all.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage unto the supreme eternal and infinite, beginningless and endless, limitless and boundless Cosmic Spirit Divine, the Supreme Universal Spirit, the Paramatman.

The theme of yesterday's sharing, it so happens, was not ethics and morality; it was rather human culture. First, we have to shine at the entry point of spiritual life and throughout our spiritual life until we reach illumination and become Masters or great teachers. We continue to be human beings, and on the level of our human give and take we have to manifest certain lofty and noble traits that are unique to the human being. We do not cease to be men and women even at the point of Self-realisation. Therefore, to be gentlemen and real gentle ladies becomes necessary and indispensable.

We gave the analogy of the child being taught the alphabet in order to become a human child. All animals are illiterate. They remain illiterate until the end of their lives. The lion, king of the forest, the elephant, the camel which is the ship of the desert and without whom the Arabs cannot live, and the cow, the oxen and the buffalo without whom the

2 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 12/10/95

Indian farmer cannot live and a hundred other animals, they are all indispensable, but they are illiterate.

What is it that makes a human child superior to the best of animals? It knows to read and write and speak and become Ph.D. in so many fields. All these possibilities open up before the human child because it has been taught the alphabet. And if it forgets its alphabet due to some extraordinary pathology in the DNA or an accident, then all its higher studies and its degrees will suddenly vanish. If a triple Ph.D. suddenly forgets his alphabet, he will not be able to read a single word.

Thus we see the basics have to remain with us till the very end. We may have gone far beyond the basics, transcended them, but they still form the basis of all our erudition, our scholarship, our degrees. They still form the basics.

A human being is born with a certain weight. He then grows, keeps on growing, becomes an athlete, a Judo and Karate master, a boxer, gets the Olympic prize, and he becomes a gold medallist. But if he contracts osteoporosis, suddenly without warning bones in his body start breaking. He gets up at night to go to the bathroom, makes a step, and the bone breaks. Physicians have no cure for it; it is a degenerative process of the skeletal structure of the body. Throughout his growth and his athletics it was the skeletal structure that supported him to achieve all the great feats. But if that which held him and supported him, gives way, then the whole structure collapses, and he becomes confined to a wheel chair.

So you are a human being throughout. Your mother and father taught you to say ‘please’ and ‘thank you’, ‘I’m sorry’ when you were a child. Now that you are grown up and entered high school and college, you cannot simply say, “They have no place in this stage; I had to be told when I was a little child. I am grown up now, these have no place in my life”.

But it is not a curriculum, a syllabus that is left behind and you go into higher syllabus. If that were so, the Lord’s Prayer would not be the same for grown up people as it is for children, students and youth; it would be different.

“Lead us not unto temptation, deliver us from evil. Forgive us our trespasses”. Because we do not trespass anymore, we are dignified citizens, we know what is evil, what is good; and we always do what is good. We eschew evil. And therefore these lines are superfluous. They may be very essential, indispensable at a certain stage for human society, but not for us who have become senior citizens. Yet millions continue to say: “Forgive us our trespasses. Lead us not unto temptation. Deliver us from evil.”

“Give us inner spiritual strength to resist temptations and to control the mind. Free us from egoism, lust, greed, hatred, anger and jealousy” may be safely eliminated from the Universal Prayer of Sivananda for those who have reached meditation level, or say a little higher than meditation level. They go into deep trance. They are not aware of any sound. The mind does not think of the past, and it does not project into the future, for it is immersed in Brahman, ‘*Ekamevadvityam Brahma*’. For those who have thus

ascended into this state, these lines may be safely omitted....
But somehow the prayer remains unaltered.

The prayer of St. Francis of Assisi would become superfluous in all Ashrams, where there are only advanced Sadhaks and devotees of God. It is unnecessary to tell them that they must be instruments of love and forgiveness and understanding; for they are so deeply in contact with the Reality that it would not be necessary. We are Vedantins, we are philosophers, we are learned people. Karma-Kanda, rituals, ceremonies, outer formal observances are only necessary for those who are incapable of Vedanta, high philosophy....

Why does this Ashram every full moon day still observe an elaborate worship of Lord Narayana, which to my knowledge is not part of any of our scriptures. Of course, in the ‘Mahanarayana Upanishad’ a dozen times the Supreme Narayana is addressed as Satya. Satya Narayana is not a Vedic Deity. Nevertheless, in an elaborate and rather naive way, we worship a special concept on every full moon day, though much of the Ashram is not concerned with it. They have a sweet tasting Prasad, but it is not very attractive, it is dry, simply prepared. Now only the Pundits are concerned with the worship. In Gurudev’s days it was not like that. The worship was attended by the whole Ashram, including Gurudev himself, until it became impossible for him to move about. He was confined to a wheel chair and then an easy chair during his office hours and Satsanga also. Then Satya Narayan Puja was not attended by him.

So why do formal worships persist? These questions do not have anything to do with morality or ethics. They are part of human culture. We continue to be human beings and human culture is a necessary part, even when we have reached a state of deep meditation in our personal inwardness. Our life continues to have the transpersonal outwardness when we have to interact with others. We cannot deal in deep meditation or in Samadhi. We have to deal in human behaviour and that behaviour has to be beautiful. We deal upon the human level, upon the level of a behaviour as gentlemen and gentle ladies. It is called Maryada. These values do have a certain place and make human life tolerable, sweet, beautiful. God also is beauty. He's not only enlightenment or realisation or liberation, He is also beauty, He is also sweetness.

A great industrial set-up may be run upon atomic energy. But the innumerable machineries, though the basic energy is atomic energy, require oil for their smooth running. You cannot run machinery without oil. The atomic energy will not be able to make the different parts run smoothly, silently and efficiently. It is only oil that can make this condition to prevail.

And therefore these lines, the Lord's Prayer, the Universal Prayer of Gurudev, the Prayer of St. Francis and other prayers in all the religious systems, they remain where they were put long, long ago, during the infancy of global human society. So many centuries and millennia have passed since these prayers were given, but can we say, "Man has come a long way, therefore, why repeat these lines which might

have been necessary once upon a time? Science and technology have advanced, the world is flooded with spiritual literature due to printing technology and computer technology. So when knowledge is flooding the entire world, we can safely eliminate these things”. Can we say this?

You’re all learned people. You have to think, dive deep within and see how much or how little these teachings are necessary for your own life; ultimately no one can judge. There are only two beings who have to decide whether these things are necessary or dispensable, and those two beings are yourself, each one, and the Lord above and within. God alone can decide and you yourself can decide. But then one has to have perception, ability to see inside. We have ability to see outside. The ability to see inside does not come, it has to be diligently cultivated and, therefore Gurudev included it in his Twenty Important Spiritual Instructions.

And the last word is, it will not hurt if one sometimes goes into deep meditation making Truth the theme of the meditation. Because truth is Brahman, Brahman is truth.

*Satyam jnanam anantam Brahma
Shantam sivam advaitam Brahma
Satchidananda svaroopam Brahma
Shantam sivam advaitam Brahma
Satyam sivam sundaram Brahma
Kevalam ananda svaroopam Brahma
Shantam sivam advaitam Brahma*

Therefore one could make truth the subject of deep meditation and trance.

One could make purity the subject of one's deep meditation and one's trance state. For Atman is Nitya-Shuddha. He is Niranjana, spotless. He is the great purity, sanctity.

Namastasmai Brahma Nirajanaya

I salute that Brahman that is spotless and pure.

So one would not be hurt if one sometimes meditated deeply upon truthfulness, upon purity and deeply upon Ahimsa, not hurting others, not injuring others.

Well, these are all thoughts, but there is a need of human culture right up to the last breath because we continue to be human beings. We said a beautiful human nature and behaviour have necessarily to be part of a Sadhaka, a Yogi, a Bhakta or a Vedantin right till the end.

That which supports the Empire State building is the foundation that supported its ground floor, the first, the second and the third floor. Now even when the dizzy 108th floor is there, the 106th floor cannot say, "Oh that foundation might have been necessary for the first and the second floor, I have no contact with it, I'm in the sky, clouds form around me, lightening sometimes flashes. I do not need that foundation". The 106th floor would not be thinking right as it is still is supported by the self-same foundation.

Gurudev Swami Sivananda Maharaj was an illumined soul; he was a liberated soul. At the same time he was an embodiment of courtesy, kindness, straightforwardness, always giving respect to others, never wanting respect for himself, guileless, never employing any method that is not

straight. Not that he had a need for all these things, but because it was part of his nature.

I and My Father are one, declared Jesus of Nazareth. But He continued to behave as a good person, perfect in his behaviour. He did not say, “Because I and my father are one, I am the chosen son of God; because I am not bound by any rules, because when I ascend I shall sit on the right hand side of My Father in Heaven, I may just do what I like. Therefore all these things are not worthy”. He did not. He was a perfect gentleman, an ideal human individual.

Buddha was likewise the soul of decorum, of good behaviour. Therefore today's sharing is, ponder these facts in connection with these great teachers. If they lived thus, acted thus, conducted themselves in such a manner, there must be something behind it, something worth pondering. And if it applied to such illumined world teachers it can apply to those who have reached a stage of deep concentration, deep meditation. It could apply. There seems to be some logic, some reason in such a pattern of thinking. So let us try to find out why Buddha stuck to a perfect good behaviour and why Jesus stuck to a perfect good behaviour. Were they in the elementary stages? Of course about this one can never have two opinions—the world refers to them as worshipful world teachers.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Long ago, summing up the highest Vedic experience, Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya declared:

*Brahma satyam jagan-mithya,
Jivo-brahmaiva naparah*

I declare to you, “Brahman alone is truth, and this created universe is an illusion, and the embodied soul is not different from Brahman”. The world is an appearance, it has no reality. It is like a line drawn on the surface of water, or like an image seen in a mirror. A story projected on a cinema screen appears real, but it is only a shadow from a celluloid film. It has no reality.

When we use the term Satyam, we mean truthfulness in daily life. That is we do not utter falsehood, we speak only truth. We do not practise deviousness and deceit. We are frank, forthright, honest and trustworthy. Such a person is called a Satyavan; and one who takes a vow of truthfulness is a Satyavrata.

Truth from the philosophical point of view is the Great Reality, the Supreme Truth, Brahman. In human daily life the same word, Satyam, means truthfulness. And truthfulness is worshipped as a manifestation of Lord Narayana Himself.

³ Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 31/5/99

That special aspect of manifestation is called Satya Narayana, indicating that truth is to be worshipped in our daily life. Truth is God's own manifested form.

Adherence to truth is the greatest virtue. By worship of truth and adherence to truth, one can realise the great ultimate truth called Brahman or Paramatma, our ultimate goal. Truthfulness is the way.

May the Supreme Being and Holy Master grace us and bless us to realise the Great Truth, the Ultimate Truth, the Eternal Truth, by being a votary of truthfulness in our daily life and by making truthfulness the sheet anchor of our character, conduct and behavior!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage unto the eternal, all pervading and indwelling Reality, the one unchanging and ever-present Truth behind these ever changing transitory names and forms that make up your universe! May grace ever shower upon you all from that Eternal Reality!

Loving adorations to beloved and worshipful Gurudev into whose presence you have come in spiritual fellowship at this morning hour. May his Kripa-kataksha (glance of grace) and Ashirvad (blessings) ever be with you, granting you all the four Purusharthas.

*'Gu'-karascha andhakaro hi 'ru'-kara tannirodhakah,
Andhahkaranirodhaya Gururityabhidhiyate*

(That being is known as the Guru who removes the darkness and brings about enlightenment. So the first syllable in the name stands for darkness. 'Gu' stands for darkness; 'Ru' stands for the removal of darkness. Therefore one who removes darkness is the Guru.)

The darkness of the night is removed by the sun when it rises with all its splendour on the eastern horizon. He is the world awakener. Therefore he is the world Guru. One of the most solemn, most sacred and greatest of all Mantras is

4 Talk given at the Samadhi Mandir on 26-12-1993

addressed to this great awakener, to this universal Guru; it is called the Gayatri Mantra. They also call it the Savitru Mantra. Because Savitru is one of the Sanskrit names for the sun, the sun God, Surya Narayana Bhagawan. Tat savitur varenyam (Ishwara's glory).

In this way, we offer adorations to the world awakener, to the world Guru, and he is therefore given the status and has been known as a manifestation of the supreme world preserver, world protector, world nourisher, Lord Narayana, Vishnu, Surya Narayana Bhagawan. They call him Surya Narayana Bhagawan. And one day is set apart in each week for His special worship and adoration. And that day is today because today is Sunday, the day of the sun. Adityavar, Ravivar, Bhaskarvar are names of Sunday.

The Guru awakens and removes the darkness. The world awakening Surya Narayana enables us to do this. For in this world only that part of our life is gainful, when we are engaged in activity, in Sadhana, in Japa, in meditation, in worship, in the service of the Guru, in the service of the poor, in the service of suffering humanity, in acts of kindness and compassion, when we are engaged in worship, in the practice of Yoga. And this part of our life will ultimately bring us purification of the heart, increase of devotion, concentration, meditation, illumination. That part of our life which goes away in sleep is unfertile, unfruitful, because no action is possible. Even though we are living, we are lifeless. Life is there only biologically, clinically; we only breathe, the blood circulates, lung inhales and exhales are continuing, but we cannot in any way go on in our evolutionary process, we cannot progress. There is no onward, upward, God-ward

movement, because we are Nishkriya, we are in Tamas. In this state of Tamas, in this state of deep sleep, evolution comes to a standstill. No spiritual Sadhana or Abhyasa is possible. No activity that elevates and uplifts us—Seva, Paropakara, Dana, Punya-karma—no such activity is possible. Therefore it is almost like a non-time or a life held in suspension. It is only when you wake up, everything becomes possible, dynamism sets in, we begin to pray,

Namostu Anantaya sahasra murtaye

Sahasra padakshi shiroru bahave

Sahasra namne purushaya shashvate

Sahasra koti yuga dharine namah

(Salutations to the eternal, infinite Purusha who has a thousand names, a thousand forms, a thousand feet, eyes, heads, hands and who is supporting thousand crore Yugas.)

We say salutations to that Infinite Being. We are able to chant the name of God, do Kirtan, do meditation, do Yoga Asanas, all these commence with awakening. Therefore, the ancient Upanishads call and say, “Arise, awake, stand up, be fully aware and exert to reach the goal.

Uttishthata jagrata prapya varan nibodhata. Uttishthata

Jagrata, Jagrat.

Utha jag musafir bhor bhayi,

Aba raina kahan jo sovat hai,

Jo sovat hai voh khovat hai,

Jo jagat hai vo pavat hai.

O traveller, come, come, arise and awake. Where is the night? It has passed. Day is about to dawn. Now is the time for awakening. Now is the time for fresh action, recommencing of your onward progress towards the great goal of life. Come,

come. Day has dawned. Come, and engage in activity. For he who continues in sleep and slumber verily is a loser, and only he who is awake and active is the gainer.

Thus wishing us our own highest welfare, the great ones have issued the call for us to wake up. This is the clue for us as how we can profit, in what state we should always be, in what state we can really achieve, keep moving towards the goal, in which state we can justify God's great gift of life by making use of it, not making it useless, not losing it, but making it gainful.

Therefore, ever let us be in a state of wakefulness, Jagrata. This is the one thing needed. This is the hallmark of a Sadhaka. This is the sign of a true Yogi - wakeful among the slumbering, diligent among the slothful, aware amongst the heedless. Such a one verily attains the great peace, attains Nirvana. That is what the great Lord Buddha has to say. Thus indeed a Sadhaka, a true seeker after God, a Yogi should be. May we all strive at every moment, heart within and God ahead, with faith and trust in God, that our life be one of wakefulness, constant alertness and extreme activity upon the path that leads to blessedness, takes us beyond sorrow, bestows upon us divine perfection and liberation. This should be the life. This is the sign of one who has heard the call, responded and known what is the right thing to do, to be ever awake, alert and active upon the path that leads to supreme blessedness. God bless you all.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

FOREWORD

24th September 2016 marks the auspicious occasion of Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out one hundred booklets comprising illuminating talks of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

To propagate Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's gospel of Divine Life, Worshipful Sri Swamiji Maharaj travelled extensively in India and abroad and showed the path of divine life to countless seekers through his spontaneous and highly inspiring lectures. His lectures, in Sadgurudev's words, are the outpourings of his saintly heart, the revelations of intuitive wisdom.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of his hitherto unpublished lectures in booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary. The present booklet '**The Highest Satsang**' is a compilation of 4 inspiring talks of Sri Swamiji Maharaj.

We express our heartfelt gratitude towards Don and Moo Briddell, Diane Dufault, Eileen Wilson, and the inmates of the Headquarters Ashram for their loving service in making this printing possible.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord,
Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful
Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—*The Divine Life Society*

1.

(A talk given in Sacred Heart Cottage on a farm at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Near Purcellville, Virginia, U.S.A. 3rd February 1980)

If you have once recognized that religion and religious life are in order to give to life its highest attainment, the greatest gift of nothing less than Divine perfection in God, transcending all limitation, sorrow, suffering, bondage and ignorance in spiritual illumination, then naturally you will understand that to enable religion to give you this highest experience, you will have to help it and cooperate with it. You have to make all conditions so favorable and suitable to this highest attainment that religion will ultimately give you this great experience. To that end there is a connection with life of Godliness.

Yoga science proceeds in a very, very clear and unmistakable way. It says there are three tendencies or qualities in the human being. The quality of inertia and darkness (Tamas); the quality of activity, agitation and excitement (Rajas); the quality of harmony, balance and purity (Sattwa). You ought to encourage the third quality of balance and purity, and conquer, control and utilize the quality of excitement, agitation and activity, and minimise or overcome completely the quality of grossness and darkness. Therefore, the ultimate attainment in religion is facilitated by

a life which is more and more Sattvic where there is a greater exercise of qualities that are of the light, that are Divine and spiritual.

And the highest of these qualities is love. Because GOD IS LOVE. Out of love comes untold good to all living beings, to the whole world, to all life. Out of love comes benefit to everyone. The highest degree of welfare of all beings is secured through love. Therefore love has been raised to the level of a prime qualification in succeeding in the great adventure of attaining God.

There is no end to what has been said about this great quality of love. In as much as selfishness contradicts love, constricts the heart and makes the heart hard, be unselfish, be noble, think of others besides yourself, more than yourself.

In as much as selfishness gives rise to anger and anger contradicts love, give up anger. Give up pride and egoism, because pride and egoism create within one the desire to retaliate, the desire to strike back, the desire to get even with anyone who has crossed your ego. It is the prolific root of ill will and hatred. Therefore, be simple. Be humble. Do not be egoistic. Be unselfish.

This is the admonition of all Saints, because they knew the mechanics of spiritual ascent, of spiritual enfoldment. They knew that these things have no place in, and are incompatible with a life of spiritual progress. They are incompatible with God nature.

Therefore, renounce selfishness. Renounce egoism and pride. Renounce anger and ill will. Renounce hardness.

Adopt compassion, kindness, understanding, sympathy and forgiveness. In one word: LOVE.

Because love covers the whole thing. That is why He gave it as the greatest of all the commandments: “Love your neighbour as you love yourself.” That ‘neighbour’ is all of humanity, all mankind, all creatures. Love banishes a multitude of vices. Love puts to flight a multitude of negative qualities which range themselves against you in your effort to attain God. Love is a Divine quality. “Thou shalt love Thy God with all Thy heart. Thou shall love Thy neighbour as Thyself.” In a commentary by preacher Henry Drummond, who has immortalized a few lines from one of the Epistles of Paul, he calls love “the greatest thing in the world.”

Love, therefore, is the single weapon by which you are able to overcome annihilate a whole battalion of unspiritual qualities. Instead of trying to grapple with them all one by one, you enshrine love in your heart. Then all evil, anger, hardness and hatred will go away. You become sympathetic; ready to forgive and forget. You become friendly. You become compassionate. You become kind and understanding. Love is a great purifier, a great ennobler of human nature. It enables you to secure the impossible. What is the impossible? Getting rid of selfishness, self-importance, arrogance egoism and pride is very, very difficult. Only one thing can enable you to overcome, and that is genuine love from the heart, because love is not a human quality. Love is a Divine quality. Love is not the romantic sentiment depicted in movies and novels and serialized in stories and magazines. Love is THE POWER OF GOD! Love is A COSMIC FORCE! A great force which

keeps the entire universe together. Sky and earth love each other. Fish and water love each other. Birds and air love each other. In the same way, the whole Cosmos is kept together by this wonderful Power which holds everything together. And it is God. It is God manifesting in nature as this great Power holding all things together. Therefore it is able to overcome what you, by your own efforts could not overcome.

God Bless you all.

Hari Om.

(Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir in 1985)

Beloved Seekers and Sadhaks,

Meditation is possible only in a quiet mind. Therefore at all times maintain a quiet mind within. Do not be affected by passing things and occurrences and events outside. Do not allow yourself to be agitated and distressed. Despite the distressed conditions of world events and world situations, you have to be centered in that eternal calm within. By thus centering yourself in the eternal calm within, you will be able to contribute to the peace outside. By allowing yourself to be agitated and distressed you will not be able to bring any change to the situation outside. Therefore, ever abide in the peace of God.

Center yourself in the Divine within. Ever be established in an inner peace, that you may be able to radiate it and share it with all. Cultivate this peace through daily meditation and for this purpose ever maintain a quiet mind.

Do not react sharply to outside events. Even when you are confronted by the most vexing of situations, say to yourself, "I am peace. Peace be unto all." Say to yourself, "Om peace, Om peace." This way you will even be able to change the situation outside.

Center yourself in the Light. Feel yourself surrounded by Light. Feel yourself being filled by that Light. Feel yourself ever in tune with the all-pervading Cosmic Light. Even when

you encounter a negative personality, invoke that Divine Light within the inner center of your being. From your heart center let a ray of light emerge. Let that light reach out to that negative personality. Feel this happening invisibly in the spiritual plane, and you will find that there is a change in the person confronting you.

Therefore live in the Light. Live in this inner peace. Abide in that profound peace. If you want peace abide in the God within. Love to dwell in the Heart of God. The Heart of God pervades and envelops the entire Cosmos. When you abide in God, nothing can touch you or affect you. Abiding in the Spiritual Heart of God, be free from all fear and worry. Be serene. Rejoice in this Divine abidance. This is the secret of peace and joy.

Cultivate this abidance through daily meditation. Meditation is possible only in a quiet mind. Therefore cultivate a quiet mind.

Develop a psychological inner restfulness. Do not think that you will be able to find peace in the mind. In the mind you cannot find peace. But there is peace beyond the mind. It is ever-present peace. Find that peace in spite of the mind. This is possible through daily meditation.

Cultivate quietness of mind at all times, in all places, under all circumstances. Be serene. Abide in that inner peace within. It is really your innermost Self. Unfold the inner Self through daily meditation. Cultivate a quiet mind.

God bless you.

*(Talk given on 18th June 1995 at Sri Sri Ananda
Mayee Ma Centenary Retreat, France)*

RADIANT IMMORTAL ATMAN!

Beloved and Blessed Children of Light!

The real ultimate teaching is silence. The real teaching is simply silence. It is not to utter words. Words and speech constitute a human phenomenon. Human nature and all its movements are finite and limited. They are necessarily conditioned by time and space. They are also, by their very nature of human perception, cognizance and knowing, confined within the framework of name and form.

The Reality has never not been. It has always been and always shall ever be. Neither has it a beginning nor an end, nor limit nor boundary. It is infinite and thus ever unconditioned.

All human speech and words are conditioned. How can you expect to express the unconditioned through a conditioned medium? Nevertheless, because speech is expected, words are spoken. Out of necessity they are spoken. Out of whose necessity? About this, we are not certain, but evidently it is a necessity, otherwise how to account for the voluminous scriptures of all the world's religions? All these scriptures constitute words and Language, which we have just now seen is a phenomenon limited by time and space, name

and form. It is necessarily so, being a human phenomenon. It means that words have been a necessity and evidently that necessity still continues, for new spiritual literature is being produced every day.

Innumerable are the questions that ask for a reply. Therefore language seems to have become necessary. Nevertheless, it is still true that the ultimate and only teaching is SILENCE. There can be no teaching greater than silence and that alone is able, to some extent, to express the truth about the ultimate Reality. How so?

All speech implies a duality, and the ultimate Reality is supremely non-dual, absolute, one without a second. Those who have had the experience of Truth said: "Ekameva'dvitiyam brahma"—One alone, non-dual is the Supreme Being. One only, unique. "Ekam" emphasizes "One alone". That being so, speech being a communication between two, and thus necessarily implying duality, how can it be the ultimate and best teaching? Why is it necessary and why does it still prevail? Because at the moment, while on the way, when in the process of seeking, the consciousness of the seeker is in a state of duality.

What to say of duality? The consciousness of the seeker is in a state of multifariness. Thinking and knowing are "many" oriented. Whether you wish to or not, you must admit this fact. In this situation of duality consciousness, naturally the duality of speaking and teaching has become part of the situation. Therefore, it must be clearly recognized that such teaching, in its ultimate analysis, is in the nature of provisional knowledge.

This provisional knowledge has an important relative value, because it constitutes sufficient data with which to

work in order to rise higher and to go beyond the provisional knowledge of whatever is.

It is like a laboratory person having all the necessary chemical ingredients needed to produce a certain reaction, who then, by bringing all of them together, produces the reaction. It is thus that spoken teaching provides us with, and puts into our possession, the necessary ingredients which constitute the requirements for the ultimate mystical experience. Just as those chemical ingredients in the laboratory, when put together in certain amounts produce an effect, even so, the possessing of the ingredients received and acquired through spoken teachings can produce the process called contemplation, meditation.

Teaching imparted through words provides for us “food for thought”. Teaching imparted though words conveys a direction for thought. Having and possessing these factors takes the form of right inquiry, deep self-analysis and discrimination. This is the outer aspect of the process. Proceeding further in the process, takes one to direct inner reflection and exploration. Reflection and meditation constitute the inner action of the process. The spoken teaching provides us with the necessary data and ingredients to work out this process. They are necessary, as there is no other way.

Some may say there is another way that can directly impart experience. “Shaktipat” does not directly impart the ultimate experience absolute. Whatever experience that is thus imparted, is only something that manifests upon the physical and the psychological level. The acid test and the most crucial point is that whatever these techniques and processes are, in what way do they transform the individual

who is the recipient of this transfer of energy and experience? Also, how permanent and enduring is this transformation? It is this crucial point that may decide the actual value and true nature of this seemingly directly imparted experience.

Illumination is within. There is a great Light. It is the light of Lights. It is ever shining eternally, because it is forever beyond all darkness. That Light dwells within you. In your essential nature, you are an inseparable part of that Light. This being so, you partake of its identical nature. In essence, you are no other than That. Not the human personality consciousness-you, but the real essential You. This essential You is Divine consciousness, unlimited, undefined by name and form, unburdened that make up this little, temporary human ego.

This Divine consciousness that is you is ever pure. You are ever awake. It is ever free. It is ever full and complete. This is what you are! Never think in a contrary manner. Never give room for any other contrary thought. Live in the light of this awareness with every breath, at each step, and at every moment of your life. Every moment of your waking consciousness firmly adhere to this Truth of the Reality Consciousness. In this state you are timeless, beyond name and form. There is neither birth nor death. The human personality may cover this up and hide it, but it cannot change it. It cannot affect it. It cannot alter you.

Here is a strange situation; the limited human consciousness being able to cover up unlimited, Divine Consciousness. How so? Because it is so immediate to you, so close to you, so near to you, so much a part of your present state.

Say you are on vacation, a holiday in the mountains. There is a tremendous, towering mountain in front of you and you look at it. There it is before you. Now, you close one eye and raise your index finger and cover your other eye. The mountain disappears and you see only the fingers due to their proximity. This is your present situation.

The human consciousness apparently covers up the Divine Consciousness that is you. But this is only an apparent situation, because we focus upon the human consciousness and we endow it with some value. We have become very accustomed to giving it importance. Therefore it assumes a power which it does not really have. It is we who give it power by exaggerating it, by focusing upon it and thus giving it value. If the same focus of attention were directed to your Divinity and the same attention and importance given to it, the whole situation would change here and now! For no matter how thick and complete the covering of clouds, the sun shines brilliantly, always. Even so, you ever shine as the supreme Light of Lights beyond all darkness.

Pay attention to this and focus upon This fact. Give the highest value to this truth. Know it to be the most important thing in life. Then you are on your way to chasing away sleep and waking up into Light. That is the one thing needful. Arise, awake and attain illumination! These are not my words. These are the moving and inspiring words of the ancient seers and sages. “Arise! Awake and attain illumination!” thus have they sounded this eternal call. Responding to that call, wake up and remain awake. Night has gone and day has dawned. To remain awake in this new day is your birthright. All you have to do is to see that you do not fall asleep again. At the dawn of a new day, it is not right to

go back to sleep. Thus, ever keeping from your sleep of Self-forgetfulness and directing your attention to the Divine consciousness, the blessed, bliss-filled Mother, Sri Sri Ma showers Her grace. Make up your mind, “Never shall I sleep. Ever shall I be awake and know that I am the Light of Lights beyond all darkness”. May you shine with the Light that you are.

HARI OM

*(Talk given at Ananda Ashram, Kerala on
6th March 1996)*

Satsang is a compound word made out of SAT, the Reality, and being in its company, going along with it. The word SAT is very significant for us who follow the Vedic way of life. In that wonderful period in human history, the Vedic age, there was speculation in the beginning, there was thinking: “Perhaps this is the Great Reality; perhaps this is how the universe has come into being; there must be some Great Being who has brought out all this magnificent appearance”. They were theorizing and giving utterance to their feelings regarding the unknown.

As this age progressed, there came a time when we entered the Upanishadic era. Not satisfied with book learning or seeking or theories, they said: “No! We want to know. We want to be sure! We have to be convinced; to perceive it directly for ourselves.” So they launched upon this quest into the realm of the inner universe of man’s being. “Where did I come from? Where did this universe come from? How did it come into being?” to find the answers to these questions they began to seek, to go deep within, to ponder, to go on thinking, reflecting, deeper and deeper, more intensely. They put together all their observations and entered into an inquiry of the nature of the seen world, which was then subjected to keen analytical scrutiny.

It was found to be temporary, changeful. Nothing was stable, nothing was lasting. Everything was subject to decay and dissolution. Everything had a beginning and will have an end. They said this entire world is temporary in time and limited in space. You cannot rely on it, because it is constantly changing. It has no certainty, is a transitory, evanescent appearance only. It was not, will not be. It is just a show, like cloud formations in the sky. Big castles are there, and after some time nothing is there.

They said: "What Reality? Everything here seen by us has a temporary appearance only, for it is perishable. From what source has it come? What it is that supports the variegated show of vanishing names and forms? What is the substratum? What is the origin, the cause? Similarly, whence am I?"

They went into these questions, the ancient pioneers of the realm of the unknown, the spirit, the invisible universe. Fortunate are we that the quest one day was rewarded with sudden illumination, then there was no more questioning, no more questing. They knew with absolute certainty the Great Reality. "Yes, yes, we have now discovered the source, the origin, the root of all things that exist. Everything that exists is from this". They said they knew it as certainly as, for example, if you have a strawberry in your hand and you close your fist, so that you are holding it in the fist of your hand; if someone comes and tells you it is not there, you will not give any value to his words, because you know, you can feel that it is there.

They were absolutely established in the experience of that Great Reality. When they came once again into this world of day-to-day living, if they were asked to declare what was that Being, what would they say? That was also the problem

for Moses, when he had that experience and talked to the Reality. He said; “when I go back they will ask me—‘that being whom you saw, whom you talked to, what name shall we call it?’ I must say something.” So we have it in the Old Testament. “Say you talked to the ‘I AM THAT I AM.’”

So the great sages of the Upanishadic era, when they became enlightened with that Great Experience and realized the Reality, how could they declare it? “We have not known this thing, this vanishing panorama of names and forms, this two days’ carnival, but THAT.” They simply referred to it as THAT; not this which we are seeing. This is like froth and bubbles and flowing water. One moment it is not there. So they declared it to be SAT – the Reality, that which exists. It has no past or future tenses, it is always that which is. It is the Eternal Present, beyond time, beyond space, therefore it is immeasurably boundless, limitless, infinite. It is here now. They called it That which is – SAT. To be ever in its presence, in its company, in its proximity, is Satsang.

This Satsang is the one sure unfailing remedy for the non-existent earth process-giving and talking, buying and selling, fighting and quarreling, laughing and weeping, loving and hating, anger, passion, envy, jealousy, conflict and discord. All these things make us unnecessarily and avoidably miserable. We create our own misery.

God has created a perfect world, one hundred percent pure – 24 karat gold, a flawless diamond. In God’s world there is only pure, unalloyed joy. There is only absolute, indescribable profound peace, every moment in all its fullness, joy and beauty and light. That is God. There is no world apart from God. He is and He has manifested Himself as whatever exists. He is one hundred percent God.

It is because there are our brothers and sisters who may not be able to grasp this concept that they are given the concept of a Being who creates out of that state of nothingness. God said: "Let there be this." Out of the Divine Will, immediately when He wills it, it is there. He created it, therefore as long as He wills, what he created will continue to exist. Then, after sometime, everything comes to the original state of non-manifestation, or homogeneous oneness. The multiplicity that existed is gone.

You try to explain this as the outcome of a triune process of bringing into manifestation many names and forms out of a nondual unmanifested state of existence and keeping it, providing for the perpetuation in the time continuum and space frame, for some time why? That you cannot ask. He doesn't owe you an explanation. You came later on as part of His creation. He will say: "Try to know it as I know it, then you won't ask."

Then afterwards it is back to its original state. So there is a God who creates, preserves, and dissolves, absorbs back. That is also given as a concept for those for whom such a concept is necessary. Otherwise, whatever exists is one hundred percent that One Nondual Being manifesting Itself. It is totally the God Essence alone than we see in this outer and inner world. Until that realization comes, we miss the awareness of the ever-present God. We see the outer name and form and our consciousness gets away from the material out of which it is made.

A beautiful sculpture is made out of black granite and polished; a dog with fine ears, a nice nose and face. It looks like a real dog the first time you see it. At that time you are not aware of the stone. Later on, the owner, your friend receives

you and you say: "My God, I was a little frightened; I thought it to be a real. Who made it?" this stone was brought from Tamil Nadu and this is a sculpture by a master artist. You talk about the material. The dog is no more there. But when the dog was felt to be a reality, you were not aware of the stone aspect of the dog. So, our mind is diverted to the outer name and form and the inner essential stuff, Tattwa, is forgotten. Therefore, we stray away from the awareness of the ever-present God Principle, God Essence.

This is falling away from Satsang. This state of being deprived of Satsang, the contents of that state, of being out of the awareness of God, is complete focusing upon the awareness of the non-existent I. You are involved in the awareness of an I which identifies itself with a single form, a single name, a single body, a single mind, a single intellect and takes it to be one hundred percent reality. Identifying yourself with this single name and form which you can see in the mirror or photograph, which you daily brush and clean and decorate and adorn, this identity becomes to you the most important thing in the world. It rules your life. It also ruins your real life. You are so much in love with that, all other things are number two. The most important thing becomes I.

Being identified with this body identity is the biggest problem that is the world, that is the bondage, that is the net, that is the disease, that is the affection. All this has to be gotten rid of, but you are so much in love with it, the very idea of getting rid of it is preposterous, unthinkable!

The complication becomes even more intricate when you move into the little inner part of your being, identifying yourself with the mind. Then you identify yourself with all its moods, its sentiments, emotions, desires, longings and all its

demands. It wants things this way and that way. This must happen; that should not happen. So much are you in love with every little detail of the psyche, of this Antahkarana, this mind with its imaginations, its schemes, plans, memories and its future—a picture of what it wants. It builds a whole world of its own.

As if this world created by Maya is not enough of a problem, you create Maya within Maya, another world of your own. You get enmeshed in it and then you identify yourself with your intellect, its opinions, its point of view and its attitudes.

Getting completely involved in this world, you are constantly in a state of wanting to assert yourself, wanting to have all things in the way that the mind wants and your intellect wants. You are constantly wanting to turn and twist the whole world to suit yourself.

But who are you? Why not make all things click with the will of God? But who is this God? This reality is more than sufficient. There is not much place for a God. God is only a concept in the mind, so He fades away with this I reality, which is constantly in pursuit of satisfying this I, providing it with all the pleasures and sensation it wants, providing it with deep fulfillment of all its desires, its whims, its fancies. So we are completely enslaved. Our whole life is a constant process of catering to this boss. In order to please this boss, you are willing to fight and quarrel. “Each one for himself. Devil take the hindmost.” That is how the world goes. Therefore the world is suffering.

The world is full of ego clashes, ego wars; the world is full of ego assertion, with great vehemence. Its opposite is total fullness. In that state you want nothing, because you are

sufficient. You rejoice and rejoice! When it is so close you forget, you turn away from it. You get involved in the contradiction of Satsang. All the contradictions arise out of this turning away from Satsang and getting into the bad company of that which is not Sat. therefore, the great ones say that Satsang is a panacea. That is the one remedy, the one golden key to liberate yourself from all the avoidable, unnecessary vitiation of your wonderful life, your Divine spiritual life, though this involvement in that which is not Sat. Therefore, the cultivation of Satsang can also mean realizing the company of these factors with which you have been all your life. This is Asat. This is not wise.

You have to say “No. Enough! All these days I have suffered. I will no longer keep company with you people. I shall only keep company with the Supreme Being.” So, in order to enter into the real Satsang, to keep constant company with the Great Reality ever-present within you, shining with the resplendence of a million suns, you have to deliberately, resolutely, turn away from this unnecessary companionship of the false ego principle and the personality which is taking you the other way, deflecting and directing you constantly. “Now I shall no longer be deluded by you. You have constantly been the cause of my torment.”

In the Gita, very significantly in two or three places, the Lord says you must put an end to this unholy alliance and begin to cultivate the companionship of the one and only non-dual Reality – God, Ram, Yaweh, Allah, Ahura Mazda, the Light of Light beyond darkness, the Supreme Tao, Ek Omkar Sat Nam. Because of this, all other things attain their luminosity and shine here. That thing, every breath, every

moment, you must live for. That alone is the Reality. All other things are temporary.

Constantly be in a state of Satsang within, with the Great Reality, with your Beloved, with Ram, with your Divine Mother. Feel whatever towards it you want to feel. It is all that and more. You can never exhaust the relationship with that Supreme Reality. That is your everything—father, mother, friend, relative, wealth, wisdom, all in all. That is the one great thing. That is the instant solution. In a single flash all your sorrows will vanish; all your Ashanti will go. All your problems will vanish. You will be in a state of absolute peace and joy.

You have to renounce that company which has been your great problem, your wrong identity. You are hugging your delusion. If you begin to see that the Great Reality is your constant life's companion—God within you- you must constantly be aware of that companion, not of anything else. This is real Sadhana, detaching from yourself and attaching to Him. If you begin to do that, automatically the unholy alliance, the wrong type of company you have been keeping (God knows for how many births) will leave you.

It is only by cultivating this Satsang that the age-long, wrong company will go by itself. Otherwise, you cannot shake it off. The only way of doing it is to catch hold of God with both hands, with your whole being. Then, that which seems impossible will become instantly possible. That is the Satsang, that is required. That is the one Satsang needed of the struggling, seeking, aspiring soul, if it wants to put an end to that delusion and enter into that glorious awareness of the timeless company of the Divine.

The moment you turn your face towards the light, darkness vanishes. The moment you turn away, you see only the dark shadow. Even though there is light everywhere, you don't see it because you have turned your face away. Therefore, you must turn towards God. Then Real Satsang comes into your life and that is the beginning of your liberation. It is the beginning of the end of all your complications, needless self-created hassles and avoidable worries. This bondage is unnecessary. It is not your real state. It is an unnatural thing created by you. Put an end to it.

The Great Satsang is what we want. It is the Satsang of the ever-present Sat within, which is the one and only Reality, the one and only true life companion of yours. Life is short, time is fleeting. Do not prolong your folly, when it is so easy, so simple, so natural to be in the Satsang of the ever-present Reality. Why stray away from it and go into unnecessary byways and highways? You don't have to do anything. You only need to stop being aware of the unnecessary and be aware of the ever-present Reality. Thou art mine. I am Thine. Thou art within me. I ever live within you.

He who sees me in all things, and he who sees all things as abiding in me, we don't have any separation. He can never have separation from me. I can never be separate from Him. That is the vision you must evoke from within yourself. Be constantly aware that there is no separation. Always be as one. God alone is. You are never apart from Him. You are a part of Him. Be based upon this truth. I am in the Light; the Light is within me. I am the Light, God is in me. I am in god. With every breath constantly affirm this truth. Affirm this Reality.

This is the highest Satsang. This takes you beyond all other Satsangs and will ultimately give you the great non-dual

experience. You will feel yourself to be pure Sat-Chit-Ananda, peace and joy, bliss and light. May God grant you this supreme experience in this very life, in this very body, by a constant, unbroken, perennial inner Satsang with the Great Reality.

Affirm the SAT to be all in all.

Hari Om.

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

24th September 2016 marks the auspicious occasion of Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out one hundred booklets comprising illuminating talks of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

To propagate Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's gospel of Divine Life, Worshipful Sri Swamiji Maharaj travelled extensively in India and abroad and showed the path of divine life to countless seekers through his spontaneous and highly inspiring lectures. His lectures, in Sadgurudev's words, are the outpourings of his saintly heart, the revelations of intuitive wisdom.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of his hitherto unpublished lectures in a booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary. The present booklet *THAT ALONE EXISTS*, is a series of 3 talks on the eleventh Chapter of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita given at the Sangeet Kala Mandir Trust, Calcutta, from November 25th to 27th, 1994.

We express our heartfelt gratitude towards the inmates of the Headquarters Ashram for their loving service in transcribing, editing and compiling these talks.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—The Divine Life Society

Salutations and prostrations to all the Brahma Vidya Gurus, who have from ancient times blessed global human society with the priceless gift of divine wisdom. Salutations to the unbroken line of successive Tattva-VettaBrahma-Jnanis, starting from Adi Narayana who imparted Brahma Vidya to Brahma and Param Siva who are the Adi Gurus from whom we have obtained the ancient wisdom that liberates.

Among all sciences and all fields of knowledge, that knowledge and that wisdom is the only one which puts an end to the darkness of Avidya. The ignorance of one's own real nature is the root cause of all human miseries, Dukha, Shoka, Chinta. The Lord Himself, who is the Srishti Sthiti Laya Karta (creator, sustainer and dissolver) of this universe, gives a very unflattering label to His own product: "Anityam asukham lokam—This world, O Arjuna, is a world of impermanent things, and here only sorrow abides; it is the place of sorrow." As though it was not enough to declare this categorically once, He repeats it a number of times. What is the real sight that meets the gaze of a keen seer when he observes the world around him, what does he see with Viveka-Drishti? He sees, "Janma, Mrityu, Jara, Vyaadhi, Dukha".

Swami Vivekananda was the first magnificent spiritual personality, who crossed the oceans and delivered the message of Yoga-Vedanta. The Vedantic knowledge came to the Occident for the first time during the historical Parliament of World Religions in Chicago in 1893, an unprecedented event in the hereto human history. From that time onwards the intellectuals, thinkers, philosophers and scholars of the West began to look upon Bharatavarsha with a different eye, with the eye of respect and reverence. They had been thinking: "We have to teach the East and especially India. But now, this young man Swami Vivekananda, roaring like a lion, has opened our eyes and made us realise that in that land there is something that we have to learn." That learning process has never stopped right until now. Hundred years and more have passed, but even today people from the West come to India, seek Ashrams, philosophers, Universities, Sadhus, saints and sit at their feet and learn the great wisdom that has come down undimmed from the past.

Thanks to the Paddhati (system) of the Guru-Sishya Parampara, instituted by our ancients, that great wisdom, that great Anubhuti has come down enhanced and augmented in each generation by great men of illumination, and thus the passage of time has not in any way lessened it. On the contrary, it has become Aparoksha-Anubhuti, the direct experience of

Reality beyond the appearance of names and forms. In this world of pain and death, where man comes and suffers, everyone is still seeking an experience of happiness that will satisfy in spite of the declaration of the Creator Himself that this is Apurna (imperfect) Jagat. Where there is pleasure, there is pain; where there is birth, there is death; where there is health, there is disease; where there is success, there is failure; where there is fulfilment, there is also disappointment. Thus, this world of dualities contains a mixed experience. Some Mahatma characterised this as a mixture of sugar and sand; if you want the sweetness of the sugar, you find that you have sand in the mouth, and you cannot separate them.

That is the reason why our ancients began to ponder life: "At every step we find something else than what we are seeking. This is Apurna. Is there not some perfect experience?" They did not know whether it existed or not. Our forefathers in this land of Ganga and Himalaya went into a quest of the unexplored, invisible realms of man's inner dimension: "What is beyond and behind the seeming universe which is a place of constant change? Even the actors change in this drama of life. Is there something in the background of that which changes, something permanent and something which is perfect also?"

In how many ways they exerted in this quest we do not know! But later on some scientific

minds thought it worthwhile to record their quests and struggles and ultimately their grand and glorious discovery. What they found constitutes the concluding portion of that mass of knowledge which is the source and origin of the religion that is today referred to as Hinduism. It seems to have existed always, and so they called it Sanatana Dharma, the Eternal Way of Life; its origin is shrouded in holy antiquity and the mass of knowledge known as the Vedas, being its origin, it is also called the Vedic way of life—Sanatana Vaidika Dharma.

Everything that constitutes the Hindu way of life arises from the Vedas. It contains an integrated knowledge of all that is necessary to live in an effective manner (the Jnana of the Sharira, the Jnana of the Bhoutika Jagat, understanding the mind and what is beyond the mind: Buddhi, Chitta, Samskaras, Vasanas). Ultimately we are told how to live to make use of the law of Karma to one's highest good. All these constitute your Vedic wisdom of which you are the very fortunate inheritors. Aparoksha Anubhuti is the pearl of surpassing value.

The quintessence of these experiences, of these wisdom teachings lodged in the Upanishads are presented to us in a brief yet complete form as the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, issuing forth from Divinity Itself, incarnated as a teacher, the Jagadguru Bhagawan Sri Krishna. It constitutes for us the concrete grace of the Divine. For the

great ones who had the vision and the faith it was not an experience that came and went away, they became established in that state of glorious Brahma-Jnana and '*tarati shokam atmavit*', (knowing the Self, one goes beyond sorrow). They stood like a rock amidst the vicissitudes of life: calm, serene, unperturbed. The second chapter of the Srimad Bhagavad-Gita Jnanopadesha gives you a most attractive description of this.

The Father of our nation, Sri Mahatma Gandhiji was so tremendously struck by the importance of the description of one who is established in firm knowledge, who is a Sthithaprajna, that throughout his life, until the very last moment when the Lord called him in the evening before prayer time at Birla Bhavan in Delhi, he used to listen to the description of this Sthitaprajna; it was his constant Shravana. Everyday someone would be reciting, and in a contemplative, receptive mood he listened to these Sthitaprajna Lakshana Shlokas of the Srimad Bhagavad-Gita.

The Bhagavad Gita is such an important scripture that is an Upadesha; a message or Sandesha; and also it is an Adesha, for it constitutes a clear description and exposition of the practical methods of attaining that experience of the transcendental Reality. It is Brahma Vidya, and it is a Yoga Shastra. It brings us close to the great Reality and is therefore an Upanishad. Issuing forth from the divine lips of Lord Krishna

to His beloved disciple Arjuna—it is Krishna-Arjuna Samvaada.

Therefore, Radiant Atman! Beloved children of the Divine! My own Bharatiya Atmabandhus! Realise that in the Gita you have the most precious treasure, and it is completely practical.

This servant of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji is here not to give something new or something that you do not know; it is yours, it runs in your blood, it is in every cell of your body. You are the descendants of those great Rishis, great Tapasvis and Maharishis who attained this Brahma-Jnana. So its potential is already there, the spark is already there. What you hear is what belongs to you. But it comes to you, not for being listened to and being a little enlightened, it comes to you for being lived. To hear something and the receiving of it is only the lesser part, but the doing of it is the essence of the entire process. If you grasp this point, then this precious Jnana is yours, and your life will become transformed.

In this world of sorrow, suffering and anxiety, you will be a serene person, unaffected by what is going on. On the contrary, if you carry out the Adesha of this Jagadguru, if you obey its imperative directive, which is meant to be lived, if you do that and keep on doing it, then you may be a factor that makes an impact upon your environment in a positive manner by bringing peace where there is quarrel, bringing serenity where there is turmoil, and bringing all that is

positive. So you become first of all transformed, and then you become a transformer. If a piece of iron is magnetised, later on it can magnetise other pieces of iron. This and much more this teaching can do, if you ponder it and start living it. The third aspect of this process is the vital and the most important aspect. Your living must become an outer expression of this wisdom that you have received. The living of the wisdom is the only way to make it fruitful for you, through you and to life around you.

The ninth chapter of the Gita occupies the center of the scripture, and it leads to the revelation of a great many secrets of the eternal Reality, uttered to man for the first time through Reality Itself, incarnated as the world teacher: Raja Vidya, the kingly science; Raja-Guhya, the kingly secret. And having prepared Arjuna by the revelation of this secret, the Lord gives him an idea of how He is contained in everything, yet nothing is contained in Him because nothing affects Him. He is like space, in which all things exist. It remains what it is, notwithstanding billions of universes within it; it is just what it is. Take away all these things, let all these billions of universes vanish, then also space is what it is. The Lord says, "Thus am I. All things abide in Me, and I am unaffected by them. I am all-pervading, ever-present, but I abide in nothing because I am too subtle. This mystery I cannot explain in words, you have to experience it. I am here, there and

everywhere. And yet, I am in nothing. I am by Myself—alone, non-dual.”

The coexistence of both these facets and aspects bewilders Arjuna, and to make it a little more comprehensible, the Lord moves on to the tenth chapter and says: “Look! I will tell you how I am present in this visible universe. I am the essence of all things. I will tell you how you can find Me in all things.” The Lord begins to tell Arjuna about His specific presence in this world that He has created. When Arjuna listens, he is able to understand, but he is not fully satisfied. Arjuna says, “What You have expounded, I am able to grasp, but I am able to understand only through my mind. Can You actually make me see this directly? Can I perceive it? If it is possible, will you please grace me with this experience?” It is then that the Lord out of great love and compassion for Arjuna says: “This is a rare vision none has ever seen, even the celestials and the gods have not had the good fortune of beholding this vision, but you are dear to Me, you are near to Me and therefore I shall impart it. Now, behold My glory! But you cannot see it through these physical eyes of yours.”—One requires a divine vision because He is always there, whatever exists is ‘Vishvarupa’, but who sees? We see only names and forms that perish and vanish and pass away, but ‘Vishvarupa’ ever shines behind because it is a subtle fact.—Therefore Lord Krishna says: “I shall grant you the divine vision, and you will

behold the truth about this visible universe which is a manifestation of Myself,” and then, blessing Arjuna with the divine vision, the Lord reveals to him His Cosmic Form.

This Cosmic Form constitutes a unique chapter of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita for the simple reason that in the other 17 chapters knowledge is imparted as teachings, as instructions by the Guru to the Shishya. But the eleventh chapter constitutes an experience, an actual revelation. It is a practical demonstration of the subtle hidden truths imparted by Lord Krishna to His beloved disciple. It is a turning point in the Gita Jnana Upadesha, and the experience is so tremendous that Arjuna is not able to bear it! First of all he eagerly asks: “Let me see! Can you not show it to me? I have understood in my mind, but I want to actually perceive it.” And when it is shown to him, it becomes overwhelming—too much. The Lord had made it very clear: “It is not the fortune of even the celestials to behold this, what of ordinary human beings or sages?” Ultimately Arjuna sees with great awe and fear, and he says: “I see this great vision and I see all trembling before It! I too tremble and am struck with awe! Please! Graciously withdraw this great form, this tremendous vision, this awe inspiring, soul shaking, stunning experience, and once again appear before me in Your gentle form!” And thus the Lord withdraws this tremendous vision, takes

away the ‘divine eye’ and appears to him as before. But Arjuna is completely transformed. The heart of Arjuna is transformed! There is a great calmness settling upon him. He who was full of agitation, completely perturbed: “How can I kill all these people, how can I engage in this violent, destructive war?” He had been overcome with sorrow, overcome with emotion, and the whole body was trembling from head to feet, and he was unable even to stand! Now a great peace settles. For in this vision, the Lord has revealed to Arjuna that whatever He was asking him to do in the field of Kurukshetra has been done! It is already finished! Arjuna with a wonderstruck gaze sees the battle, he sees the hundreds and thousands of the Kaurava army arranged against the Pandava army rushing headlong into the mouth of this great ‘Viratsvarupa’ and being consumed by it. The ‘Viratsvarupa’ is both positive and negative, light and darkness, life and death, creation and destruction—everything! And he sees all the armies, all the chariots and elephants—everything—smashing themselves into the gaping mouth and between the teeth of this great all-consuming “Kaalo’smi lokakshayakrit...” (B.G. 11\32), and at the end of it nothing is left!

Arjuna sees that whatever had been asked of him to do has already been done by the sole Karta of this universe, the One and only doer of everything, and he says: “There is nothing for Me to do!” And the Lord says in so many words: “Now

you have seen! Where is the battle? Where is violence, death? I have already done it! There is nothing for you to do. Those whom you are killing, they are no more living. Nimittamaatram bhava savyasaachin..." (B.G. 11\33). You become only an instrument to outwardly enact what has already been achieved."

Having seen the future already enacted in the present and how the Lord is beyond time—past, present, and future are immediate for him—when the vision is withdrawn, calmness settles upon the heart of Arjuna. He does not see himself anymore as a killer of people, a doer of something violent, and therefore he begins to feel, "I must obey, because now I know that I am not an actor or a doer", and surrender becomes the natural outcome of this knowledge and its experience.

What is the relevance of this all for us in 1994 in this world of great turmoil and very eventful occurrences being brought to our knowledge through newspapers, magazines, TV and radio, every hour of our waking life, day after day? We are constantly in the state of 'Uthal-Puthal' - we see a world of tremendous upheavals and changes, and we have to live in it. We do have a great duty, a great responsibility towards our ancients. Of all the nations and countries Bharatavarsha is unique in one respect, namely that the ancients came to realise distinctly that the unseen is the real. When they entered into that great experience, they found nothing but

That and That alone existing. What is the implication of the Reality being fully One and non-dual? The natural thing that follows out of this is that whatever exists is that One non-dual Reality. It cannot be anything else because there is nothing else. '*Ekameva Advityam Brahma*' was the authoritative declaration. And the natural implication of it is '*Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma*', '*Brahmaiva Sarvam*', '*Neha Nanasti Kinchana*'. The 'many' is only an appearance.

There may be a hundred different ornaments fashioned of gold in a jeweller's shop, and you may be admiring wonderful intricate designs on necklaces, ear rings, nose rings and bracelets, but you are gazing only at one precious metal, gold. Go into a textile shop, and hundred varieties of cloths are there, different patterns, different textures, thick, thin, soft, coarse, handkerchiefs and tablecloths and bed-sheets, pyjamas and Kurtas, but all the while you are gazing at one non-dual stuff called cotton. Go into a pottery shop; any number of things are displayed there, beautiful cups and saucers, tea sets and flower vases and ever so many things; but while you admire all these different shapes, you are looking only at one thing, and that is clay. All the 'Ghata-Patadi' (pots, cloth etc.) are only varieties of '*Nama Rupa*', but the Tattva is One and non-dual. And you can experience this Tattva if you apply it to this world.

The realisation of the Supreme Reality, God-experience or Self-realisation can be attained only if this great Reality is constantly being established in your heart and if in the midst of this great upheaval, you are trying to live based upon this Reality-experience and approaching all things with the vision of '*Ekameva Advitiyam Brahma*'. All the appearances are passing, whatever exists is only that One non-dual Truth, '*Brahmaiva Satyam*'. If you begin to ponder it, if you begin to meditate upon it, and if you gradually grow in this awareness, a state will emerge when you know, I live, move and have my being in that great Reality.

This is the most important thing for each and every one of us. We want to do it because it is in our blood. We are the descendants of our ancient Rishis. We are Bharatiyas, and out of the Purushartha Chatushtaya the Param Purushartha is Brahma-Jnana, Kaivalya Moksha-Samrajya through Atma-Jnana. We have to attain That. Everyone cannot go into a mountain cave or a cloister or try to do Yoga for twenty-four hours. You have to be as Arjuna and in the midst of the strife of life hold on to God-awareness. Krishna showed him how to do it through the '*Vishvarupa Darshana Yoga*'. '*Vishvarupa Darshana Yoga*' is as relevant and necessary for you today as it was relevant and necessary for Arjuna upon that great day, many millennia before us.

And how this importance can be translated into an asset through your day to day life in this last decade of the 20th century we shall consider, God willing, tomorrow morning. Hari Om. Namaskars.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

*Saba hein samaana, Saba mein eka praana
Tyaja ke abhimaana, Hari Naama gaavo*

*Hari Naama gaavo, Daya apanaavo
Apane hridaya mein Hari ko basaao*

All are one! The same Prana enlivens all beings! Give up your pride and sing the name of God!

Sing the Name of Lord Hari and be compassionate! Make Lord Hari dwell in your heart!

(A song by Sant Nivruttinath, Sadguru of Sant Jnaneshwar)

Radiant Immortal Atman! Beloved and blessed children of Light! Immortal souls in a state of embodiment during this brief journey upon this earth plane! The above two verses bring out the central experience of the Satya Sanatana Vaidika Dharma: One common consciousness is present in all existence. It runs through all the infinite outer appearances that make up phenomenal nature, in which variety is the law. This nature is a grand display of variegated names and forms. But the central experience of our great ancestors was that in the midst of these endless diversities, there is an essential unity; at the centre of all things, life is One. All things are filled

by a subtle invisible Presence, a principle that is beginningless, endless and eternal; being all-pervading, it is ever present in all things. All religions seem to agree that their concept of the ultimate great Reality or the Supreme Cosmic Being is that He is Omniscient, Omnipotent and Omnipresent.

But the uniqueness of Sanatana Vaidika Dharma is that this concept and this belief is based upon their direct experience in the deepest centre of their being. They knew about this Truth as certainly, as definitely as ‘the Amala (gooseberry) held in the palm of your hand’ - ‘Karatala amalakavata’. With this authority, the sages proclaimed, “We declare upon the basis of our own direct experience that God IS; God is NOW; God is HERE, because in all things He is present as the one, non-dual, indivisible Sutratma. Just as in the necklace made of beads of different materials, different shapes, different colours—in this beautiful variety runs one common thread that holds them together as a necklace. Even so, one common Consciousness indwells all beings and brings about unity in the midst of diversity. Diversity is a fact; the Unity is a greater fact. Diversity may change, but this Unity does not change, and therefore it is the truth. This experience is the basis and the origin of all ‘Darshanas’ that comprise the body of the Indian philosophical system. And this Darshana finds itself in every scripture that later on was produced

in order to make it easier to grasp the subtle truths of the Upanishadic literature given in a terse, aphoristic manner.

Vyasa Bhagavan developed a whole body of popular literature in the form of stories, of conversations, allegorical and symbolical. All these are the absorbing and interesting contents of the Puranic literature. The knowledge that was known as the Vedas did not exist in written form till Bhagavan Vyasa made it his life's mission to put it down in writing, knowing that a time will come when man will become short-lived, and his retentive memory will no longer be as it used to be. If this light of Vedic knowledge was not to be lost, it was necessary that it should be put down in tangible form. So he took up this tremendous task of writing down the Vedic knowledge that existed at his time, and thanks to him we have now the Vedas in the present form of four great books. These the Mahamandaleshwar Sri Gangeshwara-nandaji Maharaj has brought out in a magnificent single tome containing within its covers all the four Vedas called 'Bhagawan Veda'. For the first time it was possible for the Hindu to have Darshan of his own scripture!

Very few people had handled the Vedas because it was the field of Sanskrit knowing scholars and Pundits and other people who were engaged in Karma-Kanda etc. But the vast majority of the Hindu people had only heard that there is a thing called Vedas. Here and there,

Vedic verses were chanted daily—Purusha-Sukta and Rudra-Adhyaya and other things—but Vedas as a book were never seen, and yet it was Saakshat Prakat Svarup Paramatma—Bhagawan Veda. Whereas every Muslim has a copy of Quran Sharif, the Christians have the New Testament and the Bible and so too the followers of Judaism, and Zenda Avesta is known to all the Zoroastrians, the Guru Granth Sahib is known to all the Sikhs, but the Hindus knew only all the other scriptures but not the Vedas.

This great Vibhuti Purusha has made the Hindu race indebted to him by bringing out ‘Bhagavan Veda’, and he refused to sell this book. He said: “I shall go from place to place and present it to such big organisations and institutions where thousands of people come, and they must have Darshan. The only stipulation is that it should be kept in a prominent place, and a lamp should be lit every day, some flowers offered and Arati should be done.” He has gone all over the world, even in his late 80s, and wherever there were Hindus, he presented ‘Veda Bhagavan’. It has girdled the globe, and everywhere you can see Mahamandaleshwar Gangeshwaranandaji’s ‘Veda Bhagavan’, also in Sivananda Ashram.

*Om namo Adi deva namo namo Veda geya
Jai jai saukhya deha atma rupam*

(Om! Salutations and prostrations to the Primeval Being, whose glory has been sung in the Vedas and who is the form of the Supreme Self.)

The central experience that forms the heart of this Vedic wisdom, was the experience of the seers and sages of the non-dual nature of the ultimate Reality, “Whatever is seen, heard, touched, tasted or smelt, is nothing but that great Reality in its multifarious forms. In the midst of infinite variety, there is this unity of deity.” This great truth became proclaimed through all the Upanishads. It is the very first declaration in the first line of the first verse of the first Upanishad, the Isavasya Upanishad,

*Isavasyam idam sarvam yat kinchit
jagatyam jagat*

(Whatsoever exists in this world is interpenetrated by that one Reality, that Supreme Principle, the Ishvara Tattva.)

That Presence is the one central fact that never changes wherever you are: at home, in society, in the office, in the midst of work, everywhere He is with you; you are in Him. The heart of Yoga is that, “I am in God; God is in me.” That is the one great experience that makes one divine while having one’s feet planted upon earth when one’s consciousness is in heaven, for earth and heaven coexist in the same place, at all times. That being so, this world is not to be discarded, it is not to be belittled. He has taken these variegated forms, therefore by all means, live with them, experience them, but know that the selfsame principle that dwells in you is dwelling in all other beings; they have an equal privilege of

living amidst the things, the wealth of the world, all the things that God has created. Therefore, covet not anything that is not part of your lot but part of someone else's lot. This brings about a perfect harmony—*bhunjitha tyaktena—enjoy casting out from your heart all covetousness*. “This has fallen to the lot of others; may they have the same enjoyment as I have.” This makes once for all a lie to the accusation that Hinduism is a world-negating religion. Here it is, the very first verse of the Isavasya Upanishad says, “By all means, live for a hundred years and enjoy all the good things of this world, but give equal freedom for other people to enjoy.” This is not a world negating or austere faith; this is a robust approach to life: “Yes! I would like to live long. I would like to experience all the beauties of the world, but giving equal liberty to everyone else, because the same Being that dwells within me dwells in all creatures.” This is the basis of the highest democratic approach to life, the highest approach that tends for harmony: “*Isavasyam idam sarvam yat kinchit jagatyam jagat*”; “*Sarvam Vishnumayam jagat*”; “*Sarvam khalvidam Brahma*”

“Whatever exists is the one Supreme Being” is one of the most important expressions of the Srimad Bhagavad-Gita. Your way of life, your faith, your religion derives from the Vedic wisdom. And out of the Vedic wisdom has come the entire spiritual literature that comprises the wealth of knowledge and the Hindu vision of life. As a

matter of fact it is bewildering that all the prophetic religions have one principle scripture whereas our scriptures are endless. But in these endless scriptures, the same central truth is never absent! It is reiterated in a hundred different ways and is culminating in the Srimad Bhagavad Gita. It is the epitome of the Upanishads, the Jnana Kanda of the Vedas. It has been brought out in the verse which says: "If you regard the entire body of the Upanishads as a cow, then Gita is the milk that has been milked from this cow." And in a very descriptive verse Sri Vyasa Bhagavan has said: "The confusion and the pitiable condition of Arjuna drew forth from Bhagavan Sri Krishna the milk of the Gita Jnana, even as the plaintive crying of the calf induces the mother to plentifully give forth her milk for appeasing the cry of the calf." Arjuna is referred to as the calf and Krishna the cowherd and the Upanishad the cow; and induced by the need of Arjuna, Krishna milked forth the nectarine wisdom teachings of the Upanishad in the form of the Gita Jnana. Being the quintessential nectar of the Upanishads, the most prominent part of the Gita is the experience of the eleventh chapter.

It is Brahma Vidya, imparted by Krishna during His conversation with Arjuna. But why is it Yoga-Shastra? Yoga-Shastra is a practice; it is a Sadhana. Have you ever pondered this point? In all the other chapters instructions are given, truths are expounded and certain ways of

applying them are indicated, but with this glorious vision of the 11th chapter only experiences are presented before Arjuna, and through Arjuna before each one of us. Shaken by this experience, overtaken with awe, he bursts out in prayer: "I see, I behold, I marvel, so amazing is this sight, I can bear it no more! Lord, please withdraw it!" And the narrator says: "Thus, being appealed to and prayed for, the Lord, the great Viratsvarupa Vishvamurti withdrew the vision and appeared once again before Arjuna in His normal Saumya Svarupa, and thus ends the chapter.

Why then is it a Yoga Shastra? It is a Yoga Shastra for you and all of us who are Jijnasus, Mumukshus and spiritual seekers. This vision which presents us the central fact of the Hindu experience stems from the ground of the Hindu ways, but the experience is universal. It is the birthright, the heritage of the entire mankind. It is the central truth which was, is and ever shall be, because the Truth never varies. What a significant truth! What a deeply important truth! What an indispensable truth, if man should continue to be a humane creature and not degenerate into a demon or a devil! If there is any one thing that can save man from this disaster, it is the experience and the vision presented to us by the Vishvarupa Darshana Yoga. For this great truth is the basis of all humaneness. It places before us the sanctity of all life. Nothing is profane, all things are

important, for one great Reality is the centre, the truth of all things, is God who is worshipful. You cannot afford to treat Him with contempt or disrespect and get away with it—retribution will follow. He is to be worshipped. All things are moving temples of this great Reality, and therefore all things are worthy of respect, worthy of reverence.

In the 11th Skandha of Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana, when Jagatguru Lord Krishna gives His parting message and advice to Uddhava, an equally beloved friend of His; He brings out the same fact: “O Uddhava! Whatever you see around you is Me! Therefore, if you want to attain Me through devotion, conduct yourself worshipfully to all life around you, to the whole world and all things in it, all beings in it. Prostrate before an elder, before your superior, prostrate before a dog, a donkey, prostrate before all creatures, all animals, all trees—prostrate before everything—for I indwell all things. One common consciousness pervades all things.”

“But Swamiji, there is no consciousness in a stone or a mineral. So how do you say that God pervades all things?” The answer is a counter question: “My dear friend! Who told you that consciousness is not present in a stone or mineral? There is no speck of space and no atom of matter where consciousness is not fully present. Only in some things it is patent and in others it is latent; in some things it is dynamic and

in others it is dormant; but it is present in all things.”—“How? Please explain.”—“A tiny little seed of a banyan tree, if you blow it, it is gone, and you cannot find it. A towering banyan tree may be 80 feet in height, spreading its branches under which 100 cattle can be tied, elephants can rest. Can you say that this towering banyan tree with all its spreading branches, roots, foliage and flowers, shade and timber is not present in this tiny little seed? The tree is slumbering in the seed! The consciousness slumbers in the stone and mineral. It breathes in the entire botanical world: it takes in carbon-dioxide and gives out oxygen, and It moves in every insect even as it moves in the greater animals. It is awake, thinks, feels, reasons, reflects, discovers, invents and makes marvels after marvels in Man—the crown and glory of God’s creation.”

Therefore, this being the fact, how can you dare to treat with disdain or disrespect anything? The basis of all ethics and morality lies in this grand vision of the Vishvarupa Darshana. Why should you be good? Why should you not hurt or harm? Precisely because God abides in all things, and therefore you have to treat them not only with reverence or respect, but with a worshipful attitude. The bedrock of Patanjali’s ‘Yoga Darshana’ is Yama: Ahimsa, Satyam, Brahmacharya, Asteya and Aparigraha. Why should you not hurt anyone? Because God dwells in him or her! And about this attitude of not

hurting or harming Tulsidas says: “It is the very essence of Dharma. Daya dharma ka mula hein, paapa mula abhimaan.” It is Abhimaan (egoism) that makes one to be harsh and cruel and harm and hurt others: ‘paapa mula abhimaan’. “Tulsi daya na chhadiye, jab laga ghat mein pran!” As long as one is alive, one should be compassionate. They made Daya (mercy) the cardinal virtue because that is the one quality of God to which all humanity in its erring ways appeals:

*Mein paapi hoon Mein adham hoon
Tu Dayamaya, Daya ka saagar!
Hey Dayamaya Prabhu!*

“Please forgive my errors, and lift me up. Please have mercy upon me! I am an imperfect human being. I have done many things that ought not to be done; I have failed to do many things that ought to be done. Therefore, O Dayamaya Bhagavan! Please! Forgive me and give me another chance.” Daya is the cardinal virtue because it is a divine quality, and the outcome of Daya is that one never harms or hurts anyone, never does anything that is likely to be contrary to the welfare of others. That is the root of the Hindu ethic, living in order to be a centre of welfare to all beings.

From ancient times we have been taught to pray:

*Sarveshaam svastir-bhavatu
Sarveshaam shantir bhavatu
Sarveshaam purnam-bhavatu
Sarveshaam mangalam-bhavatu*

*Sarve bhavantu sukhinah
Sarve santu niramayaah
Sarve bhadraani-pashyantu
Ma kaschid dukha bhag bhavet
Sarveshaam mangalam bhavatu
Loka samasta sukhino-bhavantu*

All are manifestations of the Supreme Reality, and therefore our whole life should be a dynamic and creative process of thinking, feeling, speaking and working for bringing about the maximum benefit and welfare to all life. That is what the Vishvarupa Darshana would have us do if we are true to our religion.

God manifests when you are a helpless infant; He manifests to you as tender care, as protection, nourishment and comfort: therefore ‘Matri-devo bhava’. God manifests to you as the Being who enables your mother to take care of you. There is someone behind the mother who provides for all that is necessary. Therefore ‘Pitri-devo bhava’. And the one thing that distinguishes man and animal is knowledge. Therefore, one who makes you a knowledgeable human being is the teacher: ‘Acharya devo bhava’. And if you have to be a noble, dignified human being, a blessing to society and not a curse, you must be a Paropakari. You must adopt Seva Dharma. Therefore, anyone who gives you an opportunity of setting aside self, you must thank him, for he is giving you a push up the on ladder of evolution. Anyone who gives you an opportunity

for service, thank him. The more the self dies, the more you rise in divinity. Therefore, for any unexpected visitor or any person in need: ‘Atithi devo bhava’. By doing Paropakara for the visible manifestation of this Vishvarupa, you are actually offering Aradhana or Puja to that Vishvarupa:

*Yadyat karma karomi tad tad akhilam
Shambho tava aradhanam.*

(Whatever action I do, it is an adoration to you, my Lord!)

Therefore, in the Vishvarupa Darshana Yoga you have the basis of good behaviour, you have the basis of compassion and kindness, you have the basis of reverence for life, you have the basis of respect among human individuals, and you have the basis of all ethics and morality, all Niti, all Dharma.

We shall consider further this glorious experience, this priceless diamond, on the third and final morning, and we thank God and all of you for this opportunity to share this great heritage. God bless you all!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Radiant Immortal Atman! Beloved and blessed children of the Divine! Sadhaks and seekers, Jijnasus and Mumukshus, devotees of the Lord, Dharma-Premi, Satsangis assembled here on the third day for this spiritual discourse!

To all of you this servant of Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj has been offering his sharing in the spirit of the great Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya's 'Siva Manasa Puja' Stotra.

*Yadyat karma karomi tad tad akhilam Shambho
tava araadhanam*

In that verse, he equates and identifies all his physical movements, his verbal activities, his mental activities—everything—as an unending adoration and worship of the Divine. “Whatever actions I perform, all of it, O Lord, is Your glorious worship.” Even so, to that Great Being who is seated in your heart, who is your beginning, your middle and end, to that Being to whom your bodies are moving temples, these sharings are offered as an adoration in the form of these words.

Call it ‘Pravachana-Anjali’ or ‘Vachana-Anjali’—He is fit to be worshipped, and He is ever before us. Turn in all the 10 directions, He alone abides! Whichever way you face, He confronts you, and you’re facing Him. This is the truth. This

is the fact of your life. You ever live in the presence of the Divine.

Arjuna did not have this awareness, and so he broke down when he saw before him in the battlefield of Kurukshetra his kith and kin, and overcome with emotion and pity he exclaimed: "How can I engage in this carnage? How can I destroy my kith and kin? I will rather take the begging bowl and wander as a Bhikshu, than doing this and attaining the kingdom!" That was Arjuna's deplorable mental condition and feeling!

But in the 11th chapter a very significant truth is told: "O Arjuna! Whether you engage in the battle or not, they are already killed! This battle is over, because I am the One who does everything. So whether you fight them and kill them or not, they will be killed; did you not see just now?" Arjuna had seen the entire Kaurava force—hundreds and thousands of horsemen, foot-soldiers and chariots, all of them—enter like a fast-flowing river into the wide open jaws of this terrible Svarupa of Bhagawan!

Arjuna has moved with Lord Krishna; he has heard the glory of the Lord as a Supreme Being—'*Shristi, Stithi, Laya Karta*'. But all his concepts of the Supreme Being had been of a benign, gracious Being, a Cosmic Being. But, "What am I seeing? Fearful and unimaginably terrible! Who is this?" Thus, Arjuna asks in bewilderment! And in response to this Bhagavan says: "Know that I'm the all destroying Time. I'm

the all destroying One! All these beings that have come into being, they dissolve, they are destroyed and absorbed into Me. I destroy all the worlds, and you have to perform only actions that have already been performed!

“For you, there is past, present and future. Something has been done yesterday; something is being done now; that which remains will be done in the time to come. But I’m the All-Pervading, Eternal, Timeless One, beyond calculated time, beyond measured distance; I’m Anaadi, Ananta (beginningless and infinite). For Me the three periods of time merge into the Eternal Now! And therefore, whatever is done is done at this very instant; and it is only apparently done by infinite instruments of Mine manifested in this world. This is the Great Mystery.” And it dawns upon Arjuna: “I who have been bemoaning the necessity to engage in this dire action, how little did I know?” And overcome by awe, Arjuna says: “Now I realise! Now I realise! Withdraw Your terrible form! I have known now.”

And, just as the Lord concludes the 10th chapter of the Gita by saying: “Why should I narrate to you all My glories? By a little part of Me, I pervade this universe, and I transcend everything. Whatever you see, all these glories, are only a little fraction of My Being. I’m beyond this! The mind and the intellect cannot comprehend this!”

After having heard the description of the Vibhuti Yoga in the 10th chapter, Arjuna says: “My delusion is gone. I have got the knowledge now. But what You have made me understand by the description of Your glorious manifestations or Vibhutis, is it possible that I may actually behold them?” That is the reason for the vision of the Cosmic Form. Bhagavan makes the impossible possible! That is one of His Powers! “*Kartum, akartum, anyatha-kartum!*” Bhagavan can do this wise or otherwise, or not do anything. Through His Yoga Maya He brings about the Cosmic Vision to Arjuna and imparts to him the secret of living in this world, yet being in a state of constant inner communion with God. He has been admonishing him in the previous chapters in various ways:

Maam anusmara yuddhya cha (At all times remember Me and fight!) BG VIII/7

Yogasthah kuru karmani (Steadfast in Yoga, perform actions;) BG II/48

Ananyashchintayanto-maam, ye janaa paryupaasate

(For those who worship Me alone, thinking of no other, for those ever united...) BG IX/22

How to have ‘Ananya-Chintan’, He demonstrates through the Yoga of the Universal Form. It is the subtle, hidden truth of the Upanishads that the Lord in His glorious vision of the Cosmic Form gives to Arjuna in a forceful manner.

Verily, the Truth expounded in all the 17 chapters is revealed in a grand and glorious vision, and each detail of the vision brings out the truth of the Upanishads: “There is only One, and That Alone appears”. When you see this Oneness, when you see the unity of existence in one Supreme Being, you go beyond grief. The Yoga of the 11th chapter is therefore the ‘Ananya Yoga’, the constant awareness that One Being Alone exists. And no matter what the eye sees, it is that Being; no matter what we hear, it is That Being; no matter what we touch, we touch the feet of the Lord.

I was always wondering why in the description of the Viratsvarupa it is said, ‘divya-gandhanu-lepanam’ (anointed with divine unguents) which means divine fragrance or sandal paste. Then it dawned on me that He is identifying Himself with everything the senses can perceive and experience in this world. Whatever you smell, it is nothing but His fragrance! He alone is there as the sense of touch, and whatever you taste, He Alone is! He is the taster, He is the food; He is also the power that consumes the food:

*Aham vaishvanaro bhutva
Praaninaam deham aashritah
Praana Apaana samaayuktah
Pachamyannam chaturvidham BG XV/14*

Once you realise that He is present in you as the gastric fire, then you understand the sanctity of eating, which supports life. It is a Yajna.

*Brahmaarpanam Brahma havir
Brahmaagnau Brahmana hutam
Brahmaiva tena gantavyam
Brahma-karma-samaadhina BG IV/24*

Every morsel of food that you put into your mouth and swallow is an Ahuti offered to Vaishvanara Deva—Bhagavan Himself. Thus everything is sacred, all activities are directly connected with God and are pervaded by His Presence; He Himself is the fire, He Himself is the offering, He Himself is the instrument, He Himself is the One who is offering—there is nothing but He and He Alone, ‘Ananya’!

What a great revelation! What a great comfort! One becomes fearless! Wherever I am, I am never alone; I am with the Supreme Lord, the omnipotent Lord! One also becomes incapable of hating anything in this world. How can I hate anything? Even that which is revolting and outrageous, yet if I think for a while, it is His play, His Great Play. I should not hate anything, I cannot hate anything. Upon the relative plane, something may be atrocious, something may be wonderful; something may be good, something may be bad. But if I ponder deeply, I find that there is nothing to love and nothing to hate; after all it is His Grand Play. He is all the actors; He is the entire drama of life, He is the stage—He is everything! I only have to be an onlooker and profit by my ability to look, by seeing Him in all these things. Then comes a settled conviction that

there is nothing but God and God alone—‘Sukha mein, dukha mein’. Joy and sorrow is He! And yet He is supremely beyond both, so let me raise my consciousness to that Beyond, and then I shall be one both in joy and in sorrow.

The problem of the human individual is the distraction of the things around us. They always draw our attention. They make us forget whatever we want to remember. So we want to keep a diary, we want to have a watch for our appointment or telephone numbers—for everything we wish to be reminded. And therefore forgetfulness of God is characteristic of the unawakened human mind, because it is so much absorbed by the world-appearance that it has a big problem to think about God, remember God and being in constant communion with God!

Again and again the Lord says: “Be united with Me, and then carry on your work. In the midst of the world you should not lose your connection with Me.” But Arjuna is not able to see how this can be done! In the 10th Chapter, the Lord tries to tell him that this is possible, “because I have become everything, I am the Ashtavasus, I am the Adityas, I am the Rudras, I am the Marut, I am Intelligence, I am Knowledge—I am everything. I am perception as well as non-perception; I am fear as well as the absence of fear; I am freedom from delusion—I am everything. I am all the faculties that make up your personality. What more can I say? I am

everything that exists. Whatever you see, I am the beginning, the middle and the end of all things.” And Arjuna is able to understand through his intelligence. And, by giving the vision of the Cosmic Form, the Supreme Being tells His devotee, how he can be in a constant state of God remembrance even while engaged in intense activity, for “even the activity is being done by Me. You are able to act because I am the power, I am the strength, and I am the energy by which you engage in action. I am the action also.”

Therefore, the Sadhakas of the world have been given a golden key to live in the world and simultaneously live with the Supreme Being. The dichotomy between Prapancha and Paramatma is removed, eradicated—once and for all. There is no duality—That alone exists!

This great fact is worth to deeply ponder; for we are so much conditioned by the concept that the Supreme Being is only made up of all that is very comforting, very nice, very snug and comfortable to us. He is the eternal Santa Claus sitting high up, and we have only to ask Him, and He will come mysteriously in the night when we are sleeping and fill our big stocking! Not that this concept is wrong, but it's only partial, it's about one tenth! He is the Santa Claus. He gives everything that is asked for—it is true! But He is also the one Who takes away when the time comes, when He thinks that it is the proper thing to do! He is the Sarvatantra, Svatana. Therefore,

He does all in His own independent way, which is correct, accurate and right. For, He is not only all powerful, but He is the all-knowing, the omniscient. We see partially—He sees the Whole. He knows what is required where and when and in what manner! This is His Omniscience.

At the same time, devotees, Bhaktas have seen in Him Infinite Love; He is an ocean of Love! He is an ocean of compassion. He is Dayanidhi! He is Karuna Sagara! He is Kripa Sindhu! And this is an actual experience.

The Puranas are replete with telling of this great love, compassion and mercy, the tender care of the Lord! The vision of the Cosmic Form was a fact for Prahlada! He knew that there is Narayana only! He lived in this Bhava, he lived in this firm faith that there is nothing except Narayana. And a human individual is what his faith is! Therefore, in whatever way Prahlada was treated by Hiranyakashyapa in his great wrath, in all those conditions and situations, Prahlada had one unitary experience—he experienced only Narayana! In poison, in fire, in the waters of the ocean, in the rocks upon which he was hurled from the mountaintop, Prahlada experienced only Narayana, because he was rooted in the firm knowledge and Bhava, in the vision of the Vishvarupa; he was in a state of Ananya Yoga.

In the last decade of the second millennium, the state of the world is something that assails the unprepared human psyche with an agitation

unprecedented in human history. The present global human society is in a sad state. Perhaps in no other era prior to the splitting of the atom, prior to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, has society been so tormented as today—anxiety and fear grips the entire global society. So much of nuclear experiments have been carried out, that already the flora of this fair earth is contaminated by nuclear radiation. Cows eat the grass; nuclear radiation gets into the cows; we drink the milk of the cow; our cells become polluted with nuclear radiation, and unknown, strange diseases are assailing mankind all over the earth. But we have created the radiation, we have polluted the fair earth with toxic effects of nuclear explosion! Ultimately we all have to fall down to the earth and are absorbed in the soil, and whatever man is, he is the producer of the soil. We eat the product of the earth, and when it is thus contaminated ... Doctors are puzzled, this is not in 'Materia Medica', this is not in medical books; they are not able to say what it is. And in this state of a tormented human psyche countless diseases spring from the mental state in individuals as well as in society. There are more diseases produced by the mind than having their origin in the body—Adhyatma-Tapa. Painful conditions of which man suffers are created by fear, anxiety, grief, tension, etc.

This is the state of mankind ever since the nuclear explosion, ever since the era of the Second

World War. From that time onwards, violence has never abated. Violence has become a way of life, and naturally it is affecting not only new-born generations who are to be the world of the future, but unborn generations! They go into the psyche of the human being, they go deeper. The very field in which generations have to be created is thus polluted by these negative inner conditions, and all people are thus in a state of fear and anxiety, except those who receive the vision of the Cosmic Form!

They say, “Thy Will be done! I am at rest, knowing that this entire universe is in Your hands! And becoming upset and fearful is not going to help. Let me connect myself with You! And if at all there is anything that I can do, I shall do by praying to You and engaging in right action.”

Maam anusmara yuddhya cha—(Remember Me and fight) BG VIII/7

Yuddhyasva vigatajvarah—(Free from mental fever, do thou fight) BG III/30

Yogastha kuru karmaani!—(Steadfast in Yoga perform actions) BG II/48

Ananyashchinta...—(Thinking only of Me).... BG IX/22

When Lord Krishna says that, He identifies Himself with this transcendental identity: “I am the Father, I am the Supreme progenitor of infinite universes.”

The world today needs the wisdom teachings of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita. Living in these conditions, we should be rooted in the divine, constantly we should read the Yoga of the Vishvarupa Darshana. In the first 14 verses the description is being revealed to us. Then beholding it, trembling before it, overcome with awe at this majestic form, Arjuna begins to address Him, and towards the end he bursts out into prayer: “Thou art the great originator of all things! I bow to you! Again and again I bow to you, from the front, from the right, from the left; and I see all celestials also bowing before You with great tribulation, with great awe, even so, I bow before you, O thou majestic Universal Form!”

With the 11th chapter of the Srimad Bhagavad-Gita, the Lord has stretched out both His hands: “Come! I place Myself in your hands. I grasp you. You shall not fear!” Jesus also said: “O come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden. I shall give you rest, I shall give you My peace, I shall carry your burden.” Even so, the Lord stretches out both His hands in the 11th chapter: “Behold O Arjuna!”—See, Arjuna represents you and me and all of us. He is the eternal ‘Nara’ (Man). And it is Narayana calling to Nara and saying, “Come! I am not remote! I am here, immediate, closer to you than you yourself! Come! Put your hands into Mine, and you shall have nothing to fear!”

And all negative conditions that bring about a great deal of Vikshepa in our psyche will disappear when we will begin to keep the secret of this universe before us - that we are only dealing with the Divine. We should not hate, we should have understanding and we should be considerate, because He Alone sports and appears in all these forms, and therefore we cannot have resentment, jealousy or hatred. We should think—I am not in human society. The Lord has made it clear, once and for all. I am being surrounded by God in His innumerable forms. All forms are Divine to me, all forms are worthy of respect and reverence.

What is the way to worship God, if the worship is to be effective and fruitful? Do you want God to give respect to you? Do you want your grandmother or grandfather to say, "Please, Sir?" Do you expect your grandfather to get up from his seat when you approach him? On the contrary, it is you who will give him respect, you who will give him reverence. And so you are in the presence of God, no matter who seems to confront you, it is God that is confronting you. Then, how can you do anything else but be reverential and not expect reverence from anyone, because there is no 'anyone', there is only Ananya—One, One and One Alone! And therefore, let me get His grace and blessings, but let me offer reverence! Chaitanya Mahaprabhu says:

*'Trinaadapi sunichena, tarorapi sahishnunaa,
Amaaninaa maanadena, kirtaneeya sadaa Hari'*

That man alone is fit to sing the holy name
who is humbler than a blade of grass,
who is more enduring than a tree,
who does not seek honour for himself,
but shows respect to all.

He used the word, 'kirtaneeya sadaa Hari',
but he means, this is how you should adore the
Lord, how you should carry on your Sadhana,
your Abhyasa. For in this Bhava your Abhyasa
becomes energised. You are feeling His presence;
through your Bhava you are creating that
experience for yourself. Reverence for all life
becomes inevitable, and tolerance and forgiveness
come spontaneously, and no repugnance!

You all know the story of the French writer
Alexander Dumas; he had been put into prison
when he was a boy of 10 or 12 years for stealing a
loaf of bread, and then he was released many
years later. He is a young man at that time, the
world is new to him, he is afraid. Not knowing
where to go, he approaches a house of a priest
who gives him food and shelter for the night. And
then early morning when the priest comes to see
whether his guest has taken breakfast, Alexander
is not there! And the servant says, "He has gone,
and he has taken away a golden candlestick from
your private chapel." What is the reaction of this
priest? Absolute understanding! Total love! For he
knows that in that thief the Lord dwells! Later on,

Alexander Dumas is caught by the police, because he is branded already. He is hauled back to the priest, and the police take the candlestick from him. When the police appeared with this trembling man, the priest said to Alexander Dumas: "My good friend! What have you done? I gave both the golden candlesticks to you, and you have taken only one? Come, have this candlestick also!" The priest told the police: "Leave him alone! I have presented him with both the candlesticks—not one." That is the beginning of a new life for this 'criminal'! And then follows a wonderful story of the transformation of this man who becomes a great personality. The priest had the right vision: "All is divine. God dwells in every being. The kingdom of God is within, and He is the Spirit indwelling all things created by Him."

The vision of the Cosmic Form has something very important for an ordinary individual as well as for a seeker. We are all subject to human failures—we have strength, we have weakness; we have our own limitations and drawbacks. We tend to be right and proper and Dharmic when we know that someone is watching us. But that vigilance tends to gradually go away when we are by ourselves.

200 years ago, a great illumined Guru in Gujarat had a band of disciples around him, and now that following has grown into a great brotherhood of monastics called 'Swaminarayan Samstha'. A very strict code of conduct was drawn

up for the Sadhus, and one of the very wise rules is: "Whenever a Sadhu moves out, he has to move with another Sadhu and a Bhagat, a devotee, a non-Sannyasin". The Sadhus never move about single, because one is always observing the other. And what is more, they have to keep their dignity as monastics, because a Bhagat is following. Three people always go together.

"I am never alone! I am always under the benign grace of the Supreme Reality. How can one ever take a step that is unworthy in that grand Divine Presence?" If this awareness is real to you, if you are engaged in the Sadhana of the Vishvarupa Darshana Yoga, the Abhyasa of Ananya Yoga, then you will develop this Bhava, and a firm conviction will take place: "There is no other, in all things the Lord is looking at me. He is beholding me through the insect, through the reptile, through the tree, through the bird, through the bee, through every flower He gazes at me. I am surrounded by His presence, 24 hours, in the Jagriti, Svapna and Sushupti". This is the transforming truth, if it is enshrined in your heart and mind.

This is the practical significance of the Vishvarupa Darshana for us today, morally and ethically. Ultimately we will free ourselves from the fear of death, when we see that the Lord is coming to us in all ways: "He is coming to me as birth, as life, as youth, as middle age, as old age, even as infirmities of old age, and finally He comes

to me saying: ‘Come! Let us go home!’ What is there to fear? Even in the face of death, I behold my Friend calling me back to His eternal abode. So I go with joy.” One becomes established in a state of total surrender and total acceptance, and that brings Peace! And that peace is the prerequisite for Happiness, Love, Oneness, Tolerance, Vishva-Prem.

Thus we have been blessed. Let us recognise this blessing! Let us every day go into the spirit of the 10th and the 11th Chapters of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita—they are interconnected, and let these two chapters be a philosopher’s stone that touches and transforms our life into the pure gold of divine Bhava, divine awareness and illumined living! God bless you all!

*Tvameva mata cha pita tvameva
Tvameva bandhuscha sakha tvameva,
Tvameva vidya dravinam tvameva
Tvameva sarvam mama devadева.*

You are not only my mother, my father, my relative, my friend, knowledge and wealth, but You Truly are my All in all, My God of Gods!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

24th September 2016 marks the auspicious occasion of Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out one hundred booklets comprising illuminating talks of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

To propagate Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's gospel of Divine Life, Worshipful Sri Swamiji Maharaj travelled extensively in India and abroad and showed the path of divine life to countless seekers through his spontaneous and highly inspiring lectures. His lectures, in Sadgurudev's words, are the outpourings of his saintly heart, the revelations of intuitive wisdom.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of his hitherto unpublished lectures in booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary. The present booklet 'The Universal Prayer'—Gurudev's Gift to You' is a compilation of his letter of 1st January 1968 and two inspiring talks at the sacred Samadhi Shrine.

We express our heartfelt gratitude towards Shri Mukund Jere, Mrs. Moo Briddell and the inmates of the Headquarters Ashram for their loving service in transcribing, editing and compiling these talks.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—*The Divine Life Society*

(Swami Chidananda's Letter of 1st January 1968)

Radiant Immortal Atman!

Blessed Beloved Divinity!

Adorations and homage unto the supreme Universal Being! Salutations to you in the holy name of our worshipful Guru Sri Swami Sivananda. At the dawn of the New Year, I send you through this letter my sincere greetings and good wishes for long life, health, happiness, prosperity and highest spiritual blessedness. May God shower upon you His divine grace and fill all your days with joy, peace, plenty and spiritual beauty. May all obstacles be overcome, may all difficulties depart, may all problems be solved and may discord give place to harmony. May the music of Divine Life fill your life with melody and sweetness.

Upon this solemn and auspicious moment of the conclusion of the old year and the commencement of the New Year, I wish to proclaim to you briefly Gurudev's Message of Divine Life. Resolve to live a life of selflessness and service unto all beings. Worship God with

devotion and develop divine love. Meditate upon the Supreme Being each day without fail. Ever aspire to realise the eternal Reality (God) through right enquiry, discrimination, metaphysical reflection and spiritual contemplation. Strive to lead a pure life of noble good conduct and holiness in thought, word and deed. Be a doer of good action. Develop the vision of the One in the spirit of Unity. Practise the presence of the divine and dedicate all the actions to the divine. Life is meant to manifest the highest divine nature that is inherent within you. Utilise life towards this sublime end here and now. Start living the Divine Life today. Waste not time. Postpone not. Do not hesitate. Do not worry. Be bold and cheerful. You will have a glorious future. Strive with fullest hope. You are bound to succeed. You will succeed, I assure you, my beloved friend! God speed you upon this bright path to divine perfection and eternal blessedness.

Today at the threshold of the New Year, I call upon all and appeal to and urge you to exert ceaselessly and do your best to give a positive touch and constructive turn to the atmosphere and mood of negativity, vandalism and arrogance that appear to be prevailing on all sides. Live and work to uphold the name and honour of your Motherland, of your culture. Work for love and unity. Do everything you can to save the integrity

of your country and its worthy way of life. By every means strive to safeguard the ideals and values you have inherited from the life and labour of numerous noble dedicated sons and daughters of our country.

The two great needs of humanity as a whole are being neglected everywhere, and this is resulting in gloom and confusion. These vital needs are to live with idealism and to adhere to virtue. Social ills, economical ills and political ills, all result out of the degradation of the human nature and character through loss of faith in idealism and the development of selfishness. Consequently virtue has become rare and unhappiness and confusion are the direct results. The law of life cannot be ignored and broken, nor its consequences escaped. The Law is that virtue and goodness ultimately lead to welfare and happiness. Misery and misfortune are the inevitable results of evil ways of living. This is a fact. And when will man be wise and realise this? There is great urgency to do so now. Do all that you can to practise and uphold these two great principles, idealism in life and adherence to virtue. Man must be guided by them; otherwise there is no way out of conflict, calamity and suffering. Why court sorrow and needlessly invite sufferings upon yourself when you behold the gateway that leads to joy and blessedness, to

peace and stability? I ceaselessly pray that wisdom may prevail and mankind will invite joy and well-being through the Good Life. Blessed Atman, join me in my prayers. Let us pray ceaselessly for universal welfare, prosperity and happiness.

Let me remind you of worshipful Gurudev's admonition. He said, "Watch and pray. Pray and work. Work and wait". This then must you do to achieve any worthwhile goal before this life passes and you have to quit this stage of the eternal drama of life. Be watchful. Be prayerful. Be active and be patient. Activity without prayer will lead you to great bondage. Prayer without watchfulness will be assailed by temptations too strong to overcome. Work without patience will lead to frustration and pessimism. Prayer when not backed up by corresponding work to express itself runs the risk of evaporating into unrealistic sentimentalism. Be watchful. Pray and diligently labour to make the prayer come true. Work and patiently wait upon the will of God. For: to work is your duty and is the part that you have to play. The bringing about the result of work you should leave in the hands of God.

In the meanwhile chill winter has closed upon these northern parts. Yet despite the cold there are always some earnest souls braving the winter

and seeking the peace and spiritual inspiration of this abode of Gurudev Sivananda at the bank of the Ganga. The special Forest Satsanga at the Dattatreya Temple on the 20th December on holy Dattatreya Jayanti day was reminiscent of the holy function during Sri Gurudev's time. The Forest resounded with the Kirtan of the Lord's Name and the devotees partook of the Prasad squatting under the trees upon the bare earth in the jungle. Holy Christmas was solemn and inspiring and actively assisted by a number of seekers from abroad who happened to be present on that Great Day. The midnight worship of the great Yogi of Nazareth, the divine incarnation Jesus, was celebrated with devotion as well as gaiety and joy. It gave the seekers from foreign lands a touch of homely spirit of their holiest and most important festival. They were made to feel that this too was their home and that they were truly in the midst of their family – their spiritual family. The 24th Pratishtha Anniversary of Lord Sri Viswanath was celebrated at the Sri Viswanath Mandir on the 31st of December. That night the Satsanga went beyond midnight and concluded with the solemn midnight meditation in the last portion of the departing year and carried into the first quarter of the New Year. All the devotees arising from the meditation took

leave of one another after exchanging New Year Greetings.

Beloved friends, a New Year lies before you. Look forward and move into this period ahead with faith and hope and in charity. The past has passed. Forgive and forget your erring friends or offenders. Enter into a new life of divine compassion, goodness and magnanimity. Now, this day, take God into your home and make Him a member of your family. Learn to live with God, in God, for God. Establish Him in your heart. Express Him through your life. Let your home radiate with the living presence of the divine. May the entire family grow into a divine household. Strive to achieve this and this will be your greatest contribution to contemporary society as well as to Bharatavarsha, your Mother Country. This would constitute the really wise, sane and rational process of bringing about a true Welfare State.

The goodness of man is the key to the happiness of mankind. Individual character and conduct is the root of social and national welfare. Character is the greatest wealth. Sadachara is divine. In character lies the secret of successful planning and of enduring attainments. Our culture stands for character. I commend to you the UNIVERSAL PRAYER by Sri Gurudev as the unfailing formula for happiness, prosperity and

success. Peace and progress will result from this great prayer. The sublime essence of all the scriptures and the teachings of all the saints and men of wisdom are contained in this wonderful prayer. Make it your life-breath. Beloved Friend, try earnestly to live this prayer. During this year propagate this prayer far and wide. It is of priceless worth. Each line of it is more worth than its weight in gold! I request all of you to read this, to try to get the prayer printed (in any size, big or small, and on any paper, fine or coarse) and distribute it widely and freely. Print it on one side only so that people can paste it on a board or frame it. Translate it into your vernacular language. Get it published in monthly or weekly magazines or daily papers. Introduce it in schools, clubs and groups. It is universal. It belongs to the whole world. It is above religion. Let this world-saving prayer reach every home. Make this prayer circulate throughout the universe. Teach it to your children. Recite it daily at dawn and eventide.

MAKE THIS YEAR A PRAYER YEAR!

Great good will come from it. It will bless your home. It will take you towards divine perfection. It shows the path of Divine Life. May God bless you. May this New Year be a glorious year for you. You have my best wishes for long life, health, happiness, prosperity and success. I send you my love, regards and salutations in the name of God

and in the name of Gurudev Sri Swami Sivananda, the light of our life. You are divine. Therefore live divinely. Abide in God and walk in Light.

Yours in Sri Gurudev,

Worshipful homage to the eternal, transcendental Reality, the Parabrahman of the Upanishads, That which always was, is and ever shall be, unchanging and all-pervading, immanent in all things, beginningless and endless. To That our worshipful homage. May divine grace from that source of infinite grace be upon us all.

Loving adorations to revered and beloved Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji in whose spiritual presence we are all gathered here. And who taught us how to pray, even as nearly 2000 years ago the divine Master Jesus taught His followers how to pray.

He lifted up His eyes towards Heaven and said, “Our Father”, thereby declaring the nearness of that great Reality and us human beings on earth. The closest relationship in the human world is that of the child to the parents. There cannot be anything more protecting, more caring and more loving than the parents’ relationship with their offspring, looking after it, protecting it unceasingly, supplying it with every need and responding to every call. Day and night the mother takes care of the child. If need be, she

foregoes her sleep and walks about carrying the child in her arms. With a strange sixth sense which only the mother can invoke from within her, she seems to understand what the crying indicates, what the child needs, whether it is hungry or feeling some discomfort or pain somewhere. It cannot express it, but the mother intuitively is able to grasp.

Even so is the caring of the Supreme Being towards humanity. And it also brings out how close our relationship is. If we are God's offspring, Godliness is our spontaneous, effortless real nature. That which is God is within us. That which is of God is really our true being. Forgetfulness of this knowledge, alienation from this true relationship has led us to our present state. There is no need for me to comment upon it. You know what the state of humanity in the world of today is, at the close of the last year of the last decade of the 20th century. You know. You keep in touch with current affairs, so you know it.

How to reverse this situation, how to put an end to this alienation, how to restore that lost closeness to God and grow in God-nature, God-awareness? How to do all this is the message of Holy Master Gurudev to modern humanity, to each and every one of us here. And though he has put this message in his almost 300 books and

many gramophone records, though he has done all this, he has also presented the message in a concise, compact form. He composed His Universal Prayer. It contains everything.

The words of the opening line are very significant, most significant. They immediately tell us what God is for us and what we are to God. God is adorable. We should adore Him, worship Him, love and revere Him. And God is full of love for us and ever forgiving, ever forgiving, full of mercy. ‘Adorable Lord of mercy and love!’ That is important to us.

We are His children, therefore He loves us. We are beloved of Him. And also He is ever merciful towards us. Because of our closeness, our relation to Him as His children, He is willing to forgive and forget, ever keeps on giving us a fresh chance.

And then what follows is most significant, most important; what follows this first line is a pattern of living to take us near to God. To take us near to God, Gurudev says what we should do, what we should not do, how we should live; so that we begin to move and keep moving towards Him right up until the ultimate moment when we realise Him, enter into Him and we abide in Him forever and ever. The entire method is spelt-out from the second line of the prayer until the last line of the prayer. If you look at it in this way, you

will see that it may well contain the essence of all the 300 books, and by following it you can attain God. That is its purpose. The Universal Prayer is Holy Master Swami Sivanandaji's message to mankind in a nutshell. May it be your guide, the light of your life and the light on the path to God.

Adorable Lord of mercy and love! Let us abide in Thee for ever and ever!

May the grace of the Supreme and the benedictions of Holy Master enable us to attain this supreme consummation in this very life and make us forever blessed. God bless you all.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Life is the journey to the immortal. Life is itself a progress towards the perennial experience. Life is itself a way as well as the movement that takes you every day to the fulfilment that is your birthright. This is the message from him whom we worship and call Gurudev. He stood for this path. He has embodied and put this entire path in his wonderful “Universal Prayer”. That prayer contains the essence of holy, lofty life, the spiritual life, the divine life, the life unto perfection, the life of awakening and enfoldment, the life of rejecting the undivine and going unto the Divine and ultimately abiding for ever in the Divine. Upon this wonderful day let all of you,—fortunate and blessed ones who have either come into direct contact with him, who have seen him face to face or those into whose life he has appeared as light through his radiant teachings, as the wakening touch of his spiritual message,—reflect and contemplate upon this universal prayer. May this prayer become to you agospel in a nutshell! May this prayer be to you in days that are ahead your constant companion and guide, the yardstick to measure up yourself in all your thoughts and feelings that you harbour in

your heart, and the words and deeds that you express and manifest in an active way in your life!! May this be the measuring rod, the yardstick, the touchstone, that standard and criterion by which you make an impartial estimate of yourself!!! Accept this today from Satgurudev as the touchstone upon which to test your life and activities.

Contemplate upon this prayer and make it your constant companion. In this prayer you have the spirit of Gurudev Sivananda. In this prayer you have the essence of divine life. In this prayer you have Yoga and Vedanta. In this prayer verily you have both his benedictions as well as his message to you. The essence of all Dharma is to recognise the immanence or the presence of the divine in all beings. This fact, this recognition, this awareness, this inner knowledge that the divine indwells in all beings, will guide your footsteps along the path of righteousness, guide your footsteps along the path of holy, it will even take you along the shining radiant path that invests you with the divine virtues and transforms your nature into godliness and brings down to you God's grace.

Every aspect of Yoga or Vedanta—the beginning, the middle and the end, the foundation, progress and the culmination—is in

that wonderful little prayer. That Universal Prayer gives, in Gurudev's inimitable way, the gospel and doctrine of Divine Life. You are all assembled here to offer your prayers to him and to express your eternal gratitude to this Great Soul, the Guru of universal life, Guru of simple living, Guru of kindness and compassion, Guru intent upon your welfare, fulfilling the great description of the Shrimad Bhagavad Gita *Sarvabhutahite ratah*—(one intent upon the welfare of all beings). While you worship him, renew your spiritual relationship with him and accept from him this prayer, the Universal Prayer!

THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER

Let us behold Thee in all these names and forms.
Let us serve Thee in all these names and forms.
Let us ever remember Thee.
Let us ever sing Thy glories.
Let Thy Name be ever on our lips.
Let us abide in Thee for ever and ever.

FOREWORD

24th September 2016 marks the auspicious occasion of Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out one hundred booklets comprising illuminating talks of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

To propagate Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's gospel of Divine Life, Worshipful Sri Swamiji Maharaj travelled extensively in India and abroad and showed the path of divine life to countless seekers through his spontaneous and highly inspiring lectures. His lectures, in Sadgurudev's words, are the outpourings of his saintly heart, the revelations of intuitive wisdom.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of his hitherto unpublished lectures in booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary. The present booklet '**Thou Art That**' is a compilation of two Spiritual Talks given at the Kay spiritual center, American University, Washington D.C. on 8th July, 1975 and a teaching given on Sunday 14th August, 1977 in Montreal, Canada.

We express our heartfelt gratitude towards Sita Frankel, Marria Davies, Mary Dean, Carol Dyall, Liliyas Folan, Ramapriya, McNerney, Mark Weber, Bill and Melissa

Schnirring and the inmates of the Headquarters Ashram for their loving service in making this printing possible.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—The Divine Life Society

*(Talk given at the Kay spiritual center, American University,
Washington D.C. on 8th July, 1975)*

Radiant divinities! Immortal soul! May the divine grace of the Lord, benedictions of all men of God, men of spirit, ancient as well as modern, of the Orient as well as the Occident, may their benedictions be upon you.

May God grant you long life, good health, prosperity, success in your undertakings, and also may He graciously grant you the immense inner treasure, the riches of the spirit, firm faith in the Divine Reality and a great devotion to the Divine spirit, Universal Being. And too, may He grant you an earnest aspiration to attain Him, to know Him, to experience the reality, so that your life may progress not only in secular way, in earthly prosperity and well being, but it may also acquire an upward, vertical, spiritual dimension where day by day, by the Grace of God and your own earnest aspiration and efforts, you may move on, ascent towards Divine Consciousness and succeed in attaining the experience of the peace of God, the peace that passeth understanding and perfect Joy of the Spirit, illumination and divine wisdom, by which your life is crowned, and enduring attainment, an ever lasting beatitude and perfection.

That is the humble prayer of this servant of the master, Swami Sivananda, on behalf of each and every one of you

assembled here in the name of Lord, in the spirit of oneness and brotherhood. In kinship, I am here before you to offer my spiritual services by bringing to you a little message and sharing with you a few ideas about life on earth, your mission here.

What is the meaning of your being here in this temporarily embodied condition? If life is to result towards any attainment we have to live it meaningfully. We must be aware what purpose, what deeper significance life holds for us, other than the external biological processes of life. What is the meaning of life? If you asked a medical man or biologist: clinically, a man is said to be alive if his heart is functioning, if he's respiring and if his blood is pulsating through his body. So is there circulation, respiration, and the other metabolic processes going on in the body, they declare a person to be alive. And if these processes have come to an end, they say: "He's dead". Life according to them is equated to the metabolic processes, the biological function of the various parts of the inner mechanism of the body, heart, lungs...is that life? Evidently that falls far short of your concept of life. That's merely existence, a biological existence.

You are more than that. You think, feel, you are an intelligent being, a rational being. So you may say: "It is sentiment, emotion, fulfillment of desires and enjoying things around you, sensations." You would add all these to your definition of life. "We are more than plant, more than insect or animal. We are human. We must enjoy life in a higher way." This would be the common man's concept of life. Sense experience, desire, fulfilment and towards this man works, acquires the things that are necessary to supply

pleasant sensations and enable him to fulfill the desires of inner psychological being.

But, illumined souls with a greater vision, a deeper vision of you, have seen even beyond the psychological self of man. They declared that he was not only more than breathing, living, metabolic process, but he was even more than the psychological function and activities of feeling, sentiment, emotion, thought, reason, memory, imagination, willing, resolving, determining and purposeful fulfillment of desires of the psychological personality. More than this there is something in man, something higher, something beyond, which in their vision they saw to be superior. For this reason: that the biological, physical being is temporary. It has a beginning and an end. It is subject to decay and ultimate dissolution.

Even so, psychological man has a beginning and an end. It's unstable, unreliable, it's ever-changing. Your thoughts can change. Your opinions can change. Your views and attitudes can change. You may feel towards a person in a particular way at a certain moment, at a certain period. After maybe a couple of years, your feeling might completely alter. You're a totally different person! Your relationship to that person completely alters. It's no longer what it was two years back. So it's changeable. It's not stable, not reliable. There is no uniformity in it. There's no continuity in it. It's subject to constant alteration. And it's all personal experience of each and every one of you.

They saw beyond this changeable psychological level of human personality, something that was ever-stable, permanent, enduring, upon which you can count, you can rely, you can be absolutely sure and certain that depth they

saw the reality of man. He is an Eternal Spirit enfolded or involved in thought and intellectual processes, and temporarily residing in a gross physical receptacle, a body, a cage of flesh and bones, the mind and intellect being his media to express the spirit upon the secular plane, earth plane.

It is this vision, illumined seers, men of God, masters of wisdom, had of man that brought forth the phenomenon of the life spiritual. They declared to man: "Oh man! You are a traveler on this earth plane. You do not belong here in the ultimate analysis. You come from a realm of eternal sunshine. You come from a realm of everlasting life. In you innermost depth you are part of that everlasting substance, the Eternal Essence, the principle that is without beginning, without end. You have no birth, you have no death. You have no change or decay or destruction. For you are a spiritual entity. You have come into this earth plane and find yourself in a temporary state of embodiment. And your mission in life is to make use of the faculties, physical, mental and intellectual with which you are endowed. Utilize them in a right and purposeful way to bring about an awakening of the spiritual awareness, a consciousness of your perfect and eternal being. 'I am in reality that which has no birth and no death, no beginning and no end. I am in reality that which decays not. There is no disease nor old age, nor change nor decay. I am in reality that which is deathless, that which is permanent, everlasting ever-pure, shining with wisdom consciousness - the Light of Lights. I am Peace. I am Bliss. I am wisdom. I am complete and whole. I lack nothing. Therefore, no desires have I, no cravings, for I am complete.'"

It is to rise into this experience of self-awareness which by itself liberates you from all the bondage you have at present come into, to this finite existence, liberates you from all limitations, liberates you from the bonds of desire, liberates you from the shackles of sense cravings and urges, and restores you once again to your native state, pristine state of a totally free consciousness, fearlessness, freedom and an awareness of wholeness. ‘I lack nothing. I am complete in myself. I rejoice in myself. I am sufficient in myself. I am Joy. I am Bliss. I am Peace. This is Self-realization or an experience of Self-awareness of your own higher being, your eternal inalienable spiritual nature, which is perfect.

That is the great mission in life of every individual soul that has acquired this human status. Beings in a lesser level of consciousness, an animal, plant, they have not this ability for they have not this awakened reasoning and thinking power. Man alone can question: “Who am I? Why am I here? From whence am I here? And what am I here for?” this ability to question – Whence? Whither? Wherefore? Why? This is unique to that soul in the human status only, not to any other form of life. And that human being justifies his human status who puts these deep question to himself.

This faculty for intellect has as its highest function this inner philosophical inquiry. “What is life? What is the relationship between me and this external universe?” inquire into the real nature of this life on earth. Inquire into the real nature of things that surround us, so that we may know what the real value is, if there’s any. Not just be attracted by them blindly, drawn towards them, enslaved by them, held in thraldom by the external glitter and attraction of passing

things. But to question, use reason, which has made you man, the thinking being, the rational animal.

If reason is not put to this use of inner analysis and philosophical inquiry, then man does not justify his human status. Though he has acquired the form of man, a vertical being with two legs, a biped, yet he fails to be man in fact.

Make use of your faculty of inner reason and intellect to try to unravel the mystery of creation, mystery of this life, mystery of your own Self, because a great, great many of us go through life in blindness and ignorance. We have managed to acquire through our mind, intellect, observation about things around us, about this external world of phenomena, of processes that we find going on in nature, in plants, in animals, in fish, in fowl, in minerals, in chemical elements. But, in the midst of this vast store of information which the ordinary education gives through books, through tapes, through lecture classes, through our own observation, there persists a nucleus of darkness, a nucleus of essential ignorance to our own nature.

Man is not aware of who he is in reality, why he is here, what is his true Inner Reality. He goes, surrounded by this plethora of apparent knowledge but lacking in essential wisdom, in spiritual darkness, self-forgetfulness, non awareness of one's own true being. And if life were to pass in this same condition and he is to exit out of life in that state of spiritual darkness, Alas! The highest purpose of life, the supreme purpose for which he has come to fulfil, which God has endowed him with, this wonderful faculty of feeling thinking and reasoning, it would be unattained. He would go still a bound creature, in ignorance, in darkness, in a state of spiritual slumber.

Those who have gone before us have plunged into this inner research, investigating the answer to these questions and they have done a great deal of work for you and me, so that we don't have to start from scratch, we don't have to do all the spade work. They have given us the fruit of their labours and in this sense, modern man, man in this twentieth century, is one of the most fortunate generations in human history. For in this, on the eve of the fourth quarter of the twentieth century, we stand, inheritors of a wonderful heritage of spiritual wisdom.

During recent generation, two or three centuries past, the world has produced such great, phenomenal personalities endowed with God-realization, divine experience, spiritual wisdom and they have left us, therefore, as one of the most fortunate and richest generations that has ever filtered out through human history. For we are the direct heirs, we are rich in this heritage of this common, universal wealth that past generations have evolved and left for us.

If man were not to avail himself of this wonderful treasure of divine wisdom, we cannot blame the past generations. We have to squarely lay the blame upon ourselves. God gave us everything and yet we have not the wisdom to utilize it and attain the highest state.

Some home truths that these inquiries have given to us – The first is, that no matter how uncertain life on earth may be, especially in this twentieth century in this nuclear space age, (we don't seem to know what's there waiting for us tomorrow), there is one absolute certainty about which there is no argument, there is no debate, there is no difference of opinion, there cannot be two views. That absolute certainty is that one day we all have to go! One day we have to leave this

earth plane. We are not going to be here continuously, because life is short, time is fleeting, body is perishing. It had a beginning in time and it has an end in time. Well, you may say: "You are just uttering a truism. Everyone knows that. So what?" Yes, everyone knows it, but no one does anything about it.

If you are always living in this awareness of this certainty of 'one day I have to go,' would you ever neglect to do what's to be done? Would you ever postpone, procrastinate, just ignore? Would you ever neglect to do what you have to do?—Your duties, secular and more than that, spiritual? Would you postpone working to fulfil the most important mission in life to know yourself? To wake and unfold the spiritual awareness without which life would be empty, barren of content, only be a surface life of sensation and a little bit of chaotic restless thought and desire, leaving you in a whirl, unsatisfied, discontent without a sense of fulfillment.

How many of us are really making use of this awareness? That 'one day I must go,' therefore I must be up and doing, not only upon the outer path of human relationship and earthly duties, but also upon the inner path of my own spiritual mission, my highest unfoldment, the Supreme good, knowing which everything becomes known, attaining which all these are added unto you. How many of us are earnest? In how many of us, this awareness of inevitable—call it death—having to journey forth from here, is goading us to be dynamic in our spiritual life? We know, but we do nothing about it.

Therefore, the great masters of wisdom, Saints and Sages, remind us constantly: "Oh man! With every sunrise and every sunset one day of your life is lost! By so much you

span of life has become shortened, so much less time you have to do whatever you have to do. Therefore, arise! Awake! Do not postpone. Be up and doing. Be active upon the spiritual life.”

The second great truth is that you are a citizen of two worlds simultaneously. When you took birth and came into this world as an embodied being, the very fact of your having acquired this physical body, brought you into a relational pattern with a number of persons. Someone was father, someone was brother, someone was mother, someone sister, someone uncle, someone grandfather, grandmother—relationship with things, people. And all of life is an expansion of this relationship. But then you should not forget. It is the body that is related to people around you in this physical world. But to whom are you related? Whence did you come? Are you not related to some source, some invisible origin, root of your being, from which has come forth your spiritual reality?

You, in the innermost depth of your being, are the imperishable dweller in this perishable body, this ever-pure and ever-peaceful Reality behind this impure and restless mind. You are the infinite, changeless, spiritual Reality beyond the perishable, the finite and the changeful body, mind and intellect. You are the imperishable, ever-pure, ever-peaceful, limitless spiritual Essence.

In this depth and dimension of your being you are not of this phenomenon. You are uncreated. You are not a created phenomenon. You are not a process. You are complete in yourself. And in the level of life, in that plane of consciousness, you are not an earth creature. You belong to a spiritual realm which is your true abode, your everlasting

dwelling place, where there is only Existence, Consciousness and Bliss absolute. Where there is Sat, Chit and Ananda, Being, consciousness and Bliss. That is peace. That is Perfection. That is Wholeness. You are related even while this body dwells on this earth plane, even while the body functions in this created world of processes and phenomena, yet at the same time you live, move and have your being in the Divine. Only, you have lost your awareness.

Here and now you dwell in the Universal Spirit! You live in that Divine Essence which pervades all existence, which is within, without, envelops you, pervades the whole earth and interpenetrates your innermost being.

You can escape from everything, but you cannot escape from the Spirit. You cannot escape from the Reality. For it is here. That's the Truth! Become aware that I, 'I dwell in God, I breathe God, I breathe the Divine, I live in the divine, I move in the Divine Principle within me. The awareness of Being.'

Therefore, simultaneously, you are also a citizen of that spiritual realm, the Divine Kingdom, the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Heaven. Right now at this moment! It is not something to be attained at a distance in time, some remote future. And the awakening into awareness of this fact is the second great truth one has to cherish in one's mind.

Great masters of wisdom have revealed to us the science of relating ourselves in the most ideal way to both these universes so that our life may a thing of beauty. Life may be an ever progressive process which ends in the dazzling light of Christ-consciousness, the dazzling light of Self-Realization. Call it Nirvana, call it Satori, call it Liberation, call it Brahmajnana, wisdom, Illumination. It is a great thing which leaves no regrets, brings supreme satisfaction and fulfils your

life, where your life becomes totally successful; you fulfill the purpose of your very being.

They gave two ideals to develop your relationship between these two universes, on the threshold of which, in the middle of which each individual human soul stands. There, the vast mysterious, untapped, spiritual realm, which is your true realm, your true of being, and here, the temporary realm of material objects and beings, through which you but pass for a while and bid adieu. Two great ideals — how can you relate yourself so that this relationship may not become an obstacle in fulfilling that relationship? It may not stand in the way.

They said: "Relate yourself as a giver. Seek through every thought, word and deed to see in what way you can bring something to enrich life while you pass through it. Never think in terms of 'what can I get? What can I acquire? What can I hold and keep and accumulate?' but go like a master. 'God has given me this wonderful opportunity, this golden chance while I move through life; in what way can I enrich life around me? In what way can I serve others? In what way can I help a fellow human being? In what way can I benefit those around me? In what way can I beautify, enrich it?' try to make people happy. Go in terms rising above self, thinking not in terms of this little self and what it can get."

If in this way you are able to rise above self, forget self and try to make life a thing of beauty, a thing of self-offering, giving, making people happy, bringing peace to people, then you set into motion a mysterious Great law of the universe. You shall never lack. You shall have abundance of life from the Divine. The moment an individual soul ceases to think of himself or herself and starts thinking in terms of how he can

enrich life around him, the Universal Consciousness starts thinking about this being. Day and night the Universal Consciousness will start providing all the needs of this soul this is a law. This is an experienced fact to which all the great ones have been witness. And they have left this experience of theirs for our guidance.

Become great. Become noble. Become magnanimous, large-hearted. Think in terms of giving, never in terms of grabbing or getting. Let not the mind think small, think petty, think mean. But let it think in a noble way, sublime way, large-hearted way, and I assure you, I promise you that you'll never lack in any way whatsoever. Everything that is needed for your life here will be supplied to the minutest detail, and no mistake. The Divine takes all the responsibility of that soul which ceases of think of itself and gives of itself for the good of all, the benefit of God's creation, God's great family.

And the second principle: this is the ideal way of relating yourself to the world around you, so that your life becomes spiritualized, it becomes part of the evolutionary process; it becomes a supplement to the inner spiritual unfoldment. Far from being an obstacle, outer life becomes a help, a complementary process in terms of the great Spiritual Reality with which your relationship is more lasting, more real, more fundamental, which is forever.

The only thing to which you're really related is the Universal Consciousness, the Father in heaven, the Almighty Being, the Cosmic Soul. Towards it, the ideal relationship is of seeking and experiencing, entering into it. The relationship can only be brought out in this earth analogy: "Be as a river unto the ocean." Seek ever to flow towards the ocean, to find the ocean and enter into the ocean, lose yourself in the ocean.

Let your spirit be a restless river, ever questing, ever flowing onward, ever flowing ocean-ward, moving toward the ocean. Let all your life be brought together and let it be turned into one concerted flow towards the Divine. Let your life be one great love for the Divine, one great seeking, one great hunger and thirsting for the Divine.

“I shall in this very body before life ends attain the Divine and thus crown my life with the Supreme Fulfillment.” This should be your aspiration. This should be your determination. Live in order to attain divine Consciousness. Live to aspire and rise into a state of God-experience. That is the only way you can relate yourself. To love and to aspire. To realize and enter into your destiny. Forever become established in that state of consciousness. May your life be endowed with these two ideal movements towards the universe around you, beings and things, the life around you, a spirit of love and giving. And let your inner life be active and dynamic and progressive. Keep pace with the outer exterior life and let it ever move upward and Godward and become crowned with that Supreme Experience by which alone man fulfils his divine destiny.

For you are Divine. You are Pure Spirit and your life is in truth spiritual! The external physical and mental aspects of life are only temporary additives. They are not the essential and real part of your life. They are only the surface aspects of your life. Whereas deep down your real life is spiritual if anything at all.

And if not spiritual, it is nothing at all.

God Bless you!

*(A teaching given on Sunday 14th August, 1977
in Montreal, Canada)*

We dwell this moment upon the ancient prayer of the Vedas—

*"Asato ma sat gamaya
Tamaso ma jyotir gamaya
Mrityor ma amritam gamaya."*

Lead us unto the Reality, lead us unto the Light, lead us unto everlasting Life - where the Reality is identified with the everlasting Life, is identified with the eternal Light of lights. And this forms a basic concept, the central concept in the genius of spiritual India. The concept of life being a reaching upwards towards Light. Life on earth being a seeking of light, seeking after light, a moving towards light. And this light symbolizes all that is positive, all that is auspicious, all that is blessed. The eternal affirmation as opposed to the eternal negation.

The eternal negation is conceived of as the non-awareness of the Reality. This non-awareness is darkness, for it is the prolific source of all pain, sorrow and suffering, all the restlessness, the lack of peace. It is 'Ajnana' or the primal spiritual darkness or ignorance, nescience. And the one and only way to liberate oneself from Ajnana is the attainment of illumination or 'Jnana'. Even as the one and only

way of overcoming darkness is to bring in the light. There is no other way. There is only one way the rational way. To bring in the light.

For darkness is nothing but the negation of light, the absence of light. Even so, ignorance, bondage, Samsara (worldliness) is nothing but the negation of the Eternal Reality which is wisdom-consciousness, Jnana, which is the great Light of lights, the light of wisdom, luminous wisdom-consciousness.

So, even the spiritual life is in fact a continuous process every moment, every day, at each step, of trying to walk in the light - breaking away from darkness and stepping out into the Light.

The little ego is darkness. The recognition of the Universal Ego is Light. 'I am that I AM'. The great 'I AM' - that is Light. Selfishness, the product of ego, is darkness. Broad heart, oceanic heart, universal heart - that is light. Anger, ill-will, hostility, anything that is the product of selfishness is also, therefore, an extension of this darkness. It is a creeper of Maya. Therefore, to be joyful, to be cheerful, ever-serene, forgiving, absence of anger, absence of ill-will, absence of hatred, absence of repulsion, looking at the universe and looking at all the creatures with the eye of God, the divine eye, and seeing the good, seeing the inner light hidden by the Outer covering of name and form; seeing the presence of the Spirit within the enfolding mixture of gross matter, that is the way of living in the light - Doing all things in the light of Atman, where you see the universe as a visible witness to the Divine, a visible proof of God, or the Spirit, the Universal Being.

And thus, if one begins to practice this ‘walking in the light’, being in the light, and doing all things in the light of Reality, then the outer world, instead of becoming a thick veil that shuts you off from the vision of Reality, instead of becoming a veil that hides the Reality from you, separates, keeps you away from it, becomes actually the window through which you can view the Divine.

When each little thing begins to reveal the Divine, each little object, each little name and form stands there glorifying God, proclaiming the presence of God, the greatness, the grandeur, the glory of God - “Here I am, the handiwork of the Maker: Therefore, I live to proclaim His presence, His Reality.” Thus, the world around you, every object, every little thing becomes to you a token, a proof of the Great Being, the Great Reality.

It is no more a dark veil that hides, but it is a transparent window that reveals. So world becomes to us a revealer of God. Everything great and small—a flower, a dewdrop on the tip of a leaf, a passing cloud, a flying bird, the laughter of children, sunshine, the sunset and the sunrise, green grass, man, woman, child, young, old, objects animate, inanimate - all things that come to us through the avenue of the five senses of seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, smelling, come to us saying: “Here is God!” proclaiming: “Here, I come to tell You of the presence of the Maker. “I am”, therefore, one who has made me, “He is.”

So, by this viewing the entire Universe in the light of the Spirit, everything becomes to us a positive reminder of the Reality which is its source and origin, which is its support. But the fascination of the name and the form, the colour and the

sound, is such that mind is conditioned to completely become totally lost in this fascination. So that the viewer is no longer aware of the silver screen, but is only aware of the flitting shadows that are being projected from this mind movie camera upon this screen, not realizing that every moment, every split second it is the screen that makes possible the entire show, without which even for the split second no show would be possible. It would be lost in space.

So He is the substratum, He is the invisible support. And thus if we view the universe in the light of the Spirit, the universe becomes the revealer of God, not the hider of God. Universe itself becomes the window for the vision of the Divine and not a closed door shutting out the light of the Divine.

Thus indeed is the heart of the Veda and Vedanta, which says: "In the water is the Being, is the Reality, in the earth is the Reality, in the air and sky is the Reality, in the fire is the Reality. Whatever is seen or heard, in that the Reality exists, permeating, interpenetrating, saturating it, inside and outside, and filling it. The entire universe is enveloped by the presence of the Divine. Whatever is, was, or shall be is the Divine."

In this way all these great utterances of the great, ancient, timeless eternal Vedic wisdom proclaim this great fact, this great truth, of the ever-presence of the Divine; that we are indeed living in the perennial light of the Divine. And yet, because we have closed our eye of intuition, closed the inner eye, this luminous presence is denied to us, even as the physical light would be denied to a person who is standing in the midday sun if he tightly closes his eyes. He will have

darkness before him. Even so, they say, open up the spiritual vision and behold and know that you are verily living, moving and having your being in the Light of lights, that is Atman, the Great Spirit Universal, the great Light of lights.

This is the birthright of the human soul, for he is the child of God, and what belongs to the Father is verily the birthright of the child, the son. It's his natural birthright. Something which you are born to attain. Therefore it is the great Master Jesus of the middle-east said: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." He did not say, it is something very difficult, very hard, not meant for you, for which you have got to struggle greatly. He said: No. You are not having it because you are not asking for it. You are not finding it because you are not seeking for it enough. You are not knocking hard enough. So, it is not open. Therefore, he says it is the most natural things for you to do.

Let us therefore live in the Light. Let us hearken to this ancient call from the Veda and Vedanta. The heart of the Vedic wisdom says "Behold, Oh man! Where are you seeing? Where are looking for God? Here it is in front of you! God has revealed Himself through His handiwork. Everything small and great exists to proclaim the Reality of the Great Maker; who is in it. God created the world and entered into it. Therefore He is in it. He is its Reality. He is the essence of all things. He is the support without which things cannot exist. He is the very essence of all things. Therefore, see all things in the light of the Spirit and ever dwell in God. Behold Him with this inner light. Therefore be ever, abide ever in Him, for He abides ever in you.

This is the message of this holy day, set apart for Surya Narayana, set apart for the Great Light of the physical Universe which makes life possible here. The glorious solar light which is the source of life, light and energy for the universe in which we are citizens, in which we live, which is our universe upon the outer physical plane.

Today is the day of light. It is Sunday, or Ravivaar, or Adityavaar. All mean the same thing. Aditya is sun, Ravi is sun. Most befitting it is that in a great part of the western world Sunday has been set apart as a special day of God-consciousness, special day of God-thought, special day of communion with God, special day of prayer and worship and adoration and glorifying of the Supreme Spirit, who is the Light of our life, in whom we dwell, in whose light we are ever based, if we can only know it.

We do not dwell in the darkness. We ever are in the glorious shower of His Light. Therefore the prayer: “Lead us from darkness unto Light” is only a prayer that means: make us aware that we are in the Light. Make us aware that we live in this great shower of Light, always and always. Make us aware of it. Let us know it. Reveal to us this fact.

Let us live in the light, walk in the light, know that the light is in us, that we are in that light, and in the ultimate experience we are verily That Light.

Hari Om Tat Sat.

Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Oh Thou Light of lights, who illuminates the innermost hearts of all beings, shining there as the eternal Sat-Chit-Ananda consciousness - Existence, Consciousness, Bliss Absolute - we thank Thee for this hour you have shined upon us, and thus shining brought us into this Light of Awareness, Light of your Presence. May we ever breathe that Light. May we ever rejoice in that Light. May we ever dwell in that Light. May we ever move towards that Light. May we ever be the adorers and worshippers and devotees of that Light. May our life be a light unto ourselves and a radiance of that Light unto all the world we live in, to all life around us.

Om

God Bless you!

Swami Chidananda (signature)

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

24th September 2016 marks the auspicious occasion of Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out one hundred booklets comprising illuminating talks of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

To propagate Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's gospel of Divine Life, Worshipful Sri Swamiji Maharaj travelled extensively in India and abroad and showed the path of divine life to countless seekers through his spontaneous and highly inspiring lectures. His lectures, in Sadgurudev's words, are the outpourings of his saintly heart, the revelations of intuitive wisdom.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of his hitherto unpublished lectures in booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary. The present booklet '**Keep Contact With God**' is a compilation of his four inspiring talks at the sacred Samadhi Shrine during the year 1996 and 1998.

We express our heartfelt gratitude towards Shri Mukund Jere and the inmates of the Headquarters Ashram for their loving service in transcribing, editing and compiling these talks.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord,
Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful
Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—The Divine Life Society

Worshipful homage to the sourceless source of all things! Worshipful homage to that causeless cause of all things that exist! Being beginningless, eternal, without itself having any source or cause, it is nevertheless the source and cause of all things. You are in reality that absolute, non-dual transcendental Reality, which alone is. You are not the unreal, ever-changing aspect of your gross, visible human personality, your external features and hands and feet, but you are the invisible aspects in the deep subjective centre of your essential nature; you are a part of that supreme cosmic Being. That is the heart of Vedanta. That is the ultimate declaration of the Upanishads. Not to realise that real Self of yours becomes the source and the cause of all the dual experiences of this world, pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, elation and depression, rejoicing and grieving. You don't have to look for the cause for these ever recurring emotions in your psyche, because they are all caused by yourself.

Of the three afflictions this is the self-caused, the self-generated experience that comes and plagues you and bothers you no end. It arises from your inside and appears in the form of endless desires (Kama), anger (Krodha) avarice (Lobha), delusion (Moha), arrogance and aggressive ego (Mada) and envy and jealousy (Matsarya). Kama, Krodha,

1 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 21/7/98

Lobha, Moha, Mada, Matsarya constitute the true inner afflictions. These self-generated afflictions are neither discomfort nor disease of the body nor mental illness; but they constitute this invariable, inner content of all human psyches, invariable because it is present in this entire human world, in global human society. This phenomenon is the common feature in man throughout the world, in all races and nations and in all sections of people. These inner afflictions become not only a source and cause of botheration and loss of peace to your own self, but it becomes the prolific source of trouble to others with whom we have to deal in our daily life while doing our duties and fulfilling our obligations.

We are meant to be a source of service, of goodness to others and solace to others; in all ways, we are meant to be a constant source of giving, relieving, healing, helping, benefiting and bringing cheer into the lives of all, be a light in the darkness. For that is our Dharma. This is what God does to all mankind, and we are part of God. *Tat Twam Asi*. You are not what you think yourself to be, but you are no other than That, the great Reality. This is the central declaration of Vedanta and also the supreme experience Vedanta points to, “Attain this experience of your eternal oneness with the supreme Reality. In that you have to be established. This is your birth right.” Yoga Shastra also says the same thing. The gradual process of discipline, self-control and inner concentration ultimately culminates in the supreme heights of meditation. One goes beyond duality and breaks the chains of one’s false ego principle; this is the result of identification with the non-self and failure to identify yourself with your

true unchanging Self. That bondage is shattered when you reach the supreme oneness of Yogic meditation, Jnana. Ultimately you know yourself as the supreme Purusha, beyond all afflictions, delusion and phenomenal appearances created by Maha Maya, untrammelled, above afflictions and untouched by Maya.

The same ultimate experience is bestowed upon one who follows the devotional path and tries to attain the supreme Reality in its aspect of the personal God. The path of devotion through various processes, maintaining a dual attitude of devotee and God and expressing this attitude through prayer, worship and adoration ultimately leads to a culminating point when the devotee is aware only of God. God-awareness becomes the ultimate experience in the approach through devotion and love.

Thus all paths, seemingly at variance with each other and proceeding along different processes, all Sadhanas, apparently moving in diverse directions, ultimately they all merge into the same experience. This is therefore what we should strive for.

The Supreme Being is ever ready to help us at any step upon this glorious path. Hold on to this Sadhana till the last breath in your life, for that is why you have been sent here by God, due to your own aspiration you have come here and are living on the sacred banks of Divine Mother Ganga in this holy Uttarakhand. Being a seeker of the Supreme, being dedicated to this quest, that is how you will justify your existence here. In this way you will be fulfilling the prime

purpose for which you have come here by the will of the Supreme Being.

Loving adorations to revered and beloved Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji. In order to facilitate our smooth progress towards the goal, in order to provide for us a field, a scope for engaging in diverse Sadhanas according to taste, temperament and ability, he has brought about this set-up, which we call Ashram.

This is an Ashram just as there other Ashrams around, in Tapovan, Swarg Ashram, Rishikesh and Haridwar. And in common terminology Ashram means a group of buildings, a temple, a Satsanga Bhavan, residential quarters for monks, Brahmacharis, Sadhus and holy people and seekers and of course a central kitchen, because Prasad needs to be offered to the Deity after being worshipped, and all the inmates have to take the Prasad after chanting 15th chapter of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita and reciting ‘Brahmarpanam’. All these things put together is called an Ashram.

But the true and invisible Ashram is a blessed area, filled with spiritual fervour, a blessed area where there are vibrations of great aspiration, great longing for the Lord, where there is a keen and determined spirit of, “I shall seek. I am determined to find, and when I thus do Purushartha, then suddenly the Lord will open the doors to me. He is the bestower of the fruit of actions and among other things Bhagawan is Karma-Phala. And, therefore, certainly He will most graciously bless me with the supreme fruit of my spiritual action.”

An Ashram is filled with spiritual fervour, and the translation of this quest is actively and dynamically lived. This is the true invisible form of the Ashram pervaded by holiness. There is nothing negative; all is sanctity, spirituality. Karma, Bhakti, Yoga, Dhyana comprise the lives of individuals living here. The real Ashram is a blessing in contemporary times. And who is it, who makes an Ashram such a blessed centre? It is the inmates of the Ashram. It is you people who persevere in your spiritual life and add this sublime quality.

May the grace of the Supreme, the source-less source of all existence, the causeless cause of all existence enable you to fulfill this role in the highest measure for your own benefit and for the benefit of one and all. May the loving benedictions of Holy Master bless you and enable you all to fulfill this privileged and most fortunate goal. You must be a shining ideal for others to follow, by the manner in which you live and pursue your day-to-day activities. Thus, may the grace of the Supreme and the blessings of Master enable you to be really what you are, and that is no other than radiant divinities. That is what your ancients declared you to be on the basis of their own experience. Thou art That, that glorious reality, that eternal and infinite reality.

Bring your consciousness to that reality level and shine with the light of the Divine and radiate it in your daily lives. May God bless you. This is the sharing by the grace of God and Guru.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage to that Supreme Eternal Reality, the one non-dual Existence absolute, that transcends all manifestations, that is beyond all names and forms, the one that is imponderable, infinite and supreme, the one and only Reality that is. To that Being, which is your origin, your support and your ultimate fulfilment worshipful homage at this early morning hour when you are all gathered together in a most blessed spiritual fellowship by Its motiveless grace and Its divine will!

Loving adorations to beloved Gurudev who has made possible this coming together morning after morning of all of you sincere seeking souls whom God has chosen to draw in His direction. The whole world is made crazy; unthinkingly it is rushing towards petty perishable objects, rushing headlong towards momentary experiences of superficial sensations that the world has to give, pleasant sensations of a deluding and enslaving nature, that are like a flash in the pan; one moment it is there, the next moment it is not there. Because it is not continuous, it creates an unending hankering in the deluded individual soul to perpetuate it by repetitive experience, but it ends in greater slavery, more delusion, and in the meantime time flies away. The allotted life span is

² Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 8/5/96

rapidly depleted for it is rushing like the river waters under the arches of a bridge.

This is the behaviour of the vast majority of unthinking world-bound individual souls. They think what is visible is real. They think what is a momentary sensation is happiness. So they try to preserve the momentary, and the only way to make it seemingly continuous is to go on repeating it. As we go on repeating it, life goes away. The delusion becomes stronger, slavery results, and from it issue a whole host of sorrow, disappointment, fulfilment, elation, depression, jealousy, envy, clash and conflict, fights and quarrels. When there is one bone and two dogs, there is always a battle. And there are only a few treasures and more human beings, and it creates within the human mind the sense of a solid reality of this seen physical world which is an ephemeral dream. But the repetitive experience of momentary sensations gives it an appearance of something substantial, something real. If you put a stick into a blazing fire, the end of stick catches fire. And if in a dark night you shake the stick and the flaming end becomes fiery red; and if you whirl it in the darkness, it creates the illusion of a circle of fire. The more rapidly it is whirled, the more it gives the illusion of a circle of fire, and it can be photographed. You can photograph a circle of fire which does not exist! That flaming end of the stick is not there always. But you can take a photograph because the camera is even more rapid than the whirling stick.

So this is how the delusion is created that there is happiness to be experienced in this world. It is as real as the unending lights of red and white that are seen in an aerial

picture of the night traffic in Manhattan or some other highway, when automobiles are taking their owners home after office and night entertainment; they are moving in opposite directions, and in the darkness a snap shot registers a continuous unending line of red tail lights and a continuous unending line of white head lights. There are no lines! There is only a centre of light in each tale light or head light. But the continuous movement along a highway shows on the photograph unending ruby and diamond chains, an illusory effect!

That is the reality of this world. It is there, but not what it seems to be. What it seems to be is created by us and having created it, we endow it with a sense of reality, and we get caught in this illusion, this sense of reality we ourselves have created.

The one way to rise above this web of illusion and get a taste of what real happiness is Satsanga, taking recourse to the company of those who have tasted the higher experience of true happiness, true inner bliss which is objectless, independent of any external source. It is not the result of any contact of the senses with sense objects. Nothing compels you, forces you, urges you in any particular direction. You maintain your independence, your integrity, and you do not depend on any outer source for its experience. And what is more, it is ever present. It is perennial, requires no inducement and it is always there. And those who have been blessed with this experience, they call upon us, "Come, come, there is a state of bliss, there is this true happiness. Why are you running after petty pleasures? It ends in sorrow,

disappointment and a host of other complications. Whereas here is this perfect bliss. It is within you, it is yours, it is perennial. It does not deprive you of your independence. It is free from the origin of desire, of the temptation of outer attractions. It is natural, ever present, has no adverse reaction, does not at any time cease to be, for its source is the eternal Brahman, the supreme eternal unchanging Reality!" To turn towards that Reality is the highest good. It is the greatest wisdom.

It is the central purpose of being endowed with the human nature. You were brought into this existence so that you may attain that supreme blessedness, the greatest of all things. You will therefore not turn away or escape. On the contrary you will be fulfilling the purpose of your existence. You will be making the highest and the best use of your existence.

All other things constitute un-wisdom. All other things constitute opting for number 2, 3, 4, 50 or 100. All other things constitute the lesser, *Alpa*. This alone constitutes the right choice, the true wisdom. This alone constitutes a positive step, a movement towards light and not towards darkness.

Therefore all the great ones who have entered into the Experience Absolute and returned to human consciousness to behold the human world, they raise their voice aloud and call upon all humanity to partake of that blessedness. That is a central voice of religion and of all scriptures. That is the central message of all great messengers of God, prophets, illumined and liberated souls.

Get into contact with them in whatever way, either by actually meeting them, sitting at their feet or acquainting yourself through their wisdom teachings or by spiritual fellowship with other sincere seeking souls, talking about these great ones, discussing matters of the Spirit and the Reality. All these put us into direct contact with the great Reality. Then life starts to be true life and you will feel, “Great indeed is my good fortune and blessedness to sit in the company of such souls who are leading the true life, who are walking the way of wisdom.” You will yearn to spend a little more time in the company of such wise, awakened, seeking souls, who are putting their life to the highest use morning after morning. Thanks to this Holy Ashram instituted by revered and beloved Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji right from the earliest times when he started this divine Life Society!

Understand its value and come together day after day in silence, in spiritual upliftment, in meditation, chanting and listening devotedly to the selfless sharing with good intention of anyone who shares for a few minutes. All these constitute benedictions of Holy Master. All these constitute grace from the Divine, the source of all grace that we call God. You are graced and blessed indeed. May you realise this. May God continue to shower grace and Holy Master continue to shower benediction. May you continue to bless yourself. God bless you!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage to the eternal, the transcendental, the infinite, imponderable Universal Spirit Divine, the be-all and end-all of our existence! If we could only reflect upon it with wisdom, with discrimination and discernment, for which alone that Being has endowed us with the supreme faculty of the intellect, to ponder the imponderable, to reflect upon that which cannot be thought about!

Reflection itself becomes a process of Sadhana, for it gets you dwelling upon that Reality. To dwell upon it is to gradually keep moving in its direction. To dwell upon it is a means of opening ourselves to its transforming divine power. Also it has the additional result of keeping the mind from straying towards things that lead to attachment and bondage. If you determinedly keep moving in the right direction, this very process ensures and guarantees against moving in a direction that is not right; it means that its ultimate result is not good for you, not good for your evolution unto perfection which is your divine destiny. Anything that encourages the upward progress towards the fulfilment of the divine perfection that liberates should be diligently cultivated and taken into your being.

3 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 2/3/98

In this process we ought not to be swayed by other people's opinion. "Oh, you have neglected your duty, your duty towards the secular world. You have failed in fulfilling your worldly obligations." These comments and arguments are only too familiar. We cannot determine what people think or say about us. But by our very life we can determine what people ought to think and say about us. This is within our power by the sheer adherence to certain noble principles and by adhering steadfastly to a lofty ideal. This life is too short and too precious to be wasted away in worrying what people think and say about us.

Worrying in this manner is a futile exercise. It is a misdirection of your energies, a misuse of this precious thing called time or life. Therefore, always establish yourself in a positive state. With absolute humility and meekness submit yourself to God and say, "I am whatever You have made of me. Let me move forward with this as my asset, with this as my tool. Making use of whatever You have endowed me with, I can move forward."

Rather than regretting that one is not like someone else—regret never helps anyone to move forward – sincere repentance and remorse is a purifying and transforming process. It generates energy from within. Wallowing in regret is a non-productive and useless process and can never help you to move forward. Gurudev used say, "Do not brood upon the past. The past is finished, consign it into the hands of God and be at peace."

Breaking up shackles at every step, that is the inner content of Sadhana. Not to allow yourself to get shackled. Sometimes you fall in love with certain states and conditions of your inner being and do not wish to move out of it. This is an all too familiar phenomenon in the life of human individuals. We wish to nourish and cherish that very thing which is our affliction and not an endowment. Life is too short and too precious to be misdirected into this process. You must look straight ahead and move forward with determination. As a poet put it, "Heart within and God overhead."

May the divine grace of God and the benedictions of revered and beloved worshipful Holy Master, Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji enable us to be discerning individuals, determined Sadhaks, keeping our eyes fixed upon our great destiny, not allowing anything to divert us into a wrong direction, keeping our eye fixed upon the goal and ever diligently striving for it. This is spiritual life, the essence of the inner spiritual life. May God and Gurudev transform our interior into this state of a determined dynamism in the direction of our divine destiny. This alone endows our life with meaning and with a value that cannot be measured in terms of earthly achievements. All earthly achievements pale into insignificance in comparison with this aspiration and determined inner movement toward the fulfillment of the central purpose of our existence on this earth. This is not a plane into which you have come to dwell in. It is a plane to be

passed through wisely and to go beyond, leaving it behind as it has served its purpose and is no longer necessary for us. Go beyond it where the dimension of our eternal Being is. God and Gurudev help us to do this. God bless us all!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage to the eternal Universal Spirit Divine! Loving adorations to revered and beloved Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj whose spiritual presence calls you here morning after morning into close proximity with him, to contact him through Bhakti and Bhava, the feeling of your devotion and heart's love. He calls you to spend a period of sanctifying fellowship, to bless you so that your spiritual life may proceed with greater inner force, with a greater longing in the direction of the supreme goal. We supplicate the Universal Being who is within and without, we turn to Him, appeal through prayer, through supplication, through surrender, through taking shelter.

“You can do all this and you will be liberated. Do not worry, do not sorrow”, thus the Supreme Being has given a standing call, a standing invitation. “Abandoning all, you must come unto Me.” This is an eternal call, ever present for our accepting it, listening to it, answering it even today. It was not only in the age of the Gita. The call might have originated there, but it does not limit itself to that age or that set-up. Yes, it has an origin, but it is for all times, forever, this great call.

“You are wandering about in this dense darkness of self-forgetfulness, repeatedly receiving knocks and blows.

4 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 27/6/98

You are coming again and again into this wheel of birth, death and rebirth. Enough! Put an end to this. I will show you the way, by giving this direction. Now it is for you to take to the way, to follow that direction.” This means, ‘Now cease your meaningless contact with this multifarious, temporary manifestation, this ever-changing carnival around you. Now come, put yourself into contact with the Eternal.” It is like extending a hand and saying, “Come, grasp My hand!” And putting yourself into conscious, purposeful contact with the Supreme is the very essence, the central factor of the entire matter. Once you put yourself into conscious contact with the Divine, then you are worry free, carefree. He takes upon Himself everything concerning you and your spiritual life and your ultimate success in life, everything. He does not do things by half.

But you have to put yourself into contact. It is in this context there is a feelingful popular Bhajan of Surdas where he says, “Drain-water that flows and is regarded as unclean, polluted, the moment it comes into contact with the Ganga, it becomes holy water. One moment it was drain water, but from the moment of its entering into and becoming one with the sacred waters of the holy river Ganga, it becomes a thing to be treasured at home and worshipped.” It is the contact that does it. And taking this analogy further, he says, “One moment an object is a little piece of iron, but the moment it

comes into contact with the philosopher's stone, it is pure gold, the most precious of all metals." That is an indication.

Contact with this created universe, we have enough. Willy-nilly each morning when you wake up, you are part of this phenomenal universal show. The physical body is part of this earth show and therefore whether you want it or not, it is already in contact. It cannot be helped.

If God's plan for you was not different, He would not have brought you here, and He would not have created Uttarakhand, Himalayas, Ganges, Gita, Upanishad, Bible, Koran, prophets, Avatars, saints, sages. By all these things and many more He proves that He has other plans for you. You belong to Him, He belongs to you. You are His own and therefore, He is calling His own back to Himself. Allow Him to work out His plan, and on your part, in the midst of all contacts, keep the most important contact. Keep close contact with God within. Keep close contact with God everywhere.

Everywhere He is around you. Not for a split second are you removed from Him or far away from Him. Thus, base your life and attitude upon this truth, for God is a here and now God, this is the truth. Keep in close contact with Him by and through as many ways as possible. That is Sadhana. That is Yoga. That is spiritual life. When the contact breaks due to forgetfulness, distraction, anything else, again renew it. Keep

contact with God, deeply, intensely. This is the one important thing.

God help you to do so. May the divine grace of the Supreme and the benedictions of the Master help you to do this most important thing, help you in your efforts to consciously and constantly keep an inner spiritual contact with the Supreme Being.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

24th September 2016 marks the auspicious occasion of Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out one hundred booklets comprising illuminating talks of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

To propagate Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's gospel of Divine Life, Worshipful Sri Swamiji Maharaj travelled extensively in India and abroad and showed the path of divine life to countless seekers through his spontaneous and highly inspiring lectures. His lectures, in Sadgurudev's words, are the outpourings of his saintly heart, the revelations of intuitive wisdom.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of his hitherto unpublished lectures in a booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary. The present booklet '**Respond to the Call Of God**' is a compilation of his four inspiring talks, one at Zinal, Switzerland in 1988, another at the U.K. Retreat in 1989 and two talks at the sacred Samadhi Shrine during the year 1995.

We express our heartfelt gratitude towards the inmates of the Headquarters Ashram for their loving service in transcribing, editing and compiling these talks.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord,
Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful
Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—*The Divine Life Society*

Radiant Immortal Atman! Beloved Sadhaks and seekers, Jijnasus, Mumukshus, devotees of the Lord, lovers of righteousness, assembled here in the spiritual presence of worshipful and beloved Holy Master Guru Bhagawan Sri Swami Sivanandaji, the light of our life.

I wish you a very happy, holy, healthy and awakening Christmas. Let us awaken to the fact that every day we can see the birth of a new aspiration, a new discerning of the presence that we had lost sight of, if only we remember Jnananjan – the ‘cataract removing collyrium’ of the Guru:

*Ajnaana timirandhasya,
Jnananjana shalakaya,
Chakshur unmilitam yena
Tasmai Sri Guruve namaha.*

I prostrate to that Sri Guru, who has with the collyrium stick of divine knowledge opened the eyes of him who was blinded by the darkness of ignorance.

‘*Tat Tvam Asi*’ - ‘*Thou Art That*’ —the imperishable, ever blissful, ever peaceful, ever perfect, ever free Atman! Thou art That. The perfection of your Father lies within you, only awaiting your attention: ‘Be ye also perfect even as your father in heaven is perfect.’ This is this servant’s way of saying: “A happy Christmas, an auspicious Christmas, an awakening Christmas to you all!”

At this moment we ponder the meaning of Jesus coming into the world, becoming one of the human family, Jesus, the ‘Christ-spirit’ entering into the human nature to purify all levels—from the lowest unto the highest. There is in the human nature something unenlightened, something of the low-level of consciousness, that is amply provided for in the nativity setup: a dog, a sheep, and a cow, a calf, and then a number of shepherds and cowherds and village people, and at the same time there was a sensitive mother and a sensitive father—Mary and Joseph—and then came the Magi, the three Kings. They were high above the rest of their brother fellow beings in their depth of understanding and their great heights of scholarship and philosophical thought. They had an intuitive consciousness so that they were able to get the message of the advent of Jesus. And therefore, travelling great distances by day and by night, these three learned mystics arrived to pay homage. At the same time angels rejoiced and trumpets sounded in heavenly heights, and if it said in the Hindu language, ‘Gods showered flowers over Bethlehem, the stable and the whole area.

So Jesus’s advent was on all levels of the human nature, bringing about a purification and uplifting. In the midst of darkness Light came; in the midst of lowness the highest and the greatest came. In the midst of simplicity there came Majesty. And into the human level descended Divinity to transform the human factor into its own divine condition. Jesus the Christ came to lift all beings into the state of Christhood. He said, “I represent what you are. I am the son of God. No less are you. He is my Father, who has sent me

here, and He is your Father too, and the perfection with which He has sent me here dwells within you as the sleeping Christ consciousness. The Father would have you to be as perfect as He Himself is.”

That is not only a possibility, but it is your birthright! And if you, out of your folly, reject your birthright and go down into a lesser state, all is not lost, for you have only to stand up and say, “I shall go back to my Father. I did wrong to have turned away from Him.” And once you have resolved, then you are no longer fallen, you are no longer far away from your Father. From that moment onwards, the distance between Him and you begins to lessen until you stand before Him who runs out to welcome you, embraces you and rejoices that you have come back, and then there is a festivity, a feast. That is Jeevanmukti, the liberation of the being. Jesus, the divine Master, assures us, this is what ought to be. This is what you have to do. “Come follow Me.” First seek That which is your destiny, which is your inheritance, and you have only to ask for It. It is waiting for you and it shall be given unto you; it will not be long before you find It, if only you seek sincerely.

Therefore, what is required on the part of the son is seeking and asking and not being daunted or disheartened by a closed door. A door is not closed to keep you out, but is waiting to be opened, and the opening is done by knocking. That is Jesus for us. That is what He wants the wanderer on earth do. Far have you wandered, far away from home and the further you go, the more vexed you are and greater is your distress. Now come back, enough of this wandering! “Come

unto Me all ye that are weary and heavy laden." With open arms this call has gone forth.

And Lord Krishna says:

*Sarvadharmaan parityajya maamekam sharanam vraja
Aham tvaa sarvapaapebhyo mokshayishyaami
maa suchah.*

(Srimad Bhagawad Gita Ch.18/66)

Abandoning all duties, take refuge in Me alone: I will liberate you from all sins. Grieve not.

It is that same Eternal Being calling to all life and persuading, keeping on calling again and again, until the deaf ears have to open and listen and say, "Yes! I respond." Not only does He call Himself, He sends messengers to call us back. And one of these glorious great teachers who came to sound the call of the eternal Father for all His children to glory, joy, peace, liberation, to their native state is the divine teacher Jesus whose advent we are just now celebrating.

May His grace and benedictions be upon all of us, all sincere souls who have answered the call. Otherwise, life would not find you here at this moment in Uttarakhand, the holy land, on the banks of the sacred Mother Ganga, in the holy Ashram of Sri Gurudev, sitting with fellow seekers and Sadhakas and observing the advent of this great and wonderous teacher - what a joy, what a wonderful good fortune! God has already called you, you have responded and you are already seeking and searching and asking. And no one who really, sincerely asks from the heart, is ever turned away empty handed. Never! But you have to ask from your

heart, not with words or from the lips or tongue. And this assurance is there, do not doubt. Even on earth, if a child is asking his father for bread, would the father instead of bread give him a stone?

Therefore have firm faith. Man may fail man, but God will not fail man. With absolute faith, with total trust go on seeking, go on asking, and maybe you don't even have to knock. Gurudev has said: "The Lord is waiting with outstretched arms to embrace you with His divine love if only you turn and go towards Him. And if you walk two steps towards Him, He comes running ten steps towards you." That is Gurudev's way of putting what already Master Jesus has amply declared to us. So be firm in faith. Let your trust be total. Ask from the heart and seek sincerely. He knows even the rustle of a leaf in the breeze.

May we all be deserving of His Grace. In this Iron Age, we do not have to perform severe penance and mortification and austerity. Even a little, a fraction of what our ancients did, what the early Desert Fathers did, what our ancient Rishis did in the forest and mountain caves, even a fraction of that will immediately fructify. It is the mercy of God that in this age it is far easier to realize him than it was in bygone ages. That has been the declaration of recent Saints.

May the Grace of the Father, the son and the divine spirit, the Holy Ghost be upon all of you and the benedictions of the Divine Master Jesus who came to show the way of attaining the Supreme Being and He embodied the way.

What was the way? The way of prayerfulness, of simplicity, of purity, of compassion and kindness, the way of making God the sole goal, the highest value in your life and to occupy the central place in your life. ‘God first; everything else afterwards.’ Attain Him through ceaseless prayer, through moderation and also ceaseless being good and doing good. Jesus has shown the way by his own life of being good and doing good. Ceaselessly pray, ever aspiring and centering yourself upon God as the supreme goal, the highest value, occupying the central place in your heart. That is what we try to bring out in His highest of all commandments.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Worshipful homage unto the supreme, eternal, all pervading Divine Presence. May Its divine grace be upon you all in this morning hour in the spiritual presence of beloved and worshipful Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in the Samadhi Hall.

Loving adorations to revered and beloved Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji, into whose presence you are fortunate to be drawn day after day before you commence the activities of the outer world. You first of all awaken the awareness of your inner being which is divine. With this re-awakened awareness, after a period of total oblivion to the gross material world in the silence of deep sleep, you are spiritually made ready to go into that false world again with the consciousness of the divinity within you. You know, what I see, hear, taste, smell, touch, what is spread out before me, the Maya bazaar, well, well this is it.

Day after day, the Jivatma, the individual soul comes under the sway of this delusion and enters into the net of taking the fleeting names and forms to be realities, to be important, to have value. To be drawn into this net, one's thinking and reasoning is overcome by some mysterious power which makes you feel that the seen is the real as it

¹ Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 3/6/95

appears to you, not as it is in its essence. It is a projection of the Satchidananda consciousness. Each thing as it appears to your sense perceptions becomes the reality having a special meaning for you and you having a special relationship with it. All this creates the deluded condition of moving away from the awareness of the unseen reality, and getting caught in the compulsive reality of the seen, the changing scene which has once and for all been discovered and declared to be perishable, passing—*yat drishyam tat nashyam*.

Whatever is perceived is perishable, subject to decay and dissolution. This is known in the intellect, but plays no part in your actual day to day experience. This truth does not govern the level of your consciousness. It is the impact of a temporary reality that governs, compels attention, governs your consciousness and pulls it down to a lesser level. And this impact is carried right to the close of the day when you enter into sleep.

Therefore, Gurudev said: “Do not allow this to happen; otherwise it will affect your dream state also. Bring a break, let there be an effective gap between the whirl of your daily activities and the moment of your entering into the serene calm of the inner state of sleep. Put a gap, have a period of calm meditation, negate the world - “Nothing exists, nothing belongs to me. I am neither mind nor body, immortal Self am I. Nothing exists, nothing belongs to me. Immortal Self am I. Om, Om, Om, Om; Om Tat Sat, Om Tat Sat, Om Tat Sat, Om Tat Sat; Om, Om, Om!” Thus shake from your consciousness, from your mind all vestiges of this deluding influence of the

dawn to dusk world experience, of these fleeting names and forms. Be like a worshipper entering into the sacred precincts of a holy shrine, who sets aside his sandals and wipes his feet and then enters into the sacred shrine. Even so, before you enter into the serene silence of the inner shrine of the sleep state, bring a gap, leave the dirtied sandals of your day time, the name-and-form-consciousness, and invoke from within the awareness that the non-dual Supreme alone exists: “Ekamevadvitiyam Brahma, Om, Om, Om! That is peace, That is silence, That is bliss, That is the reality, That is the eternal.” In that way, invoke from within a strong awareness of this great truth. And remain in that state sufficiently long to be purified of all the dross in which you act and move about from morning till evening, so that no vestige remains. Once again your consciousness is made subtle and pure, and you enter into sleep. Then your dream state will be subtle, it will not be dominated by the gross experiences of the material fleeting world. It will be pervaded by Sattva and from there you go into deep sleep where there is only awareness of bliss, awareness of peace; there is no awareness of fighting or quarrelling, love and hate, tragedies, nothing Rajasic and Tamasic.

Thus from this serene state of the silence of sleep when you emerge into this world again, do not get thrown into its contrary state of world perception. Say, “No, let me first emerge from this serene state into a consciously created state of God-awareness. Let me go into the spiritual presence of Gurudev, sit with sincere seeking souls who aspire for the

same experience. In these uplifting spiritual vibrations may I keep up the same current of peace and joy. May I invoke from within a spiritual awareness, become awake in that dimension where I am what I am and remain in that state in prayer, in deep silence and meditation. And thus equipping myself let me enter into this new day, into this gross field of sense perceptions and impelled activities.” You should safeguard the integrity of your inner identity. Be in the world, but not of it; be in it, but let it not touch you, even as a lotus leaf is not touched by the muddy water in which it grows.

Be rooted in Reality, dwell in God, giving only a part of your mind to the outer exercise of your sense awareness and your sense perception. Give just as much of your mind as it is necessary, so that you attend sufficiently and satisfactorily, but leave part of your mind in the proximity of a spiritual powerhouse. That part becomes your anchor within the turbulent waters; you are anchored in the Self, the Atman. Unto that end is this period of contemplation at this dawn hour, so that it may set the right note for a day filled with the same quality of your awareness, your approach, your perception. “I behold God in all names and forms. My eyes do perceive the deceptive outer appearance, but it is also aware that within this dwells the ultimate Divine Reality. The world is pervaded by God. The world is a revelation of God. It is a manifestation of the Divine that I am seeking. The goal is here and now. Let me live in the awareness of the ever present Reality That will lead me to the experience of the Great

Reality". Thus reasoning, we will be able to enter into this new day with a fully illumined interior.

That is the purpose and the fruit of the communion with Gurudev's spiritual presence and the one God who indwells all beings, who is present in all those who participate in this morning hour. Your living becomes divine living, because you enter into this day with the awareness of your divine identity. "I am divine; I am filled with the quality of truthfulness, politeness, soft speech, friendliness towards all creatures, compassion towards the lower beings, reverence for all life and a bright awareness that Divinity is immanent in the entire universe. If you enter into the new day and its activities with this vision, you bring an uplifted perception into your environment. Everything that is seen, heard, tasted, touched or smelt is realised to be what we are seeking. Entering into your activities, your field of duties with this heightened perception, you purify, you uplift, you bring light wherever you go, and vibrations of peace and joy pervade any place where you are present. Because you are a centre of Divinity. The hallmark of Divinity is virtue, is character, spirituality, purity. That is the greatest ornament for the child of God. That is the greatest ornament for a disciple, a seeker, a follower of Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivananda. Seek to adorn yourself with this divine ornament of Dharma. Shine with the inner beauty of the Spirit. Rejoice in the fact that God has made it possible for you to renew this awareness day after day, so that it is always fresh, strong and vibrant.

Thus should be known the meaning of this daily drawing near the spiritual presence of Gurudev. It has a purpose. The purpose is to prepare yourself to enter into another cycle rooted in Divinity even when you go through the outer processes, doing your duties and pretending to be taking part in this drama of life. Be like a skilful actor, Daksha, Karma-Kushala, living in the world knowing you are not of it and yet enriching it. Understand this and utilise this hour to this end. In this may God and Gurudev grant you success!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

The way of life of the Monastics, of the Yati-Sannyasins, has long been a tradition in India. But it is not unique to Hindu culture only. All people in any religion are told to honour renunciates. If you go to the Vatican, you kneel down and kiss the ring of His Holiness the Pope. The Christian world honours its priests and monks, and they are addressed as ‘Reverend Father’, ‘Your Holiness’. In Islam the Fakirs, Darvishes and Sufi saints are very greatly revered and honoured by the lay people. In the Buddhist tradition, if a monk comes, immediately everyone stands up and welcomes him, and the householder regards it as a great honour if a Bhikku comes to his door and begs of alms. It is regarded as a great honour and merit to give Bhiksha to a Buddhist Bhikku in Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Japan, and until recently even in China.

And so it is a part of all the existing world religions. Everywhere monks are honoured as people worthy of reverence because they had taken to a holy life. They had turned away from the pursuit of worldly ends, and they had dedicated themselves to the attainment of the supreme spiritual goal of human existence. Therefore they were a special chosen sector of human society, and as such they are seen as worthy of reverence.

2 Talk Given On 20th September, 1989 U.K Retreat

But in India, the concept has been taken one level higher, one step further. The Indian genius, the devotional attitude of the normal Hindu went to the extent of deifying the Guru, regarding the Guru as God Himself, and even setting up a special day in the year for the worship of the Guru. It is the full Moon Day which usually falls in the month of July or August. They worship all the Gurus from the most ancient times, and there is an unbroken line of these holy people who had kept alive the spirituality which is the real India. They are all remembered, invoked in our memory, and as a token of our unending gratitude they are worshipped.

This day is also known by the term ‘Vyasa-Puja’ or ‘Vyasa-Purnima’, because one of the greatest illumined sages of ancient India is the great Sage Vyasa Maharishi. He started with putting down the Vedic wisdom in writing, which was upto his time only imparted by oral teaching. He undertook the stupendous task of classifying the entire ‘then known knowledge’ of the Vedas into four great books: the Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and the Atharva Veda. Therefore he came to be known as Maharishi Veda Vyasa, and it is he who wrote the 18 Puranas, the Mahabharata, the great Srimad Bhagavatam and the Aphorisms of Vedanta known as Brahma Sutras or Vedanta Sutras.

He is regarded as the father of Indian culture and spirituality. Therefore, this holy day is called ‘Vyasa-Puja Day’ or ‘Vyasa-Purnima’. But it is also called ‘Guru Purnima’ because each group of seekers worship their particular Guru, and simultaneously they worship all the great Gurus, starting from Vyasa.

Why there is in India this unique lifting up of reverence for a Sannyasin or a spiritual preceptor from the ordinary honouring to actual worship can be understood, because the ultimate vision of the ancient sages was that the Supreme Reality is not merely a remote transcendental reality, but it is an immanent Reality. There is nothing and nowhere where that Reality, that Divine Principle, is not present. They had the vision that it inheres, it permeates, it pervades all that exists, and it indwells everything. And in the light of this vision everything is sacred, everything is divine. A glimpse of that vision was imparted to Arjuna in the Yoga of the Cosmic Form expounded in the 11th chapter of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita.

It was very clearly expounded and expressed in the first of the ten principle Upanishads, the ‘Isha Upanishad’. It begins with the declaration:

“Ishavasyamidam sarvam yat kinchit jagatyam jagat.”

Everything in this entire existence is permeated by the Divine Presence. Everything is therefore a receptacle of the Supreme Divine Reality. And that has been wonderfully elaborated in the Srimad Bhagavad Mahapurana and in all the 18 chapters of the Srimad Bhagavad-Gita, particularly in the 11th chapter. Therefore, based upon the experience of this truth the Indian law-givers had admonished us: “Divinity pervades everywhere.” All the five elements are God:

*Jale Vishnu sthale Vishnu, Vishnu parvatamastake;
Jwalamalakule Vishnu, sarvam Vishnumayam jagat*

But it is specially present in certain places and certain beings and things.

God is the ultimate concept of man's idea of help; He is the one source of all help, all protection, all nourishment, all care, all love, all comfort, all solace—He is the Supreme Being. He is an ocean of compassion, of love, of goodness.

To a human individual soul born into this life, the first experience of the great love of God is through the mother. The child knows nothing; its world is in the enfolding arms of the mother, in the loving gaze of the mother; its experience is completely filled by the mother-experience. Therefore, the Upanishadic sages said, "Regard your mother as God."

And the next experience of the growing child is the father figure. "Regard your father as God."

As the child grows up, who helps the unfoldment of the intellect? It is your teacher in the school, stimulating your intelligence, teaching you knowledge, and the value of knowledge, giving you the answers to your questions. He helps to unfold and develop that in you which makes you superior to the animal kingdom. And therefore, "Regard your teacher as God."

But the one who gives you an opportunity to serve, to set aside your selfish considerations, who gives you an opportunity to rise above yourself is your greatest benefactor. A chance visitor at your door at the time of your taking food, he gives you an opportunity to serve. Service elevates; service is the only way by which we can shed our selfishness, purify our heart and grow in devotion. It is selfless service without

expecting any reward, for the love of God, with the only idea to serve: “I don’t want anything out of it, not even thanks.”

The Guru of Swami Vivekananda, Sri Ramakrishna Dev, used to say, “When you have the opportunity to serve someone, don’t think you’re doing something from a higher pedestal to someone who is lesser. On the contrary, thank the being for giving you an opportunity to serve, thus evolve yourself spiritually.” He said, “Service is a grace conferred by God, and anyone who is the channel for bringing you His grace, thank him first, and then in a spirit of humility eagerly do the service.” He is also to be regarded as God.

This is the ancient teaching. “*Matrudevobhavah; Pitrudevobhavah; Acharya devobhavah, Atithidevobhavah.*”

This is the basis for deifying the Guru. When you regard as God even persons who confer upon you earthly benefits, the Guru is a being who confers upon you the supreme benefit of removing the darkness of ignorance and giving you the light of a spiritual vision; ultimately such a bestowal will enable you to attain liberation itself. This is not an ordinary thing. All other helps: father, mother, teacher, guest, are within the bounds of earthly life. But here a being comes into your life and imparts to you a spiritual awakening and grants you the gift of spiritual knowledge, which makes you aware of your real Self and puts you on the road to Self-realisation or God-consciousness, liberating you forever from the bondage of this earth life. He brings you face-to-face with God. One who confers this is to be verily worshipped as God Himself.

Therefore the Guru is worshipped as God. There is a very interesting incident in the life of the famous mystic Kabir Das. One day the Guru happens to visit him, and as he is receiving the visitor, God appears before him! The disciple is now puzzled. Both of them are in front of him: Guru as well as God, and the disciple is wondering, “To whom should I bow first?” What to do?” Then suddenly he decides, “I will bow to the Guru first, because it is the Guru who enabled me to see God; through Guru’s grace only I came into contact with God.” That is the concept with which the Guru is regarded as God Himself.

I am very happy for this opportunity of sitting amidst you all and spending some time here in Satsanga. God be thanked for this great grace of spiritual fellowship. God’s presence is here in a very very special measure. Let us lift up our hearts and minds and thank him for this great grace.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

*(Talk given during the yearly Yoga Week of the European
Yoga Associations in Zinal, Switzerland on
10th September 1988. Swami Satchidananda from USA and
Swami Satyananda from Munger were also present.)*

Blessed Immortal Atman! Beloved children of the Divine!

My message to you is briefly to bring the Master to you so that you may understand what He is and what He represents, and thus open the doors of your hearts and receive Him! Holy Master Swami Sivananda is the world Yoga teacher of the 20th century.

Swami Vivekananda brought the message of Vedanta, the great philosophy of India, to the Occident; he did this in the year 1893.

After Vivekananda's advent and after he passed on, a great change came into the Western world. After a long period of peace and prosperity the world was plunged into a very savage war from 1914 to 1918 which practically involved all parts of the world. This was a very soul-shaking experience for humanity in the West but also in the East, because England had colonies everywhere, and so troops from India, Nepal, Bhutan and Burma were all involved in it. The message of Vedanta was forgotten and the focus and attention of

mankind was forcibly drawn to earthly affairs! Then after some years, the great financial depression plunged the world into a very, very sad state!

It was into such a world and in such a situation that the message of hope, of awakening and of a higher purpose for human life was sent by Swami Sivananda from his quiet little hermitage on the banks of the holy river Ganga. This message was a universal message. It was a spiritual message that went beyond any religious theology, dogma or doctrine. It was addressed to man as a member of the human global family. Holy Master Swami Sivananda chose to name it ‘The message of Divine Life’. It is a message that directly declares that your true nature is divine!

Your human identity is only a passing, superficial identity. What you think yourself to be, that you are not! You are an eternal, imperishable, indestructible being without birth, without death! Birth, infancy, childhood, adolescence, middle age, old age, decay—all these pertain to the body. These changing conditions of the body and the different states of the mind cannot touch you, for you are divine and immortal! Therefore, being divine, divinely live your life. Assert! Affirm, and manifest your divinity! Let your thoughts, feelings, words and actions radiantly express this divinity in your daily life! Let everything that you do through mind, speech or body express this inner essential nature of yours! Lead a life of truth, purity, compassion and love. Be

kind, be compassionate. Have a noble character. Shine with virtue and good conduct.

To be divine and live divinely is your birthright! That is your real mission on earth! To be aware of your divinity and to make your daily life filled with the divine quality—that is the Divine Life message of Master Swami Sivananda. Such a life is a life of Vedanta and Yoga in actual practice. The practice of Yoga is to be adopted in order to bring about this inner awakening of your essential nature. And to make this awakened divinity manifest is the purpose of all Yoga practice.

The various types of Yoga and Yoga practices were brought into being in order to suit the different temperaments and abilities of human individuals. It is for you to use your common sense and intelligence and see what the practices are and which path suits you most, or you allow your Spiritual Master to make this selection for you. Once this has been done, you must seriously take up the practice of unfailing daily Sadhana.

Human life has been given for you to practice spiritual Sadhana. This was the heart and soul of Master's message. He said, "Do real Sadhana, my dear children! This body is an instrument for spiritual Sadhana. It is an instrument for Yoga practice."

Give up egoism and selfishness and serve all with a selfless Bhava. Regard this selfless service as an offering to the

Divine. Know that the Divine Being is the indwelling presence in the hearts of all! Your body is the moving temple of the living presence of God. Therefore, offer up your selfless service at the feet of this indwelling Presence. This was the Holy Master Swami Sivananda's message:

"To live all your life as a continuous offering at the feet of the ever present divine Being. Cultivate faith and devotion for the Supreme Being, and express this devotion in daily prayer and worship. Remember the Divine Being constantly even in the midst of your daily activities. Give your hands to your earthly duties and work. Let your heart ever be filled with love for God, and let there be a constant, unbroken stream of God-thought in your mind. Establish a deep, inner connection between you and the Cosmic Being. Discipline your senses. Conquer the desires of your mind. Observe moderation in all things, and concentrate and meditate upon the Divine daily. Ever discriminate between the non-eternal and the Eternal. Discriminate between the changeful outer appearances of this world and the Supreme Reality which is its origin and source. While living in the midst of the non-eternal and passing things, seek the eternal Reality."

These seven principles constitute the very essence of the Master's message of Divine Life:

1. "Truthfulness;
2. Purity of conduct and character;

3. Renunciation of anger, hatred and ill-will by the cultivation of kindness and compassion;
4. Sincere service with absolute selflessness;
5. Daily worship of the Divine;
6. Unfailing regular meditation upon the eternal Reality;
7. Constant pursuit of the realisation of the Absolute through philosophical enquiry, discrimination, analysis and meditation.”

These seven principles are like the seven colours that coalesce together and bring forth brilliant white light. In whichever life these seven principles combine together, that life will shine with the radiance of Yoga and of Vedanta. It will shine with the light, radiance of divinity which you are!

Beloved and worshipful Holy Master, Gurudev Sri Swami Sivananda was born in 1887. Providence soon arranged things in his life as to mould him into a Prophet of this present age. In the early thirties in India, only the English educated, middle-class and the upper-middle-class people knew about him and his teachings. It was much later that his original English writings were translated into the different Indian languages.

But in Europe his teachings became translated first. Jean Herbert of Geneva translated his earliest books into French,

and then appeared translations in German, Spanish and Italian.

In the early thirties in European countries there were groups of earnest people practicing Yoga and corresponding with Gurudev Sri Swami Sivananda, getting instructions and practicing Yoga. One of his foremost disciples and European Yoga teachers was a Latvian called Harry Dickman. Another great being in those days was a wonderful Raja Yogi called Boris Sacharow. He had advanced so highly in the practice of Raja Yoga that he had many of the Siddhis mentioned in the Patanjali Yoga Sutra in his own life. He could see without eyes, hear without ears and could cognize things from far away; all his Yoga practice was under the written directions of holy Master Swami Sivananda from Rishikesh. There were many other great Yoga practitioners who were directly guided by Gurudev, but with the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939, the link was broken. For about 7 or 8 years we did not know the whereabouts of all these wonderful people. After 1946, slowly some of them started to renew their contacts with holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivananda.

Thus, in Swami Sivananda you have a man who was nurtured in the Oriental way of education and life, and gave his teachings in a language which was directly accessible to the Occident. Therefore it is no wonder, that many feel him to be the patron of the Yoga movement in the West. And above all, he was a man of deep love and great compassion. He

considered himself not as a world Guru but as a cosmic friend and a cosmic servant. He declared very plainly: "My beloved friend! I live to serve you all." And he serves you all by bringing you the message of Divine Life. He declares to you the pre-eminent role of spiritual Sadhana in daily life. As Swami Satchidanandaji Maharaj said during his talk this evening, he called upon all to live a life of the fourfold Yoga of Service, Devotion, Meditation and Divine Realisation. Gurudev Sivananda's Sadhana was a beautiful and harmonious synthesis of these four paths, and the entry into this life of Yoga-Vedanta was through Truth, Purity and Compassion. May this message find a place in the heart of each and every one of you here! This will raise your Yoga life unto a sublime, higher level. God bless you all! May the spirit of Yoga and Vedanta pervade your entire life!

Let your home be the true center of the Yoga way of life. If you are a married, regard your family status as a spiritual partnership with another soul. In addition to being a mere social partner, let your other half be a spiritual partner. Thus bring holiness into your matrimonial life. Be partners in selfless service, in devotion, prayer and meditation. Be partners in seeking the great Reality and attaining illumination. Practice Yoga at home; practice Yoga in your professional life. Be aware that you are a Yogi even when you are in the midst of society. Never forget this central identity of yours!

Let me express my gratitude for giving me this wonderful opportunity to bring the message of holy Master Sivananda to you all! This servant feels it a great blessedness to have been able to do this tonight! Let your life become radiant with divinity and divine living. Let Vedanta be the awareness present in your heart! Let Yoga be the spirit with which you live and act! Let your life become a Sadhana for attaining Self-realisation! This is the real and true way of paying homage to this great-hearted being, Holy Master Swami Sivananda! He lived to bring the benefits of that ancient wisdom and science to each and every one of you, and he still lives in and through His servants like me in order to keep on bringing messages to you!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Beloved immortal Atman! Blessed children of the Divine, immortal pilgrim souls temporarily in a state of physical embodiment and psychological limitations and confinement. During this brief earth pilgrimage you are most fortunate that during this particular incarnation you are not merely pilgrim souls but you are also seeking souls. Many times have you come, many times have you departed.

The Lord gives a hint about this to Arjuna. The Lord says: "I shall expound to you the ancient secret science, the knowledge of the Supreme, which I expounded to Manu and to other wise kings of the Ikshvaku race and now I shall expound that to you." Arjuna asks, "I do not understand? Yourself and myself, O Krishna, we are of recent birth, and these beings who have been taught the same sacred science, they lived ages ago. How could You have taught them?" In reply to this query the Lord says, "O Arjuna! This is not the first time that we are here, you and I. Very many times we have been here before. I know of all the times I have appeared and done this great work but you, it so happens, this knowledge has not been given to you, it has been kept away from you." And it is a great mercy! If you knew all the past incarnations, it would be impossible for you to live. Because you would remember all the others with whom you had dealings and would be

overcome by various emotional attitudes. Fortunately, it has been kept a closed book. And so there is this pattern ever since the dawn of creation: coming into being, sojourning for a brief while here and again departing, only to come again.

But then, if this was a bed of roses, if this was all milk and honey, coming again and again into this place would not be very unpleasant. But it so happens that the Lord, who is the originator of this phenomenal process of Sristi, Stithi and Laya, has been very frank about his own handiwork: “Arjuna, this is a world of sorrow,”

Duhkaalayam ashaashvatam...(B.G. VIII/15)

Here everything is impermanent and full of sorrow, there is no real happiness. Pleasurable sensations, yes! But happiness, no! Pleasurable sensation is a reaction of our nervous system to external stimuli. Pleasure due to sight, depending upon our optical nerves and its network; pleasure due to touch, depending upon our tactile network of nerves, pleasurable experience from listening to nice things, depending upon our auditory nerve and its network and pleasure due to inhaling a fragrance, depending upon the olfactory nerve and its network and pleasant experiences due to taste, depending upon your gloss pharyngeal nerve and its network. And if they are functioning, you have these fleeting pleasurable experiences and they are not always dependable. Because, if something is wrong in another part of your

system, that which might have given you pleasure, does not give you the same experience. If something goes wrong with the central nervous system, then all these things fail to register.

This is the actual analysis of what we call pleasure, enjoyment. It is nothing but a phenomenon, a process of certain nervous sensations being carried from the outermost terminal along the nerve through your brain centre where it has to be converted into a certain type of sensation. This is the entire range of so-called human physical experiences through sight, sound, taste, touch and smell. This is not a state of mind. The mind may react to it in the form of an acquisition or a rejection. If the mind reacts in the form of 'Yes' we label it pleasure: "I enjoyed it." If the mind reacts to it in the form of 'No', then we do not enjoy it, we do not want it, we suffer it and we label it as pain.

This is the entire anatomy of the so-called range of experiences that human beings undergo from the moment they wake up from the Sushupti Avastha, and the whole world stands there as Rupa, Rasa, Shabda, Sparsha, Gandha, until they go back into slumber and this outer universe vanishes. You go into a different state where these five organs of perception cease to function. So, when they cease to function, the outer universe with all its infinite so-called pleasure giving objects is non-existent to you. The outer universe does not exist. And day after day we unthinkingly

delude ourselves into thinking that in this way we seek our happiness. Never for a moment do we stop to first of all define the term ‘happiness’. What exactly is this thing which I’m trying to find here? What is our definition of this elusive concept of happiness? It is an inner state of mind, and anything that depends upon something else has already lost its freedom and it is in a state of slavery.

The Lord who created this universe knew very well. He says, “Arjuna, this is an abode of grief and sorrow.” Therefore having come into this realm of Asukha, if you wish to have happiness, come seek where it is. It is in the eternal, never changing, all perfect Cosmic principle which is of the very nature of pure Bliss. The Nitya Tattva that we call Bhagavan or Parabrahman or the state of Nirvana or the Siddha Avastha of the Jains, call it the kingdom of God, call it Jehovah or Allah or Ahura Mazda, call it the supreme Tao or the state of illumination or Satori as Zen would call it—no matter, what term is used, that ultimate state is a state of perfect Bliss. There, all the human quests since the dawn of creation become fulfilled. There it is 100% absolute bliss.

*Anityam asukham lokam imam praapya
bhajasva maam... (B.G. IX/33)*

In this great sentence, the Lord gives a hint to Arjuna. “Look here! The world around you is something that has been brought into being by My Shakti called Maya or Prakriti, and She has made

everything very attractive. If you wish to live in the midst of these attracting objects and go through them day by day, and yet at the same time not be deluded by them and lose your way, then make Me your goal, make Me your be all and end all. Live for My attainment, attend to all your other works but know that they are secondary. You have not come here for that. You are born for greater things, and you are heir to eternal glory. Because you are a part of Me. And therefore, I will tell you:

*Daiivee hyeshaa guna mayee mama maayaa
duratyayaa
Maameva ye prapadyante maayaam etaam
taranti te...(B.G.VII/14)*

“My Maya is very difficult, formidable. But, those who take refuge in Me, they cross easily over the great Samsara Sagara, as one would step over the puddle formed by the footmarks of a cow. Therefore, the way to do it is, ‘Make Me your goal’.”

Fulfil your duties. Do whatever has to be done (Kartavya Karma). But, the greatest of all duties is to fulfil your divine destiny, and that is the attainment of the fullest knowledge of your real identity. And God’s grace, light, can take any form.

Into the life of the great illustrious Maharishi Tagore, the father of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, light came in the most extraordinary way. He was waiting for the ferryman to take him across the river. The ferryman had already gone

with some people to the other shore. So he had to wait for him to come back. He was a reflective person, a mystical person. Dust blew dried leaves and other things, and then a piece of paper landed and he casually bent down and picked up that torn piece of paper. God's grace touched him at that moment. That piece of paper was a torn page from the Isavasya Upanishad. And it was the first Shloka:

*'Isavasyam idagum sarvam yad-kincha
jagatyam jagat.'*

*All this—whatsoever moves in this universe
(and those who move not) is covered (indwelt or
pervaded or enveloped or clothed) by the Lord.*

with the translation in Bengali. Sri Devendranath Tagore looked at it and he took in that great idea. At that instant, his life was transformed. A great light dawned in his mind. He was no longer the same being. The eyes that had hitherto seen the world as an object, a universe of inert matter, from that moment, when he read and re-read this Shloka 'Isavasyam idagum sarvam yad-kincha jagatyam jagat', immediately the veil was lifted from his mind and intellect; when he lifted his head and beheld the universe, he no longer beheld anything material, anything inert. He beheld everything as the Supreme Reality, 'Ishvara Tattva ota-prota.' He saw the spirit manifest in everything that his eyes took in. From that time he realised, "I am in God. God is in me. There is no distinction between Him and me. I

did not understand this. All my life until this age, I have been living in God and I never recognised it.” The whole universe stood before him in a different light. That was how God came into his life and touched him. It was the grace of God that blew the wind and brought this truth about the universe at the feet of Devendranath Tagore.

God comes through listening to a lecture, through reading a book or through hearing a chance conversation between two people, but in one way or the other it is Grace that comes into your life and changes you from being a mere pilgrim soul into a seeking soul. When you are a pilgrim soul, you go the way all the others are going, and you don’t know where it is leading to. You just follow the pattern of everyone around you as they have been living generation after generation, your father, grandfather, great-grandfather and so on, and you think this is it. But when Grace dawns, we begin to realise, “This is not it. I have been sent here with a definite purpose. I have before me a specific goal to attain.” The purpose of living is for a specific attainment and achievement. And what is that specific achievement and attainment? Nothing less than realising your own eternal relationship with your cosmic source, your eternal abode, the very root and origin of your being.—Physically, mentally, psychologically, yes I may be a human individual and I may have my origin in a human household. But I who dwell within this human

personality, I am timeless, I am ageless. I do not belong to this material universe. My origin is God. I am one with Him. He is my Aadi, Madhya and Anta. In Him I have got my being. In Him I live my entire life, and I must work consciously towards the attainment of that great destiny. And therefore, I have this consciousness, this awareness: I have come with a purpose. Life is a golden opportunity given for the attainment of a great destiny, and that destiny is Atma Jnana. That destiny is the realisation of the unchanging Reality, hidden behind this panorama of ever changing names and forms. Everything here is temporary. It comes and goes. But there is something which never changes. Amidst all these transitory, temporary appearances, there is an eternally present reality, and to behold That is this golden chance given to me.

*Samam sarveshu bhooteshu tishthantam
parameshvaram
vinashyatsu avinashyantam yah pashyati sa
pashyati... (B.G.XIII/27)*

He really sees, who sees the eternal existing in the non-eternal appearance.

The Sat Chit Ananda Tattva is hidden behind Nama and Rupa, which are the ever-changing but hiding veils. Behind it is that which exists as a luminous principle of awareness or consciousness, and it is the quintessence of absolute Bliss. That Sat Chit Ananda Tattva is my

goal. I must pierce beyond this veil and attain
That great reality.

This awareness has been given to you and therefore in the midst of this Vyavahara, you have the urge, you have this great aspiration: "I must know the Reality. That is why God has made me a member of the human race, that unique creation of His which has the power to think, feel, reason, understand, investigate, analyse and ultimately realise, experience. Of all the forms of living things created by God, I am unique and therefore I must prove my uniqueness, and I must use my intellect, my mind, my heart in order to realise." This is an awakening to or awareness of a dimension of your being beyond the apparent physical dimension and beyond the inferable, psychological dimension. I say beyond 'inferable' because no one has ever seen the mind. It is only a concept. They say this thinking process is what is known as the phenomenon of mind. "I think, I remember, I plan, I imagine, I try to ponder." All these processes are made possible because of some hidden something, and they call it 'mind'. So through inference, you believe in the existence of some power, some faculty of your personality which you have never seen. No one has ever brought the mind and said, "Yes! Here it is." He must have seen the brain. The super science of modern inventions and scientific progress has made possible to see hidden things. But the functioning of the mind is never seen. You may

have charting of Alpha and Beta impulses but that is the functioning of the brain. The mind is a mysterious thing.

It is an elusive thing which no one has ever seen but which is everything. It is that which makes you what you are. It gives you the ability to think, reason, remember, project into the future, plan, imagine. All these marvellous, intricate things are the endowment of God. And that is why you are a human being. Endowed with this, you are able to think: "There must be something in me, a dimension which I never knew existed. There are people who have experienced that dimension and even gone beyond and known themselves in the deepest centre of their reality." Having come to this knowledge, you are seeking souls. This Mumukshutva, this Jijnasa is a gift of God.

And therefore, I have the privilege of sitting with a very special section of earth pilgrims who have come to know that they have a divine destiny. Life has a divine purpose that goes beyond the earth plane. And life is specifically the great gift of God to enable us to attain that supreme state which once and for all liberates us

from all the painful experiences that go to make up earth life. This earth life is a ladder to supreme blessedness. Therein lays its one great redeeming feature. And, it is worthwhile to put up with all the ups and downs of earth life, the problems and pains and sufferings ... all that becomes minor when you realise that there is a wonderful chance given to you. You go through all of it because this is a chance. This is an ascent of the spirit to its pristine glorious state of freedom and fearlessness, of absolute emancipation and bliss. Therefore, this endows you with an inner strength: "Putting up with everything, I will go straight towards that great target as an arrow shot from the bow. I shall make my life a relentless pursuit of this quest: determined, persevering, and ultimately in this very life, in this very body, I must attain self-realisation."

This quest for attaining the great reality has made you into Sadhakas. You are devotees of God, you are Sadhakas, and you have to do this Sadhana in and through the rough of this earth life and its inevitable complications. And here is the supreme value of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita. It is above all a teaching of realisation, perfection and liberation through action. Trying to attain the Supreme Being through love, through prayer, through devotion, through worship, is Bhakti Yoga. Time-honoured in all the great living religions of the world, is the mystical approach to God through restraining the senses, withdrawing

the mind, gathering it through concentration and fixing it upon the great reality, and that is Dhyana Yoga. But you cannot sit in a room and do Dhyana all the 24 hours. Hunger will force you to come out. If your hunger does not force you, your dependents will not allow you to sit like this. They will say, "What are you doing? Go work and see that we are fed." That is what drove Ratnakar to become a dacoit. He had married a tribal dame and thought that he will have a nice comfortable life in the forest. But then she said, "You have married me and therefore it is your duty to go and earn." He said, "How shall I earn? I am not part of your tribe. I am not skilled in hunting." She replied, "It is your problem. You have to go and do it any way!"

In this way, in the third chapter verse 5 of the Srimad Bhagavad-Gita, the Lord says, "It is impossible for an embodied being to remain without action". Action is part of the nature of Rajas. We have to act. And if you act driven by desire, selfishness, ignorance, it will bind you. But if you act with wisdom, knowing that 'I am only a witnessing being, and that action is brought about by a fivefold combination of factors, and I am not one of them. I'm something that belongs to a different dimension and a different Tattva altogether. Therefore, I am in the midst of activity but I'm not the actor'. Knowing thus, if you engage in action without the sense of doership, then action cannot bind you. The Srimad

Bhagavad-Gita is a Scripture par excellence of the skill in action. If you act with this skill, then action cannot bind you.

Make the Supreme Being your only objective in life, and there is no more desire for any other petty thing here. When desire is taken out of the activity, then you know that the value of all things in this world is cipher. They have a utilitarian purpose, to meet some immediate need of this physical body. When it is extremely cold, you want a sweater. When summer comes, the sweater becomes unpleasant. Nothing in this world has any intrinsic or inherent value by itself. Once you realise that, things outside will fail to attract you, and you are in a position to pass through life, doing all that has to be done but detached. This is the heart and centre of the philosophy of the Bhagavad-Gita, the teaching on how to be in the world but not of the world.

When Mahatma Gandhiji returned from South Africa, he settled down on the banks of the Sabarmati River in Ahmedabad and brought that Ashram into being. He had been influenced by the wisdom teachings of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita and decided to translate it into Gujarati. He named that first translation ‘Anasakti Yoga.’ He did not call it Srimad Bhagavad Gita, he called it Anasakti Yoga, the Yoga of not being attached, passing through life in a spirit of detachment. The great Guru of Swami Vivekananda, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Deva said, “If you

want me to tell you the teaching of Lord Krishna it is Tyaga.” He was a simple villager, and he also said, “I will tell you, if you go on repeating the word Mara, Mara, Mara, Mara, it becomes Rama, Rama, Rama, Rama. Similarly, if you go on repeating the word, ‘Geeta, Geeta, Geeta, Geeta, Geeta, Geeta, you will ultimately find yourself repeating Tyagi, Tyagi, Tyagi, Tyagi, Tyagi.” Tyaga is the heart of the Geeta message. Therefore, to go through life renouncing all desires and attachment for things, having your mind fixed only upon the supreme ultimate reality, then in and through action, you can attain perfection.

*Svakarmanaa tamabhyarchya siddhim
vindati maanavah...(B.G. XVIII/46)*

Worshipping Him with his own duty, man attains perfection.

The Gita Jnana Upadesha culminates in the 18th chapter in this ultimate revelation of doing your Swadharma without the sense of doership. And unattached to anything in this world, that action will liberate you from the necessity of coming back into this world. And, there is an extraordinary similarity in one way between the commencing chapter and the concluding chapter of the Srimad Bhagavad-Gita. In the commencing chapter, Arjuna says, “No! No! No! No! Massacre and slaughter all my kith and kin standing before me here, what a great sin, Oh Lord Krishna! What are you asking me to do? Chaos and confusion will result in our entire society.”

*Aho bata mahatpaapam kartum vyavasitaa
vayam...(B.G. I/46)*

“No. No. No. No. I shall not fight. Rather than slaughtering and killing my kith and kin, it is much better to renounce my Kshatriya Dharma, I do Tyaga of my Kshatriya Dharma, take up the begging bowl and wander as a mendicant.” So, Arjuna decides to do Tyaga, to renounce his Kshatriya Dharma and take to Sannyas rather than wade through blood to attain his kingdom and throne. And here, we have Arjuna asking in the 18th chapter,

*Sannyaasasya mahaabhaaho
tattvamicchaami veditum
Tyaagasya cha risheekesha prithak
keshinishoodana...(B.G. XVIII/1)*

“I would like to know the essence of Sannyasa and Tyaga”. Arjuna begins with saying I shall renounce everything and become a Sannyasin. But after listening to Lord Krishna’s Jnana Upadesha from the second chapter to 17th chapter, he begins to realise that something is wrong. What I thought Tyaga or Sannyasa does not seem to be the proper thing. “Now O Krishna, will you please tell me what Tyaga, what Sannyasa is?” He comes to this point. So, there is the similarity, but there is an extraordinary juxtaposition of two totally opposing situations. In the first chapter Arjuna says, “I shall not fight”, he drops his bow and sinks to the ground, fully overcome with Moha, delusion. Lord Krishna is

starting to convince him. And at the end of the 18th chapter this same Arjuna says as the ultimate concluding declaration,

*Nasto moha: smritir labdhaa
tvat prasaadaanmaya achyuta
Sthitosmi gata sandehah
karishye vachanam tava*
(B.G. XVIII/73)

“My delusion is gone, and I am ready to follow your admonition. Whatever you say I’m ready to do.” That is why the most important Shloka, to you, me and each one of us today is

*Yatra yogeshvarah Krishno yatra paartho
dhanurdharah
Tatra sreer-vijayo bhootir dhruvaa neetir
matir-mama... (B.G. XVIII/78)*

Sanjaya concludes by saying, “where there is life guided in obedience to the Lord’s teachings, carried by wisdom and where there is the readiness to follow whatever has been said, and readiness to implement the wisdom that has been received, there is success, there is victory, there is glory and there is firm adherence to Dharma. There is no doubt about it.”

We shall go into the details of this wonderful revelation of the 18th chapter which contains the quintessence of all the other 16 chapters tomorrow and the day after tomorrow. We thank the Lord for giving this opportunity to consider these eternal teachings given to mankind for all

ME

times. And I am privileged to impart it to you who are not merely pilgrim souls but you are seeking souls! God bless you and make your quest end in success, blessedness and illumination.

Hari Om Tat Sat. Paramatmane Namaha.

Worshipful adorations to the Purna-Avatar Bhagawan Sri Krishna, who graced and blessed the global human family with this priceless Gita Jnana Upadesha containing the quintessence of the Upanishadic divine wisdom. It also embodies within its brief 18 chapters and 700 verses the practical method for attaining the experience of Reality. The necessary practices, the way of living and acting in our life will make life a process of attaining that Supreme Reality. Therefore, it is also a Yoga Shastra. The way of life that the Gita expounds is powerful and effective in bringing us closer to that great Reality. It is Brahma Vidya, it is Upanishad, it is Yoga Shastra, directly expounded by God Himself in all His glory. They say, that Lord Krishna is Shodasha Kala Yukta, Purna Avatar of Para Brahman. It is this fullest manifestation of Divinity that has personally given the teachings. Lord Krishna expounds the nature of the ultimate Reality and also the method of attaining that transcendental experience and the art and science of living your life in such a way that it will become the means for its attainment. Spiritualising your life and transmuting all activities into a process of linking yourself to the Divine, is a process that brings you into a continuous relationship with the source and origin of your Being. So, life becomes no longer an activity that binds, that stands in the way of your

God attainment, but it becomes activity that takes you towards God. It becomes activity that has the power to remove whatever obstacles may be in your path to God realisation. Life is spiritualised, activity is converted into Yoga. For, in the ultimate analysis, what is Yoga? Yoga is anything and everything that links you up with God. Yoga is anything and everything that helps you to move in the direction of God.

Sajana Kasai was carrying on his trade as a butcher. But the way in which he did his profession, instead of it becoming an obstacle, became Yoga. The devout service of her husband by a wife is to her no longer a worldly activity. It becomes Yoga, for she sees God in her husband, and thus her service becomes worship of her visible God in whom she sees the ultimate Reality.

For a disciple, loving and sincere service of his Guru is not a service on the secular level. It becomes converted into absolute Yoga. For he sees in the Guru not a human person, but he sees God manifest in and through the Guru. Therefore, his Guru Seva becomes Bhagawat Aradhana.

Sankaracharya, the great expounder of Kevala Advaita Vedanta Siddhanta, dismissed the entire phenomenal universe as a temporary appearance upon the canvas of the mind, as Sankalpa-Vikalpa, which has no existence of its own. *Jagat mithya swapnavat* (*The world is unreal like a dream*). Yet, at the same time he said and all the Siddhanta says, Karma is the main cause for

human bondage, and if Karma is inevitable, we have to find a way through which we can convert Karma into a process of God attainment. And therefore, he has given us that famous Sloka that occurs in his *Siva Manasa Pooja Stotra*:

*Yadyat karma karomi tat tad akhilam
Shambho tavaaraadhanam.*

Whatever actions I perform, all these I offer as adorations to you my Lord!

That same Jagat Guru Adi Sankaracharya said, "As long as a human being, born out of the Prakriti and the three Gunas, has qualities of Tamas and Rajas in him, he cannot refrain from Karma." If he still wants to progress towards Moksha, then he has to find out the art and science of converting this very process into a Moksha Sadhana. And that is precisely what the 18 chapters of the Srimad Bhagawat Gita expound to us. In the midst of activity, how can we convert this activity into a liberating process? In the seventeenth chapter we have Sannyasa twice expounded to Arjuna. In the fourth chapter we have the exposition of Jnana Karma Sannyasa and in the fifth chapter, Karma Sannyasa Yoga. When he has already expounded Sannyasa in two of the previous chapters, why does the Lord in the very last and concluding chapter take up the same theme of Sannyasa, Moksha Sannyasa Yoga?

The purpose of all the Scriptures that exist within the Satya Sanatana Vaidika Dharma, the

one central objective and purpose they wished to fulfil is to show the way for the Jivatma to attain liberation. All the Granthas, the Vedas, the Upanishads, Brahma-Sutras, Bhagawad Gita, Mahabharata, Ramayana, the 18 Puranas and whatever has been written during the course of centuries, they have but one objective—to tell us how being caught in the Jaala (net) of Maya of this world, how we can attain liberation in and through this life. That is the crowning glory, which alone the human creature is in a position to attain.

When we take up the study of the 18th chapter, we must understand that the word ‘Sannyasa’ is not the fourth Ashrama that is part of the Varnashrama Dharma of the Hindu way of life. Life ends with the fourth Ashrama, Sannyasa, after having fulfilled the duties and obligations of the Brahmacharya Ashrama, Grihastha Ashrama and the Vanaprastha Ashrama. And by that time usually, the individual is already in an advanced stage of age. We have the episode of Yajnavalkya and his two wives, Katyayani and Maitreyi. Yajnavalkya was a Grihasti. He was a Brahma-Jnani, a great towering figure in the Upanishadic Vedic scene. But he was a Grihasti with plenty of property, cattle, land, servants, gold and silver. And ultimately he thinks, “I have lived my life fully. I’ve enjoyed all that has to be enjoyed. But now I must take to the Sannyasa Ashrama. I must retire into the forests, and there my only

duty is to dedicate my heart, mind and intellect to the Supreme Reality or Brahman. I have to merge in Brahman.” A Sannyasin has no other duty except Atma-Chintana, Brahma-Chintana. There are only three things for him, Bhiksha, Shaucha and Brahma-Chintana. Hunger is inevitable as long as there is the body; so one has to take Bhiksha; when one eats, one has to eliminate, so Saucha is necessary; and then, Brahma-Chintana—day and night Brahma-Chintana.

Arjuna was a young man, he was a prince, a warrior, so why is the Lord talking to him about Sannyasa? The Lord is talking to him about giving up what is in the way of transforming his active life into a process of approaching God. Action you cannot avoid. And unless you know the secret of acting in a way that the action becomes a liberating process, action will bind. And the principle that converts action into Yoga and makes it into a liberating process is Sannyasa. Sannyasa here means renunciation, giving up. In our normal day to day activity, where we do not enquire into the real nature of life and actions, where we do not discriminate, the action becomes a binding factor. First Arjuna refuses to act, refuses to engage in battle which he himself had sought, made all preparations for and for which he was fully armed in a chariot on the field of battle. At the last moment, he said, “I shall not fight! I shall not act!” He had the idea that this action is sinful, and he will be partaking of that

sin. He had the idea that, "I am going to do this"—Kartrutva Abhimana. This is the sense of doership and not having the insight, that there is some Great Power that pervades all things and without which even a dry leaf cannot move. Man is nothing at all if God is not the inner power that propels Him to act. If with Kartrutva Abhimana an individual engages in action, that action becomes a source of bondage. Because, it is propelled by a Sankalpa of his little human ego. The renunciation of Sankalpa, the Sannyasa of Sankalpa takes away from the action the power to make you bound. Kartrutva Abhimana is one reason for bondage. Another reason is that all human beings engage in action driven by desire. "Out of this action, I wish to gain something, I want to enjoy this experience". Therefore, desire is the propelling factor behind all actions. Phalaakanksha. As long as there is Phalaakanksha, action becomes a source of bondage. Kartrutva Abhimaana, the idea that, "I am doing the action" and the desire to obtain something, these become the factors that bring about the binding nature of normal human activity, when there is no clear perception that there is no actor except God and God alone. His power is making this universe move: suns, moons, stars, galaxies, oceans—all are in a dynamic movement because of the great will of God. The will of God pervades and prevails everything and we are nothing. Realising this, one completely surrenders to the will of God and says,

“Here I am! I place myself at your disposal. Do with me what You want. As You say, I shall let You act in and through me.”

At the end of the great revelation of the 11th chapter, the Vishwarupa Darshana Yoga, the Lord turns to Arjuna and says, “Now do you see? Are you going to fight? Are you going to kill? Are you going to engage in battle? Have you not seen? Everything is done. I have done everything. Realise that there is nothing for you to do and that you are but a mere instrument in My hands. For fulfilling the Maryada of the external universe, I make you My instrument.”

Nimmita maatram bhava savyasaachin...
(B.G. XI/33)

With these words, He revealed to Arjuna the secret of inaction in the midst of action. Akarma within Karma. And it is such Akarma that ultimately takes one to liberation. Therefore, this chapter has the befitting name, Moksha Sannyasa Yoga. Tyaga here is used for renunciation. Renouncing whatever stands between you and God attainment. In several chapters of the Gita the nature of renunciation is again and again reiterated, and the summing up is, you have to renounce the desire for the fruit of action:

*Karmanyeva adhikaaraste maa phaleshu
kadachana... (B.G. II/47)*

In this battle of life, you cannot afford to be chicken-hearted. You cannot afford to be fearful.

Strength is the one thing needed, and so the first renunciation is:

*Kshudram hridaya daurbalyam tyakto tishtha
parantapa...(B.G. II/3)*

You have to give up this weakness, you have to have self-confidence. "I am a child of God. I may be alone, without human relations or friends. But, I am never alone because God is with me. He is my eternal companion. With Him, I can overcome everything." If this faith is there, then there is strength within.

You have to give up, you have to renounce all forms of weakness, and bravely face life. He says, "whatever is divine, that is to be accepted; whatever is undivine, has to be renounced." And He singles out three great enemies of man, and much later in His own inimitable style Sankaracharya has to say the same thing in his 'Vairagya Dindima':

*Kamascha, krodhascha, lobhascha dehe
tishtanti taskarah
Jnana ratna apaharartam tasmaat jagrata
jagrata.*

Within you abide three dacoits ready to plunder the great gems of wisdom. They are carnal passion or impure desire; they are anger which is the inevitable corollary of passion. Where there is anger, you can be sure that there is carnal passion. They go together, and Lobha makes your heart a stone. Compassion and kindness are the

very source and bedrock of Dharma. The whole edifice of Buddhism and Jainism rests upon this great virtue of Daya. Selfishness and greed turn your heart into stone. Shankaracharya says, “These three are your dire enemies. Therefore, beware! Beware! Beware!” And Krishna says,

*Trividham narakasyedam dwaaram
naashanamatmanah
Kamah krodhah tatha lobhah, tasmaat
etat trayam tyajet..(B.G.XVI/21)*

Triple is the gate of this hell, destructive of the self—lust, anger, greed, therefore one should abandon these three.

He brings out what is to be renounced, what is real Tyaga. Not giving up your bank balance, your house or motor car or your wife and children or something that you are doing. As long as you have not renounced impure desire, gross passion, anger, as long as you have not renounced greed, avarice and cupidity, your renunciation is not renunciation. Again in the 14th and 16th chapters of the Gita, He hints at what real renunciation is. Real renunciation is not an external action. Real renunciation is an internal action. He expounds the ‘Guna Traya Vibhaga Yoga’ and says: “To attain the supreme goal of God realisation, you have to go on increasing Sattva Guna. And in this process, you have to renounce all that is Tamasic and Rajasic when it is linked up with Tamas.” Rajas when it is linked up with Sattva, can become a helpful liberating process.

And in the 16th chapter it is the renunciation of everything that is Asuric. You have to renounce completely, give up everything that is undivine. Renunciation, therefore is a recurring theme in the teachings of the Gita. And Sannyasa is being preached and expounded to one who is right in the midst of Pravritti. Just imagine, Lord Krishna, the Guru is teaching Sannyasa and teaching Tyaga to a fully armed prince who is in the centre of a battlefield between two armies, about to start a great war!

What does it mean? Tyaga and Sannyasa are absolutely indispensable. Not merely for the Sannyasin, Yogi and Babaji. Tyaga and Sannyasa are absolutely necessary and indispensable for everyone who is in the midst of dynamic activity. It is meant for everyone, wherever he is placed by providence, if he wants to make life a liberating force. If you are a true Hindu, if you are a true follower of Satya Sanatana Dharma, then your goal of life should be liberation! Then alone you have understood the essence of Hinduism. The great call of Hinduism is: "Come! Come! Become a Yogi and attain liberation." A follower of the Satya Sanatana Vedic Dharma should be a Mumukshu, a seeker after liberation. Liberation comes out of wisdom, therefore he is a Jignasu. *Shraddhavan labhate jnaanam*—wisdom dawns in one who has devotion to God. And *Buddhi yogam dadaami te*—it is a Shraddhalu Bhakta to whom God gives His Grace—the wisdom that liberates.

Arjuna said in the first chapter, “I will renounce everything and become a mendicant. I don’t want this kingdom which I have to obtain wading through a river of blood, slaughtering and massacring my own kith and kin”. Then Krishna through 16 chapters is telling him, “Be clear-sighted. Think well. You are overcome with attachment, Moha, Asakti, Mamata. Your Buddhi has no Viveka. It is completely dominated by strong emotion. Be calm. If you do not slay any one of them, if you do not engage in this action, do you think they are going to live forever? Do you think by your not killing them, they are not going to die?”

*Jaatasya hi dhruvoh mrityuh dhruvam janma
mrityasya cha B.G. II/27*

“It is inevitable. The wise do not grieve over that which is inevitable. Wake up! I will expound to you the Reality, the great Truth.” And through patient advice, patient revelation, answering all his questions, He is clearing all his doubts. And after Krishna had expounded the ‘Shraddha Traya Vibhaga Yoga’, Arjuna has gone a long way.

Krishna ultimately comes to the 18th chapter, as Arjuna begins to see things in a proper perspective. His thinking has risen to a higher level. He is able to perceive things which he did not perceive when he was overcome by delusion. And so Arjuna says, “Yes! My idea of what is

Tyaga and what is Sannyasa seems not to be all right. Please expound this to me very clearly.”

*Sannyaasasya mahaabaho tattvam icchaami
veditum
Tyaagasya cha hrisheekesha prithk
keshinishhoodhana...(B.G. XVIII/1)*

Lord Krishna goes direct to the heart of the matter:

*Kaamyaanaam karmanaam nyaasam
sannyaasam kavayo vidhuh...(B.G. XVIII/2)*

Renouncing all desire for personal gain: “I act because it is my duty, and I act because out of this action I may perhaps be able to fulfil the highest ideal that the Vedic way of life has placed before the human individual.” That is, you have been sent into this world to be a source of benefit to God’s creation. All ethics and morality has been summed up in this one concept of Paropakara. This body has been given so that it may be an instrument of benefit to God’s creation. If thus thinking, you engage in action, you are practising Sannyasa. Yoga means practice, Abhyasa. (Vishaada has also been termed Yoga. But that is a different subject.) But in all the other 17 chapters termed Yoga Shastra, Yoga means Abhyasa. This Sannyasa therefore is to be practised in the middle of activity, so that you can keep yourself out of your action.

*Kaamyaanaam karmanaam nyaasam
sannyaasam kavayo vidhuh
Sarvakarmaphalatyaaagam phraahustyaagam
vichakshanaah... (B.G.XVIII/2)*

The sages understand Sannyasa to be the renunciation of action with desire; The wise declare the abandonment of the fruits of all actions as Tyaga.

Some people say, “No! Sannyasa means that all actions have to be given up. That is real Tyaga.” Why? By their very nature, all actions have got defects. And because all actions are defective, if you engage in them, the result will be bondage. All actions have to be completely renounced. And some say, ”Nishedha Karma is to be given up, but not Karma that is incumbent upon you as a human individual in a society.”

*Tyaajyam dosha vadittyek karma
prahurmaneeshinah
Yajnadaanatapahkarma na tyaajyamiti
chaapare... (B.G. XVIII/3)*

Some philosophers declare that actions should be abandoned as evil; while others declare that acts of sacrifice, gift and austerity should not be relinquished.

Some wise people say, “Action has to be renounced because it contains defect, and he who becomes the actor, becomes the partaker of this defect.” But others say, ”Actions that are beneficial to others should not be renounced.”

Yajna is purifying, it is uplifting. Out of Yajna much benefit and good comes not only to you, but to all creatures. Together with the Yajna, there is worship of the Gods, chanting of Vedic Mantras and Daana Punya Karma. Therefore, sacrifices that are of a purifying nature should not be given up. Sharing what you have with others is a noble process, it enables you to rise above yourself; it is not to be given up. And penance is a great purifier. Within our nature, there is Tamo Guna, there are countless Samskaras and Vasanas that are negative. Karma is Mishrita. We have engaged in Shuba-Ashuba Karmas in previous lives. When we come here, a certain portion has to be worked out in a single incarnation. It is a mixture --- Shubha-Ashubha Karma. Out of that, we engage in positive as well as negative actions, and these Samskaras are so deep within us, they are invisible, subtle and elusive. How can we purify them? If your outer cloth becomes dirty, with hot water and soap, you can clean it. If your hands become dirty, you can wash them. If there is dirt inside your body, you can take a purgative, you can fast or can take medicine. The Pranamaya Kosha can be purified through Kumbhak. But much deeper than the Sthula Sharira and the Sukshma Sharira is the Karana Sharira where all the Vasanas and Samskaras are embedded. What power, what Shakti, what force can go into the deepest recesses of the Karana Sharira and purify the Ashubha Vasanas? That Shakti is Tapasya. It

is the Mahabharata war within your psyche between that which pulls you downwards and that which wants to take you upwards. There is a constant tension between these two, and determining to take the side of that which is positive, divine, spiritual, that will take you upwards. This continuous state of subduing all that is against your progress towards God is Tapasya. This tension between the higher and the lower, the greater and the lesser, creates within you a fiery power. The word Tapasya comes from the word Taapa, heat. A psychic heat is generated within you that has the power to burn up all dross. Tapasya generates the power to penetrate into the Karana Sharira and completely purify your inner Self. Therefore, some say, "Yajna, Dana and Tapa, they are the purifying Karmas and they should never be renounced. Even if all the other things are renounced, these three are not to be renounced."

O Arjuna, these are the opinions of various people.

I will now tell you what is to be renounced. Three types of renunciation are there, O best among Bharatas:

*Nischayam shrunume tatra, tyaage bharata
sattama
Tyaago hi purushavyaagra trividhas
samprakeertitah... (B.G. XVIII/4)*

*Yajnadaanatapahkarma na tyaajyam
kaaryameva tat
Yajno daanam tapahschaiva paavanaani
manisheenaam... (B.G. XVIII/5)*

Yajna, Daana and Tapa should not be renounced.

They are the purifiers of the human nature.

They are your friends upon the path of God realisation. And mind you, He is telling this to a warrior in the midst of battle, fully armed and ready to fight. That means, He is telling this to each one of you seated here. If you really want to be the Jijnasus and Mumukshus, you must always keep your daily practice of Yajna, Daana and Tapa.

But while doing Yajna, Daana and Tapa, you must not be attached to them. Krishna warns against this:

*Etaanyapi tu karmaani, sangam tyaktvaa
phalaani cha
Kartavyaaneeti me paarthaa nishchitam
matamuttamam... (B.G. XVIII/6)*

You must do it thinking, “This is my duty. In these circumstances, this is my duty, Kartavya Karma. It should be done renouncing all desires, renouncing all expectations of fruits out of it.

*Niyatasya tu sannyaasah karmano
nopapadhyate,
Mohaattasya parityaagah taamasah
parikeertitah... (B.G. XVIII/7)*

It is not proper for a person to renounce those actions that are his duties. In whatever stage of life you are, either you are in Brahmacharya Ashrama, in Grihasta Ashrama or in Vanaprastha Ashrama, each Ashrama has its particular Dharma. If in a particular stage you neglect to do your set of activity which forms your Kartavya Karma and Dharma, either through idleness or reluctance to exert or because they are not very pleasant, that Tyaga is not good. If he relinquishes them out of delusion, his relinquishment, his Tyaga is Tamasic. We are all sybarites. We like comforts, we do not want exertion. And therefore, “if this action is painful, I would much rather be without it. I don’t want to lose my comforts and conveniences.”

*Duhkhamityeva yat karma kaayaklesha
bhayaat tyajet
Sa kritva raajasam tyaagam naiva
tyaagaphalam labhet... (B.G.XVIII/8)*

The fruit of renunciation does not accrue to one who renounces action because he thinks it is uncomfortable, it is painful. And so, due to fear of exertion and discomfort caused by action, if he renounces that action, he may be regarded as a renouncer but he will not be able to get the merit of renunciation.

Kaaryamityeva yatkarma niyatam kriyate'
Arjuna

*Sangam tyaktvaa phalam chaiva sa tyaagah
sattviko mataha... (B.G.XVIII/9)*

The real Tyaga, Tyaga of the highest quality is to engage in Karma because it is one's duty. "I engage in Karma because it is my duty. I expect nothing in return, I have the satisfaction that I have done my duty. They say, 'virtue is its own reward'. With this noble idea, if I fulfil my duty, that is enough for me. I do not require recognition or thanks from anyone. The very idea that I have done my duty in the eyes of God is enough." If one engages in action and desires for no gain, then he is a real renouncer. He is a Tyagi, he is a Tapasvi, even though he is right in the midst of action. In activity, you are in a state of Tyaga.

*Na dveshtyakushalam karma kushale
naanushajjate*
*Tyagee sattva samaavishto medhaavee
cchinna sanshayah... (B.G. XVIII/10)*

The man of renunciation, pervaded by purity, intelligent and with his doubts set asunder, does not hate a disagreeable work nor is he attached to an agreeable one.

And without any doubt he is doing the correct type of Tyaga. Engaging in such action all his doubts are dispelled by the purity of his intellect; he does not hate disagreeable action nor does he become attached to an agreeable action. In this

state of equanimity within, he neither shrinks from a disagreeable action nor is he impelled through attraction to a pleasant reaction. Thus, acting with the wisdom of the sole ideal “It is my duty”, you are absolved from the binding factors of the action. Action becomes a liberating force. Action is the binding force if you have the idea, “I am doing it”. Action no longer binds you when you have the idea, “I am fulfilling the role which I am meant to fulfil. I am carrying out my duty.”

Worshipful homage and loving adorations to That supreme world teacher Purna-Avatar Sri Krishna Bhagawan, who out of Grace infinite, Ahetu-Ki-Kripa, Grace without any cause or reason, has bestowed upon humanity for all times the priceless treasure of the Bhagavad-Gita. It is the quintessence of the Upanishadic wisdom, that gives to us the exposition of the great supreme eternal reality, Brahma Vidya. It also offers the Yoga Shastras, the practical method of aspiring and striving for and successfully attaining that supernal experience. And it puts us into inseparable spiritual relationship with the supreme reality which is not distant, but is an ever present indwelling reality. The shortest Upanishad, the Isavasya Upanishad, contains 18 short verses, even as the Srimad Bhagavad Gita contains 18 chapters. That shortest Upanishad brings to us the priceless treasure of the highest experience, the Aparoksha Anubhuti, Brahma-Anubhava and expounds very briefly ‘Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma’. Whatever is seen, heard, tasted, touched, smelt, thought about— now, ages ago and ages hereafter—is nothing but Brahman and Brahman alone. That alone exists: the one without a second, supremely non-dual, Ekameva Advitiyam Brahma; Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma; Brahmaiva Satyam. This Upanishad also enjoins us to engage in action:

*Kurvanneva karmaani jijeevishecchat gum
samaah*

Engaging in action, you must live a full life.

We get the heart of the Gita, the teaching of Lord Krishna, expounded in the very second Mantra of the Isavasya Upanishad. The Isavasya Upanishad is regarded as one of the most important Upanishads. And it holds a place which no other Upanishad holds. For all the other Upanishads belong either to the Brahmana portion or the Aranyaka portion of the Vedas. But the Isavasya Upanishad belongs to the Samhita portion of the Vedas. Therefore, every verse of this Upanishad is regarded as a Mantra. They sometimes refer to the Isavasya Upanishad as the Mantropanishad. Of all the Upanishads the most important are 10 Upanishads, the Dashopanishad, and the very first of the ten important Upanishads is the Isavasyopanishad. It forms part of the Yajur Veda Samhita, and it is in the Vajasaneyi portion. Therefore it is also called the Vajasaneyi Upanishad or Mantropanishad. And our tradition sometimes holds that the entire Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is an exposition of the Truths expounded in the Isavasyopanishad, that the Brihadaranyakopanishad is a commentary upon the Isavasyopanishad. That is the importance of this Upanishad.

The first verse of the Upanishad brings out the revelation granted by Lord Krishna to Arjuna in the 11th chapter, the Vishvaroopa Darshana

Yoga, where Arjuna was granted the Divya Chakshu and he beheld everywhere nothing but God and God alone, nothing but divinity and divinity alone:

*Ishaavasyam idagum sarvam yat kincha
jagatyaam jagat*

*All this—whatsoever moves in this universe
(and those that move not) is covered (indwelt or
pervaded or enveloped or clothed) by the Lord*

And the next important Adesha of the Isavasya Upanishad, ‘engaging in action we must live a full life’, is brought out in the 18th chapter of the Srimad Bhagavad-Gita. And if the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is a vast, elaborate commentary upon the Isavasyopanishad, the Srimad Bhagavad-Gita Jnanopadesha is no less.

They said that Vyasa summed up the entire Upanishadic revelation of the ultimate reality and put them into a concise aphoristic form in his Vedanta Sutras or Brahma Sutras, on which Sankaracharya has written an outstanding Bhashya. Narada and Shandilya wrote aphorisms upon Bhakti. The great Patanjali Maharishi expounded the science of meditation through his Yoga Sutras in eight stages, ‘Ashtanga Yoga’. But where have we been given an exposition on Karma Yoga? How many people can go into the forest and engage in deep meditation? How many people have got the equipment to study Brahma Sutras, Upanishads and Vedanta, and how many indeed

can really and truly love God for God sake only? Asking for nothing but to love Him, "Grant me absolutely unmotivated love for Your lotus feet. I have no wish, I have no want. I have only one great longing in my heart to love You, and to love You alone." The Bhakti that is present within the great living religions of the world consists of going to church, mosques, synagogues, temples in order to ask for something. They offer worship so that God may be propitiated and give them what they want: solve their problems, remove their difficulties, give them success and prosperity. To put it frankly, it is Sakamya Bhakti, not Bhakti for Bhakti's sake. True Bhakti can arise only in a pure heart that has emptied itself of all desire, knowing that the value of the entire world is cipher. If you analyse the real nature of things, they are giving more sorrow and sufferings and restlessness than the opposite.

So it is very difficult to practice Vedanta or Yoga, deep meditation where time and space are transcended. It is equally very difficult to have devotion. In millions, one or two: a Prahlada, a Meera, a Narada, a Chaitanya Mahaprabhu — they had Bhakti of that kind. And the vast, vast majority of human beings are engaged in ceaseless activity in Prapancha, the world of Vyavahar in Samsara. This being the fact, there was a need to find a path of how in the midst of activity one could be established in Tyaga, one could be established in Sannyasa, one could be

established in Bhakti, and one could be in a constant state of Yoga. And is there such a path? The Gita answer is hundred percent Yes! That is exactly why Lord Krishna gave his Gita Jnana Upadesha to Arjuna, because He was not other than him. Nara and Narayana are one and the same. Again and again He says, "You are very dear to me. Therefore, I expound to you this greatest of all secrets, the supreme secret which none else has been able to know from me." Therefore, Gita is Karma-Mimamsa.

Now let us try to consider the central message of the 18th chapter of the Gita? If you want to have an answer and a clear understanding, you have to go back to the very first chapter. Arjuna had asked Lord Krishna's help to engage in a battle, and Lord Krishna had tried his utmost to avert this battle, this bloodbath, this carnage, even humbling Himself to go as a messenger on behalf of the Pandavas. He was the ruler of Dwaraka, but he said, "Yes! If possible I shall see that war is averted." He had to return without the mission being accomplished. And therefore, what had to be, had to be. At the very last moment, Arjuna refuses to fight, and that was the occasion for imparting the Gita Jnana Upadesha. War was the only course left, and when it was about to start, Arjuna refused to fight. Then Krishna had to tell him, "You have to fight. It is your duty. By this alone, you will be fulfilling your duty as a Kshatriya, as a warrior, as a prince." What are the

duties of a Brahmin? What are the duties of a Kshatriya? What are the duties of a Vaishya? What are the duties of a Shudra? Very clearly it is explained in the 18th chapter that heroism, valour, fighting, Udaarata, Daana are the duty of a Kshatriya. The whole Gita arose out of the necessity of Krishna to somehow pursue Arjuna that his decision not to do his duty, not to engage in action, was a wrong decision which was due to not understanding the nature of action, the nature of Tyaga. He starts His exposition of the secret of life, human nature, of life and death. He tells Arjuna, "You think that you are doing the action, but it is not so. The supreme actor is the Supreme Being, and whatever is being done, is being done through His power. You are only like a puppet at the end of a string; you have to be the instrument in His hands." He actually gives a direct revelation of this to Arjuna in the 11th chapter. After that, He follows it up with six more chapters and ultimately, the 18th chapter contains the entire exposition of the nature of true action, the nature of true Yoga, the nature of true renunciation and relinquishment, Sannyasa and Tyaga. Arjuna becomes perfectly convinced that the way to attain both Tyaga and Sannyasa is not renunciation of action but engaging in action in the right and proper manner.

And therefore, at the very beginning of the 18th chapter Arjuna says, "I thought I will renounce action, I shall no longer fight. But now I

see that my idea of renunciation was not proper. Please tell me what is real renunciation? What is Tyaga and what is Sannyasa?" This question is so very important to each and every one of us here in this Prapancha. All of us have to engage in action, and all of us have to attain Self-realisation. Engaging in action, we have to fulfil our divine destiny. Our mission in life is to attain liberation through God experience. Are these two contradictory? Conclusively, Lord Krishna says, that the essence of Tyaga and Sannyasa is an inner spiritual attitude to action.

What is Sannyasa?

It is the renunciation of all action that is the outcome of selfish desire and greed for gaining something.

*Kaamyaanaam karmanaam nyaasam
sannyaasam kavayoviduh*

The sages understand Sannyasa to be the renunciation of action with desire

And what is Tyaga?

*Sarvakarmaphalatyaaagam praahustyaagam
vichakshanaah...(B.G. XVIII/2)*

The wise declare the abandonment of the fruits of all action as Tyaga

To ask or to desire that out of this action one should gain something is the seed of greed, and that makes Karma Bandha Kaaraka. Karma binds when it is accompanied by greed for gain. Karma

binds when it is driven by desire. When such actions are renounced, you are already in the free field. You can engage in any action you want, as long as you give up all actions driven by selfish desire. That is Sannyasa. That is Tyaga. Action is not the opposite of either Tyaga or Vairagya or Sannyasa. It is the attitude in which you engage in action and the approach to action. Action in order to please God by fulfilling your duty is the action that liberates.

And in trying to explain this, Krishna says, “I will expound to you, O Arjuna! Five factors go to make up an action. Without these five factors, there can be no action.

*Panchaitaani mahaabaaho kaaranaani
nibodha me
Saankhye kritaante proktaani siddhaye
sarvakarmanaam... (B.G. XVIII/13)*

For any action five factors come into play. The circumstances which call for this action is called the Adhisthaana or the field, the actor himself is Karta and the type of exertion in order to achieve that action is the Chestha, and the means by which this action can be attained it is the Karana (not only our own instruments, external instruments also), and ultimately He says, “the fifth factor that governs action is Providence, the will of God.—There is the field, the immediate circumstances which call forth an action and then the actor himself, the various types of exertion

that he has to engage in and the means and the instruments for action, and ultimately Providence, destiny, Daiva.

And Lord Krishna shows step after step that all these five factors have a threefold nature. The 14th chapter is again expounded here. Who is a Sattvic Karta, a Rajasic Karta, a Tamasic Karta? What is Sattvic Karana, Rajasic Karana and Tamasic Karana? What is Sattvic Tyaga, Rajasic Tyaga, Tamasic Tyaga? All the five factors are classified into these three Gunas. The simple reason is that all activity has to be done within the field of Prakriti by the human actor who is himself part and parcel of Prakriti. Lord Krishna says, "O Arjuna, neither in this world nor in the heavenly worlds these three Gunas are absent. They are present everywhere. And therefore, he who chooses the Sattvic way of acting, Sattvic instruments of action, Sattvic attitude and approach to action, he liberates himself in and through action. Action becomes for him the liberating Yoga."

*Adhishtaanam tathaa kartaa karanam cha
prithagvidham;
Vividhaashcha prithakcheshtaa daivam
chaivatra panchamam... (B.G. XVIII/14)*

*The seat (body), the doer, the various senses,
the different functions of various sorts, and the
presiding deity also, the fifth.*

*Shareeravaangmanobhiryat karma
praarabhate narah;
Nyaayyam vaa vipareetam vaa panchaite
tasya hetavah... (B.G. XVIII/15)*

Whether it is a mental, a verbal or a physical action, these five causative factors prevail. They are present in all types of action: mental, verbal, physical, positive or negative, righteous or unrighteous.

*Tatraivam sati kartaaram aatmaanam
kevalam tu yah
Pashyatyakritabuddhitwaan na sa pashyati
durmatih... (B.G. XVIII/16)*

One who is dull-witted thinks, “I’m the actor. I’m doing this.” He does not realize that it is the confluence and combination of these five causative factors that ultimately achieve any action, and that he is only a witness. This is the main cause of bondage. In the beginning Arjuna said, “How can I kill all these people? I am committing a great sin. I will go to hell. Why are you goading me to this action?” Arjuna fell into this delusion because he took upon himself the sense of doership, and therefore Krishna tells him, “O Arjuna! You are not the actor. Without these five causative factors, no action is possible and four of them belong here and the fifth is Providence. It is That Supreme Being by whom all is pervaded.”

Therefore, surrender to That Supreme Being and put yourself entirely at His disposal: “In whatever way You want to make use of me, O Lord! O Supreme Power! make use of me. I shall be willing to be Your instrument.” Once you do that, you can plunge into any action, and no action can bind you. In the midst of activity, you will be absolute Nishkriya, just as the central axis of a whirling wheel. The wheel is revolving at a great speed, but right at the very centre, there is stillness. In the centre of tremendous hurricane is absolute stillness.

*Yasya naahamkrito bhaavo buddhyasya na
lipyate.*

*Hatwaapi sa imaam lokaan na hanti na
nibadhyate... (B.G. XVIII/17)*

He who is free from the egoistic notion, whose intelligence is not tainted (by good or evil) though he slays all these people, he slayeth not nor is he bound by the action.

Prakriti is working. And all these five factors combined are performing all the actions. If this clear understanding comes, no action has the power to touch you.

In each Karma there are many factors according to the aspects in which you look at it. There is the knower, the thing to be known, and the process of knowing it.

*Jnaanam jneyam parijsnaataa trividhaa
karmachodanaa;
Karanam karma karteti trividhah
karmasangraha... (B.G. XVIII/18)*

Knowledge, the knowable and the knower form the threefold impulse to action; the organ, the action and the agent form the threefold basis of action.

*Jnaanam karma cha kartaa cha tridhaiva
gunabhedatah;
Prochyaate gunasankhyaane yathaavacchrunu
taanyapi... (B.G. XVIII/19)*

Knowledge, action and actor are declared in the science of the Gunas (Sankhya philosophy) to be of three kinds only, according to the distinction of the Gunas. Of these also hear duly.

*Sarvabhooteshu yenaikam
bhaavamavyayameekshate;
Avibhaktam vibhakteshu tadjnaanam viddhi
saattvikam... (B.G. XVIII/20)*

That knowledge is Sattvic, where in the midst of multiplicity there is one thing alone, and that is the inner reality. One who, seeing that one thing prevailing in the midst of apparent diversity and multiplicity, making his activity an adoration to That One Supreme Reality, his actions become adorations. His actions become the process of liberation. Then action becomes supreme Yoga, it becomes Maha Yoga. But if in the midst of these multifarious names and forms, one sees them as

different things and becomes attached or repelled, that is Rajasic activity. Such activity coloured by like and dislike, Raga-Dvesha, tends to bind. And the Tamasic activity is goaded by desire. The awareness of the all pervading reality being present in and through all these activities is totally absent in the person of gross Tamasic perception. Being oblivious of that Cosmic Being, he relates himself upon a personal relationship of like or dislike or relation of love or hate. That knowledge that, "I am dealing with my friend, my relative or my enemy", is Tamasic knowledge.

However, the action that is performed with a sense of duty without any expectation of fruit, without expecting anything, without attachment or hatred, that action is known to be Sattvic, that action is Yogic activity.

The action that is performed with the expectation of fruit, with the sense "I am the doer" and with great exertion, that action tends to bind, it is Rajasic.

*Yattu kaamepsunaa karma saahankaarena
vaa punah;
Kriyate bahulaayaasam
tadraajasamudaahritam... (B.G. XVIII/24)*

But that action which is done by one longing for the fulfillment of desires or gain with egoism or with much effort—that is declared to be Rajasic (passionate)

*Anubandham kshayam himsaam anavekshya
cha paurusham
Mohaadaarabhyate karma yattat
taamasamuchyate...(B.G.XVIII/25)*

That action which is undertaken from delusion without a regard for the consequences, injury and (one's ability)—that is declared to be Tamasic.

That action which is undertaken on the basis of delusion, either to fulfill one's desire or to satisfy one's senses, brushing aside all considerations, that action is Tamasic.

Now, there are three kinds of Kartas, three kinds of agents: Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic. The Karta who says, "Whatever is done, is done through the power of God that resides in me. He is the Antaryamin; He is the ultimate Karta Dharta. I'm only an instrument, and He is using me to make this action." He perseveres in that action no matter how difficult it is, resigning himself to the will of the Lord. He is a Sattvic actor.

But one who is passionate, desirous of fruit, wanting some personal gain he is Rajasic. Once there is greed, all sense of right or wrong, pure or impure goes away.

*Raagee karmaphalaprepsur lubdho
himsaatmako'shuchih;
Harhashokaanvitah kartaa raajasah
parikeertitah...(B.G. Ch.18|27)*

Passionate, desiring to obtain the reward of actions, greedy, cruel, impure, moved by joy and sorrow, such an agent is said to be Rajasic.

Because, when one is driven by greed and the desire to enjoy the fruits of action, no one can come in his way, he is prepared to do anything to eliminate the obstacle. That is the chain that has been described elsewhere about desire: thinking of objects of enjoyment, there arises a desire for these objects and when desire arises, one engages in action, in order to fulfill that desire. And when engaged in action to obtain that desired object, if someone comes in the way, anger manifests itself. So, anger is the direct manifestation of lust or desire. And once anger takes hold of a person, he is completely out of balance, and whatever he has learnt is forgotten. Due to anger, the mind becomes completely clouded, all past experiences are forgotten and in this state of complete loss of memory the intellect comes to a stop. Ravana is a classical example. Ravana was a Brahmin. He was a Sama Veda Paarangata, he was a great Tapasvi, a great Shiva Bhakta. Nevertheless, he was overcome by desire, by passion, overcome by Ahamkara, and because of this his entire intelligence and his Tapasya were of no avail and he lost everything.

The Tamasic agent is described as follows:

*Ayuktah praakritas stabdhas shatho
naishkritiko'lasah
Vishaadee deerghasootree cha kartaa
taamasah uchyate...(B.G. XVIII/28)*

*Unsteady, vulgar, unbending, cheating,
malicious, lazy, desponding and procrastinating –
such an agent is called Tamasic.*

In this way, Krishna analyses for Arjuna the various factors that constitute the anatomy of an action: "O Arjuna! Do you see now clearly that you are not doing anything, you are not acting? It is Prakriti with these five factors that bring about all activity. Four of them are within the range of Prakriti; one is beyond Prakriti, that is Daivi Iccha. Your decision not to act has no meaning. You are made of Prakriti. Prakriti is made of three Gunas. Dynamism is the hallmark of Prakriti. Para Brahma is Nishkriya because Kriya is out of question for a Being that pervades everywhere.

Whether you are willing or not willing, you will have to engage in action because Prakriti is acting in and through you. And if you do it unwillingly, grudgingly, without wanting to do it, then you become bound by your own attitude. But knowing that it is Providence and Prakriti that engage in all activity, if you willingly surrender to that great Power in full devotion, then you co-operate with Prakriti and you are liberated from the binding power of activity.

And in the culminating portion Bhagavan says, "I am myself that great Power of powers beyond Prakriti and therefore, surrender to Me."

The Being who makes all people act is the Supreme Being seated in the hearts of all, and we are nothing. We are made to whirl around by his Divine will operating in and through us. That Eeshwarah is the originator of all activity and all actions: mental, verbal and physical. And now I tell you, O Arjuna, what you have to do:

*Tameva sharanam gaccha sarvabhaavena
bhaarata;
Tatprasaadaatparaam shaantim sthaanam
praapsyasi shaashwatam... (B.G. XVIII/62)*

Fly unto him for refuge with all thy being, O Arjuna; by His grace thou shalt obtain supreme peace and the eternal abode.

Surrender unto Him with your entire being. You will attain peace in the midst of the most hectic activity. If you surrender to Him, you will attain peace, and through such activity, you will ultimately reach that Supreme state from where there is no return. Thus, I have imparted to you the supreme knowledge.

*Iti te jnaanamaakhyaatam guhyaad
guhyataram mayaa;
Vimrishiya ita dasha shena yath ecchasi tatha
kuru... (B.G. XVIII/63)*

Thus has wisdom, more secret than secrecy itself, declared unto thee by Me; having reflected over it fully, then act as thou wishest.

Having fully, completely thought about it, having fully considered it, now it is up to you to do whatever you want.

Arjuna has now clearly understood that all activity is governed by Daiva and all activity is the dynamism of Prakriti, "I am nowhere. I'm only being utilized, I am only an instrument. Therefore, let me willingly and gladly co-operate by surrendering to this grand process and not have my ego stand as an obstacle. Once this is done, I know my highest good is secure. Lord Krishna has assured it. My delusion is gone due to Your Grace, I am ready to do Your bidding." Here, he does not say, "I stand up ready to fight." The idea that he is fighting and killing is no more there in Arjuna. He is only aware that, "Here I am doing the bidding of the Divine. I am fulfilling my duty and whatever is His will is being worked out through me. So he says:

*Nashto mohas smritirlabdhaa
tvatprasaadaanmayaachyuta;
Sthitosmi gata sandehah karishye vachanam
tava... (B.G. XVIII/73)*

Destroyed is my delusion as I have gained knowledge through Thy grace, O Krishna. I remain free from doubts. I will act according to Thy word.

If with this attitude activity is engaged in, there is only worship offered to the all pervading presence of the Divine and right in the midst of activity, there is Sannyasa. And, where there is no wish for obtaining any personal gain out of avarice and greed, there is Tyaga. Tyaga and Sannyasa are the very essence of true activity. That is Yoga and worship. Activity is Yoga and worship. This is the Karma Mimamsa expounded in the 18th chapter of the Srimad Bhagavat Gita. And thus, the main thesis propounded by the first two Shlokas of the Isavasya Upanishad is realised by acting in the spirit of the 18th chapter of the Srimad Bhagavat Gita, free from delusion, free from ego, free from personal desire, free from any attachment. Then, we cease to be, and the Lord operates in and through us, and our life becomes transformed into a perennial devotion, adoration and Yoga. That is meditation in action.

With the sharing of these thoughts based upon the eighteenth chapter of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita which takes us back to the first two Shlokas of the Isavasya Upanishad, and to have the company of Sadhakas, Jignasus and Bhagavat Bhaktas is not an ordinary good fortune, it is a Parama Soubhagya. Thanking the Supreme Being for having graciously bestowed

upon me this Parama Soubhagya and thanking you all for your divine presence and your patient hearing, I conclude these three days of Jnana Yajna at the feet of the Lord as my Pushpanjali. God's grace, Guru Kripa Kataaksha and the Ashirvad of all saints be upon you and grant you success in your striving after the goal both secular as well as spiritual. God bless you all.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Radiant Immortal Atman! Seekers and devotees of God! All those of you who have assembled here, though from many different places, have come unified in one identical aspiration for a higher life above and beyond the normal, biological life lived by millions of people and millions of animals. This aspiration is for the upliftment and ennoblement of your entire nature. Though the ultimate experience may be a transcendence of this human nature and the attainment of a divine experience, the transformation of your human nature is very important to this ultimate goal.

This transformation of your present human, physical, mental and intellectual nature is no less important than the ultimate transformation of your consciousness. It is important because this physical, psychological being of yours is the way through which you have to ascend to that level or plane of consciousness. It is not only the way, but also the instrument through which you have to work out this transformation. Naturally, therefore, the way has to be free from obstacles and pitfalls and the instrument has to be pure and worthy.

That is why Yoga (the process to, and union of the individual with the Universal Soul) commences with the body, goes next into the subtle life force, then into the mind and intellect, and ultimately concludes in an experience that goes beyond the mind. The means you adopt are as important as the goal you are trying to achieve. Yoga science propounds first and foremost a set of physical exercises. If the basis and foundation of a building is strong, the edifice will be strong and long lasting. The physical, mental and ethical disciplines are like laying the foundation and getting the necessary equipment to set up the superstructure.

Patanjali, the great sage who expounded the Yoga of Meditation, starts out with the establishment of self-control of your own physical organism. The eight-fold stages of Ashtanga Yoga are a continuing, progressive system, commencing with the body and gradually going inward through the different levels of your being, to a state of inner quietness of the mind.

Patanjali did not have the advantage of any of the scientific instruments of today to test the various workings of man's inner system, nor did he have at the time the psychological studies and discoveries of this present age to guide him. Nevertheless, he achieved a marvelous insight into the most detailed and minute workings of the mind and intellect. This insight into the workings of our interior, into mind, into intellect, memory, imagination, thought processes, feelings and

emotions, both positive and negative, is really astounding in its great depth, thoroughness and correctness. Down through the decades his findings have not been disproved. On the contrary, whatever he discovered and declared has been borne out to be authentic in character.

What is the genesis of thought? How does it arise? There are very learned scholars and scientists today who say that thought process goes on until the brain dies. Apparently this works very scientifically. There is no doubt that there is a connection between thought and brain. It is the same connection as that between a master musician and his musical instrument. A violin or clarinet or flutes do not contain music. They are made up of inert parts.

First, the entire totality of a musical composition is within the consciousness of the musician composer. He is able to visualize and even hear the music before he puts notes down on paper. What he experiences in the silence of his consciousness he transfers onto paper when he starts composing the melody. You cannot have

music without a musician, but you can have music without a musical instrument. Caruso did not play a musical instrument, yet he was a great master who treated the whole world. He did not count upon an instrument to produce his music.

The mystics and yogis (those practicing Yoga) heard music even in the depths of their own silence, whether they were oriental or occidental mystics. They were able to be transformed into

blissful states by listening to this inner, celestial music which did not even require the function of their vocal chords. The point is, what is the source of these mystics' inner visions? What is the source of man's mind?

Mystics heard the music when the brain was not functioning and were even able to chant it later. Mystics saw vivid visions. So, the belief that inner thought processes depend upon the functioning of the brain is a very natural and understandable error. It is an error on the part of those who had not experienced the existence of higher planes of consciousness, because their conclusions were always based upon observance. You can observe only that which is expressed. That which has not been expressed cannot be observed. Therefore, you cannot know anything about such phenomena.

In depths of trance and deep meditation, the experiences that take place are not experiences that present themselves for expression to any other person. Not having known of the existence of such phenomena, it is obvious to see how some scientists came to the conclusion that all observed phenomena are the result of brain function. This was, in the ultimate context, presumptive, because they inferred or presumed that the interior of the person or subject, whom they were studying, was functioning in a certain manner, based on their observations of the behavior of that person. This inference may or may not be correct.

Also, it does not explain why that person harbored such a pattern of thought and feeling within.

Perhaps they may be able to infer or presume the existence of a certain state of mind. But why that state and not some other? For this, they go into a study of other factors by which the person is surrounded or is in contact with, such as home environment, influence of other family members, etc. They try to look into the early period of one's infancy and childhood, and through such a study, they came up with certain observations and conclusions about that person's nature. If a person reacts in a particular way, they say it is all due to his family background and early experiences. But if these are not sufficient to explain a certain behavior, they assume the influence of heredity.

This is a new dimension: microbiology and genetics. A couple has seven children. Due to genetics they may have some common facial features of the father or mother, but given the same parents, the identical treatment, the same diet, and the same education, yet each of the seven children develop absolutely different and distinctive character traits of their own. This is not a supposition, but is true in hundreds and thousands of human families all over the earth. Therefore, it seems to contradict the psychological theories formulated by modern scientists of the mind.

Patanjali found no problem in explaining this. He said the mind had existed before this

particular individual was born into human society, and that it is a mysterious factor that has been brought over from a previous existence. Much has come into the makeup of the mind and nature even before it starts to function within, as an individual human being. This fact has to be carefully considered when we deal with this Science of Yoga, which is concerned with the discipline and transformation of the mind.

Your mind starts picking up impressions and experiences after you are born to your parents. It comes already containing within itself the subtle seeds of previous experience in the form of subtle impressions. It also brings along with it certain predilections or inclinations of behavior due to latent tendencies from previous experiences. Thus the impressions of previous experiences make up the factor which is already in the mind when you take birth.

Secondly, latent tendencies have been brought over from a previous existence. Impressions are called Samskaras, and latent tendencies are called Vasanas. Both are in the mind in a state of inactive dormancy or unmanifest latency. In this unmanifested condition, they subsist in a certain part of the inner being of the individual soul. This part is, as it were, a repository or storehouse. All potential for all thought activity is inherent in that level of your being. It is this level of your being that is a prolific source of all thought processes and functions.

Therefore, Patanjali's vision went beyond earthly life and infantile experiences and even heredity, and took one into a non-physical dimension that went beyond earth experiences of that being within the individual. It is this fact that explains the totally different natures of half a dozen children of the same parents, all given the identical experiences, from the point of view of diet, upbringing and education.

It was Yoga Science that took upon itself the task of dealing with this depth of the individual human person. When I speak of these Samskaras and Vasanas, these impressions and tendencies, being in the depths of the human consciousness, I am not referring to some academic or theoretic individual, but it is a practical fact which you have to wisely use, with the knowledge derived from these insights, to deal with yourself. You have to know how to educate and train your interior.

You must not be juvenile and puerile and try to take shelter behind theories brought out by modern psychologists like Freud and Jung. It is alright to read these modern studies and fields of knowledge, to get to know how things have been seen by occidental studies of the mind. It is alright to get some knowledge, but you should not make use of this knowledge as an excuse for allowing negative states to prevail within yourself. Neither should you condone these things within yourself in order to justify behavior by giving it a very nice, modern explanation. Do not try to use these theories in order to get sympathy or to avoid

dealing harshly with yourself. This is not the yogi's way of making use of knowledge of the inner being.

The yogi makes use of knowledge of the inner being for self-conquest. The spiritual seeker makes use of this knowledge to rise higher and higher in order to overcome oneself. The entire approach is positive, constructive and creative. Always remember this. Never forget it for a moment. Knowledge of psychology and of neuroses and complexes is not to be used as a shelter to hide behind. It is not supposed to condone your conduct. If you make use of some of these observed facts, that is fine. But ninety-nine percent of people in the modern world try to take shelter behind modern psychological theories to explain away their aberrations and eccentricities.

Patanjali said, "Here I am giving you all these facts. Now take them up as truth to work with. Make necessary references and use them to overcome all negative states". He did not tell you about these negative states to give you excuses. He gave them so you could watch out for them, equip yourself to deal with them, and then go beyond them.

So, you have brought your nature (in the form of Samskaras), with you. Now you know what you have to deal with, and Yogis, I am telling you how to deal with them. Use them to overcome yourself and to advance toward the goal. This is the purpose of the Science of Yoga. Its main thrust is

towards overcoming and transcendence; also, towards sublimation and transformation.

Sometimes an extraordinary scientific method renders something harmful into something harmless. Take for example a certain tendency. If a preponderance of Tamo Guna (quality of ignorance, inertia) is allowed to prevail in the presence of that tendency, then the tendency begins to function as a problem and causes great difficulties within your interior. But, if the same tendency is predominated by Rajo Guna (quality of passion, restlessness), it begins to function in a different manner. It is not a great problem, but is transformed and begins to function in a different way. Level by level that selfsame tendency, when subjected to a preponderance of Satva (light, purity) through Yoga, gradually disappears. Or, in course of time it may even begin to function as a helpful process of your spiritual evolution. These are insights that the great sage Patanjali gave to us about our own interior.

Thus, thought processes may manifest in your brain and control the nervous system, but their root source and origin is not the brain, but is at a much deeper, subtler level of your subconscious, which existed even before your brain had come into being or your body had been born. When the individual center of consciousness migrates or transfers from one existence into a new existence, it brings along

with it all these factors which later on function within the new personality that it now assumes.

It brings along with it its five inner organs of perception (sight, sound, taste, touch and smell), and the five main Pranas (vital energy, life-force) and the five secondary Pranas, which make the different parts of the body function in their respective manners. The individual center of consciousness also brings along with it the ego-consciousness: its mind activity, its intellectual powers, and its latent repository or storehouse of all the subtle inclinations or tendencies. This is called Chitta (mind-stuff, subconscious mind), which holds the key to your whole nature and behavior.

The intellect, mind and ego are the three which are manifest in the active aspect of your mind, whereas the fourth one is not the active mind, but the submerged inner depth of the mind's interior. Pantanjali concerns himself with this inner depth, for it supplies the potential for the emergence of all thought phenomena. Latent potential for all thinking, feeling, urges, desires, memories, all inhere at this level.

If you can work upon that and bring about some changes, you hold the key to your inner transformation. It is called Chitta. Its activity sends up the impulse for the emergence of thought upon the active mind and thus it holds the key for the discipline of your inner being and its control. This impulse that sends a potential seed thought to become manifest upon the mind

is called a wave, or Chitta Vritti. An impulse sent up by the Chitta is like a bubble being sent up from the bottom of the sea, or from the bed of a lake which then appears and bursts and sends ripples over the water's surface.

To try to get control of this function is the central purpose of the Science of Yoga. If you gain control of this process, you will gain control of the mind in all its aspects. The way in which it manifests depends upon the ratio and proportion of the three Gunas (qualities born of nature) within your interior. Sattva is subtle, with an upward direction. Rajas is less subtle, and its direction is outward. It is distracted and agitated. Tamas is very gross and heavy, and does not allow any positive movement. It holds human nature at a lower level of awareness and functioning.

A considerable part of Patanjali's Yoga and its various practices is aimed at bringing about a more desirable proportion of these three Gunas. All three Gunas are present in all human nature. The thing to decide is which among the three Gunas is dominant. Sattva should be in control, and Rajas and Tamas should be regulated. This is the condition that is desirable to cultivate within your interior. Therefore, at the very onset of his expounding of this science, Patanjali declared that Yoga is the disciplining and overcoming of the activity of the Chitta.

Hence, the well known Sutra (aphorism) about the gaining control of the subtle tendencies of Chitta, keeping them under check and allowing

new impulses and tendencies to prevail within your consciousness. New tendencies and impressions are created by Satsanga (association with the wise), by the practice of carrying out the spiritual instructions of the Guru, by unfailing daily study of important scriptures and spiritual books, through spiritual discussions with fellow seekers, and through transforming processes like Japa (repetition of the Divine Name), Asana (posture), and Pranayama (regulation of breath), and certain spiritual disciplines, like vows, fasting and vigils, etc. They all have the power of subduing Rajas and Tamas, and of increasing Sattva . They bring about a subtle change within your interior.

Simplicity of life, sublime thinking, adhering to certain ethical principles, refusing to compromise your ideals, outer and inner cleanliness, the practice of self-control, always keeping up a positive state of mind, a minimum state of austerity, and constantly dwelling with heart and mind in the divine Presence with dedication to the divine Reality, are the various ways of bringing about the gradual transformation of your interior.

Each one of these factors functions in a different and special manner, but the overall result is the transformation of your interior: increase of Sattva, control of Rajas, elimination of Tamas, and a clear perception of your interior. In addition to these various yogic disciplines, one can never underestimate the importance of having

a heightened awareness within, and a certain gratefulness. If you want to evolve, you must watch day by day, moment by moment, when you are alone and when you are among others, in all situations.

The Yogi should not forget himself. He is always a self-aware person, not in a metaphysical sense, but in a practical sense. Be aware of yourself, physically as well as psychologically. Keep watch over the movements of your thoughts, emotions, and feelings. Keep a close watch upon your reactions. This is very important. It is our reactions to things, people, surroundings and circumstances which reveal exactly what we are. That is the depth of your real inner state. Introspection is Yoga and Sadhana (spiritual practice). Self-examination is Yoga and Sadhana. Detached observation of your reactions is Yoga and Sadhana. It is this which reveals to you the state of your interior.

This revelation is valuable because it reveals what is necessary to be done within yourself. If you do not know yourself day by day, you will not know what to do. These are methods by which to see in which direction you must work. Yoga psychology is the positive, creative way to study your interior. It is not a 'know-how' in beating a retreat, but a 'know-how' in making an advance. It is not a system of knowledge for half-hearted escapism. It is a positive system of knowledge to face yourself and to deal with yourself and to go beyond yourself.

This is the central idea which you must grasp about Patanjali's insights into yourself. He was not a clinical psychologist, but he was a mystical, transcendental intuitionist. That is the value of his discoveries and his system of knowledge. It tells you about the mind. Make use of your knowledge of the mind to subdue and overcome it, then you can go beyond it. So, luminous seekers of God, strive to lead an ideal life. Hari Om.

Let us carry further our consideration of the inner man. We spoke of the entire purpose of Sadhana and spiritual life as the purposeful directing of our mind and thoughts towards Reality. We saw how this process was hampered by the natural tendency of the mind to always move in the direction of outer things in this universe, because the outer objects present themselves with a certain glitter and power of attraction. Ninety-nine percent of the entire global human population is convinced that these objects are solid reality, substantial things. They also are absolutely confident that they will obtain happiness and satisfaction through these objects.

Seeing that all human beings here on earth are constantly engaged in avoiding pain and suffering and trying to seek and find happiness, it is natural that they move towards outer sense objects. They think them to be the solution to all pain and suffering, and that certainly happiness will come from the possession of these objects.

You people who have obtained the life spiritual form a microscopic minority, who, by the grace of God and the benediction of the saints, have become aware of the higher destiny for man other than running after these petty objects. You are convinced that there is something higher and greater than the little mundane life of sense satisfaction and desire fulfillment. You have

become aware of a greater Cosmic Reality which is of the nature of fullness, bliss and peace. Due to your faith in the scriptures of the world, and also in the declaration of illuminated perfected masters, you are convinced of that great Reality. One does not find true satisfaction in this finite world.

You are absolutely convinced by these great teachings that once the goal has been attained, all desires will be satisfied and there will be a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction. Hence, your gift is not a gift of perishable, non-eternal, finite things, but of the Eternal and All-perfect. You want to contemplate and meditate upon the Eternal, but you find that the mind habitually runs after the old patterns of earthly objects and things. It is engaged in running after created things and not after the Creator of these things.

It is the concern of the Science of Yoga to change these natural behavior patterns and conditions of one's interior, to somehow make them go inward, to meditate and to attain that Reality. Yoga concerns itself with the mind and what causes its movements, activities and its habitual thought processes. It is here that the ancient spiritual genius of those great seers intuitively discovered mind as being an independent faculty of the human brain. Brain is not the source of thought. Thought transcends and exists even before brain existed.

It is in this deep inner study of the Science of Yoga that this valuable truth has been brought

out: that which is perceived by the five senses is not the ultimate Reality. The ultimate Reality cannot be a created thing, because a created thing would not exist before it was created. That which had known existence in one time, can go into non-existence at another time. The possibility is always there, and it makes all objects not worthwhile. So, the quest is after the beginningless and endless Reality.

To direct our entire being towards that Reality, we must first master our restless minds. Patanjali gave us valuable information about the very nature of the mind, how it can be curbed and checked, and made to dwell upon the Eternal. Here we have a glimpse into the marvels of Yoga psychology and science, of how thought activity must be transcended. The subduing of the unceasing thought processes is essential to Yoga Science. It commences with this transformation, and goes on to explain the root and origin of all thought waves, which goes beyond the explanation of modern psychologists.

The formation of thought patterns is not based merely upon heredity only. Biological patterns are not derived only from genetics. Behavior patterns are not merely from prenatal conditions, nor from birth and infancy. The seers had the insight that when one is born, one brings the potential for an entire pattern of thinking and behaving from preexistence. The exact manner of this preexisting nature is described in detail.

Knowledge that Vasanas and Samskaras were found to be the basis of our physical nature.

Patanjali's Science of Yoga drew up a comprehensive formula which constitutes distinct processes, both internal and external. In external form, it constituted the first five Angas (steps, limbs) of Yoga Science. They provided for dealing with one's habitual nature according to one's level of awareness. Repetitive activity of a uniform kind becomes a habit. Habit becomes second nature, which is difficult to shake off. Therefore, the repeating of such activity was negated by taking some basic vows. The seeker deliberately ties himself down to certain vows and he eliminates all activity contrary to these vows. Thus you see how, at one stroke, all manifestations of wrong action contrary to spiritual progress are controlled by the first Anga.

These great vows which form the first Anga of Yoga are: non-injury, purity in thought, word and deed, non-stealing and non-acceptance. Once this is achieved, to stop all useless action patterns in order to change our present nature, a whole series of daily observance is suggested for the seeker. The whole life of the individual is now given an upliftment into a God-oriented movement. This is achieved by suggesting that one follow a definite daily observance, with the ultimate effect of turning the mind's direction. The results bring a further check of old habits, plus these observances begin to make one God-oriented in all one's activities: cleanliness, a positive attitude of

mind, contentment, the pursuit of a certain degree of austerity, daily study of scriptures, and last but not least, the surrender of the human ego at the feet of the Divine.

Thus through these first two steps, Patanjali succeeded in establishing a right-about-turn to life's movements. Gradually we must move inward. This is the key to man's destiny. 'As a man thinketh, so he becomes.' Whatever the faith of the person is, that the person receives. What distinguishes you from all the lesser creatures and as the supreme end of evolution on earth? The faculty of thinking and reasoning, which is denied to all lesser forms of life on earth. This ultimate factor actually opens the door for unlimited power, progress and experience.

The human individual is an integrated mechanism. All levels are interconnected with one another. Mind and body are inseparable. Modern scientists have now discovered that many physical conditions are brought about by the mind. This is called psychosomatic illness. Patanjali's knowledge of this situation was very deep. He knew precisely and exactly the anatomy and mechanics of how the body worked.

Mind is not directly connected with the body. It transmits its effects onto the body through an intervening sheath within us, called the Pranamaya Kosha, or seat of the life force. This force is divine power. It pervades the entire world. It vibrates in every cell of our being and in our minds. It is the basis for mental activity also. Body

connects to mind through this Prana. Mind is the actual target to subdue, control, centralize and focus upon the Supreme Reality. This subtle inner vital force is the key to the ultimate overcoming of all mental activity.

The second step was to try to discipline and control the body. When the body is in a state of hectic activity, Prana within the body is also in a state of hectic activity, and when there is this state of disharmony and discord, the situation is conveyed to the mind.

Asana is the third step in Yoga. You take a fixed seat in which you remain motionless, without pain or pressure. Patanjali's Asana is not to be taken for the various Asanas of Hatha Yoga, which are very good for their physical effects on the body and one's health. However, for the purpose of Yoga meditation, a steady unshaken pose, with the head, neck and spine in a straight line, is to be held for a certain period of time.

In that state of equilibrium, the Prana contained within naturally tends to subside into a slower rhythmic pace. When thus poised and in harmony, the steadiness of the body is conveyed into the sheath of Prana, and Prana takes on a similar state. The Prana communicates itself to the brain, to which it is directly connected. When this is communicated via Prana to the mind, the mind gradually begins to undergo a change. Pranayama is the fourth step. Thus a gradual subdual of mind processes is achieved through Patanjali's first four Angas. This process is to be

persisted in. The more Sattva you bring into your system, the greater the continuity of this state of contemplation and concentration.

The fifth inner state deals with the externality of the mind, or its habitual exterior movement. Gurudev Swami Sivananda spoke about this a great deal. He said all other processes of Yoga are done in a certain place and time, through all waking hours, day after day. The Sadhana of Pratyahara (withdrawal of the senses from their objects) is not confined to any time and place, but you must train your mind to dwell in a constant state of Pratyahara. It means training the mind not to run after the external world. Not allowing it to run after external things requires a great deal of understanding of the mind. You have to persuade the mind that all these objects are the source of pain and suffering.

It is only through Satsanga, Vichara (enquiry into the nature of the Self), etc., that one is gradually convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt that all external things are worthless. It is the result of conviction arrived at after much deep thinking and observation of what is happening around you. "The more I run after these things, the more restless my mind will be." Desires never subside. In fact they only become more intense. This fact has to be discovered about the nature of desires. Created objects are sources of sorrow. Now, firmly believing this, you begin to give up and renounce desires. This is explicitly stated in

the Gita. Here, Vairagya (dispassion) comes in to establish you in Pratyahara.

When perfect withdrawal is obtained, you enter into the state of internal Yoga. The five earlier Angas are called the outer Yoga. They are indispensable at their own stage. The first four steps to the fifth stage must be carried on as a process you continue throughout your life. Doubtless after entering into the inner plane of Yoga, the emphasis will shift from the first five to the last three.

Having entered into the inner Yoga, there is now a severe test of the patience of the Sadhaka. What type of patience is required? See the sixth chapter of the Gita. It contains the essence of Raja Yoga. Consciousness comes and goes. Mind has so long been habituated to being on the move that trying to check it and lead it in a desired direction is resisted by its old habit patterns. As many times as you try to concentrate the mind, it moves away from its center. Without the least agitation, gently bring the mind back. Strong love for your object of meditation is a sure guarantee for success in meditation. When these attempts to focus the mind are achieved and consciousness is unbroken and lengthened beyond a certain period, then it becomes Dhyana (meditation). Then our main practice becomes only meditation.

Emphasis now rests entirely upon this ultimate process, for meditation is the ultimate process. Here, the thought is entirely transformed. It is filled with Sattva. Vrittis

(thought waves) go away into Nivritti (renunciation). Even as various thoughts arise, they are all centered around God. Directly or indirectly, they are connected with the ultimate object of meditation, because the eighth state is no longer a process. Mind ceases to be and only a yogic state prevails. Seven Angas constitute yogic processes, five external and two internal. Mind is not only filled with Sattva, but it is also totally established in firm abidance in that state of Yoga. It does not now wish to move from that Yoga, for it finds peace and joy in that state. It has totally changed its very nature.

When Vrittis arise from the subconscious into this state, they are automatically rejected. There are no processes and no effort is necessary because mind stuff becomes totally sanctified. This is the state that all Sadhakas should strive to gain. Samskaras and Vasanas cannot exist in this evolved state of mind.

We have been considering the importance of understanding the mind, of being able to deal with it and ultimately to be able to make use of it in order to attain to a state of super-consciousness, beyond mind. The uniqueness and distinction of the human being is the possession of the faculty of the mind. Human beings are not like animals, but are far above, because they possess this unique

faculty. Therefore, one author has said, "Man is a thinking animal".

When a man completely loses his mind, society considers him no longer fit to be in society and they put him away. If this same mind becomes diabolical and the source of great evil and harm, society may decide to put him away to protect others in society. Ultimately, if the mind works out something very destructive to human life and safety, society may decide to destroy that person.

Thus, even in today's modern world, great countries and governments sometimes have been obliged to take this extreme step of capital punishment. Though it is a highly controversial subject, certain governments, due to their experience in dealing with such subjects, refuse to regard this as an ethical issue and they deal with it on a totally different secular level. When there is no one hundred percent guarantee of being able to reform and change the mind of that person, they do not want to risk the lives of others within that society. The government authorities feel that they are responsible for the safety and security of the subjects whom they rule, and thus they feel compelled at times to still keep this law operating.

The point is, all this is due to the extremes of the human mind. The same mind, if it functions in a sublime manner, becomes the source of immense good to innumerable people. Then, the whole world recognizes the nobility of such a mind, and in recognition they present two

distinctive honors or awards: the Nobel Prize and the Macassay Award, which was awarded to Mother Theresa. Just as in the film world, an Oscar is given for various outstanding skills, so a Nobel Prize is given to people of such distinction. Giving of the death sentence or awarding the Nobel Prize are both functions of the mind.

This is to make you aware of the importance of the place that the mind occupies. Great thinkers have seen that the individual, by the way the mind is made to function, can make a heaven or a hell right here on earth. Upon a different dimension of metaphysical thought, there is a famous Sanskrit saying: "It is the mind itself which makes for the human being's liberation or bondage."

Ultimately, no matter at whatever level, it is your mind that makes the difference. Raja Yoga (Patanjali's Royal Yoga of meditation) is spiritual psychology. From start to finish it is the refinement, purification and perfection of the instrument called the mind. Human mind is human nature. Mind is a distinctive faculty and it is indispensable for you to function. Your entire understanding of the world around you is due to the mind at every step. It helps you to get along in this world. Your speech has its source in the mind. Action springs from the mind. The entire pattern of your relationships ultimately comes from the state of your mind. Your understanding of yourself also comes from your mind, as the result of the function of the mind on itself.

Thus, mind occupies a central place and plays a most important role in your life. It is in this same interior that your problems exist. Mind can also be your problem. It can bother you no end. But, properly directed and handled, mind can become a valuable instrument and it may become the one and only faculty, force and pattern by which you can attain Reality.

Remembering God is also using the mind. Thinking of the great Reality and reflecting upon it requires mind. Directing your love and devotion to God is part of the inner function of the mind, as emotions. Though most people consider the mind to be a thinking process, it is also a feeling process. Your mind has a four-fold aspect by which it functions: mind, intellect, ego and memory. Ultimately, it becomes the instrument ‘par excellence’ to take you into communion with the Divine. Whether it will become your enemy or your greatest friend depends upon how you manage it.

The entire Science of Raja Yoga is a systematic method of thus understanding the mind, dealing with it, training and disciplining it, and making it your greatest help and the instrument through which to enter into direct communion with God. One book which explains this Science in a knowledgeable way, is the English translation of a book by Christopher Isherwood and Swami Prabhavananda, entitled ‘How to Know God’ (Los Angeles Vedanta Society). Swami Prabhavananda was a senior monk at that

mission, but he is no more. Also, Gurudev's book on Raja Yoga.

Even though the very essence of your human status is the mind instrument, you must be able to deal with the mind as distinct and apart from you. You must be able to be objective about the fact that in spite of your being a human individual with a human status, you are in fact above and beyond your human personality. You are Atman (the Self), immortal, distinct and different from mind, intellect, memory and ego personality.

Human ego-consciousness is a temporary state through which you are functioning in this world. In fact, you are beyond that. To realize that higher identity of yourself is the purpose of Yoga and Vedanta. In this system of Patanjali, you enter into that state of Reality in the eighth stage of Ashtanga Yoga. In that state of Samadhi (superconsciousness), the seeking soul realizes its higher spiritual identity and knows itself as the Atman, distinct and beyond all the various factors of nature (Prakriti), which make up the human personality. It is a state of resplendent consciousness. Yet the supreme Self is independent of Prakriti.

Thus, the mind is a problem in the beginning and a helpful instrument in the later stages, and the main force by which to enter into true communion with the Divine. In the plane of the pure spiritual realm, the seeker is asked to understand his mind and to intelligently try to relate to it in a positive manner. Whether you are a

Bhakta (devotee of God), a Jnani (one who follows the path of wisdom), or a Vedantin (one who follows the path of Vedanta Sadhana), you have to deal with the mind to enter into the spiritual realm through the mind.

The need to deal with, understand and control it is not confined to Patanjali's Raja Yoga only. The entire human life is made up of how you are able to cultivate your mind. Your actions are the results of your thoughts. Your destiny depends upon the thoughts you allow to prevail in your mind. Your gradual growth is into that which you constantly dwell upon through the thoughts of your mind. 'As a man thinketh, so he becomes.' It is the mind which makes heaven or hell on earth.

Thus, the declaration of the great Vedic thinkers, that mind alone is the cause of man's bondage or his liberation. Reflect well upon this truth and take a keen interest in the development of your mind. All significant scriptural works give a great deal of attention to this important inner factor. The outer is ten percent, but the inner part is ninety percent.

The problem of the modern person today is in the context of the changing times and conditions. One cannot recreate and duplicate the same exact circumstances of spiritual life of hundreds of years ago. Present day life has become greatly modernized, industrialized and commercialized. Money economy exists everywhere. People are no longer self-sufficient. Sometimes they are required to be at their place of work for eight hours a day, and it may take them an hour to go and come from work. In temperate zones, people go to and return from work in the dark.

Many years ago, I lived with a Polish family in the U.S.A. for a number of months in the wintertime. The man was a welder, who had to drive one and a half hours to and from work. When he returned home, it was after 4 p.m. and already dark. By train or bus, it would have taken even longer. Under such circumstances, how much time would he have for meditation, Japa, etc.? This is a typical example which can be repeated in thousands of circumstances. Often, both husband and wife work.

All these things seem to have been perceived by Holy Master Swami Sivananda. He knew that life is short, time flies away, so naturally, what

has to be done must be done while you are still alive. But such is the lifestyle of modern man, that Gurudev said that since you all have to work, do it, but do not lose life's great opportunity. Even in the midst of your work, develop the habit of repeating God's name silently to yourself. Leave your hands to work, and let your tongue repeat God's name. While so engaged in work, the repetition will keep you in God-remembrance. So contact with God will not be totally lost, because a part of your mind ever remains with Him.

In the work that you do, let there be a worshipful attitude, knowing that God is not a far off, remote Reality, but is an ever-present Being. "Whenever I am working, whatever I am doing, I am doing it in God's presence. I offer whatever I do to Thee. We are all divinity. My work will be my adoration. All my activity will be my way of worshipping God." If you give your life this feeling, it will take a Godward movement. From time to time, mentally offer your life at the feet of God. "Oh Lord, whatever I do, all my acts, I offer at Thy feet." Thus, everything becomes linked up with God and all activity becomes a yogic process.

Everything you do becomes devotion and worship. In all that you do, keep an unbroken current of God-remembrance. Then work becomes meditation. It becomes Yoga and worship, and a continuous attraction to God. There is also Jnana (wisdom) in it, because you understand that you are living, moving and

having your being in God's presence. It is knowledge, devotion and meditation.

Gurudev said that in order to live a life of Yoga it is not necessary to renounce. You can do it internally. What he suggested was the renunciation of the feeling of 'I and mine'. It is not renouncing things that is important, but the idea, 'I am this body, mind, desires,' etc. This identity with all these added factors should be renounced. Desire for petty little sense objects should be given up. This is giving up the identity with the human personality and its desires and cravings. When thus, desire and attachment are renounced, already you are moving towards God.

Everything in this life should be brought into direct contact with God. Behold His presence in all His creation, and make service to all His creation part and parcel of your life. For this the study of the eleventh chapter of the Bhagavad Gita is very helpful. Don't allow your attention to be distracted by things. Through the Gita see that there are many things, but God alone appears in all things. "Everything is a reminder of My existence. It is not something which hides Me, but it is there to reveal Me".

Change your perception of things. Look at them as reminders of the Divine, and not as so many things which distract and hide Him. On the contrary, they are there to remind you of the Maker. A change in the angle of your vision is necessary. In the morning recite, "Thou art everything that exists. Thou appeareth before me

in a million forms. All that I perceive through the senses is Your multifarious manifestation. As You thus manifest before me, I bow to You again and again. I salute the Infinite Endless, Who is appearing in these infinite forms”.

When you arise from sleep, first salute the cosmic appearance of God. Always abide in God and be aware that He abides within you as your inner being. With this awareness, offer all your acts as a perennial prayer to God. Make a careful study of the Bhagavad Gita and try to read the book by the Christian Brother Lawrence, ‘The Practice of the Presence of God.’

Gurudev’s prescription for the modern Sadhaka (spiritual aspirant) is that you do not need to set a time, place and pattern for your daily Sadhana, but make every moment and everywhere the place to realize. Let there be a constant living in the presence of God. Make your life itself a great Sadhana by the spiritual manner in which you live it. Bring a spiritual quality into your aspiration, movements and actions. Do not think of yourself as living in the modern world, but as living in God. Thus head, heart, mind and intellect are all God-oriented in their activity.

This is the way for modern man. It does not mean that you should not have a set Sadhana with a certain time and place. Within your everyday possibility, have that also, but know that the time for this is limited. Of course there is a little difference between the time when you are fully occupied and when you retire from your

occupation. At that time you are expected to devote more time to God, but that only comes after twenty-five or more years of hard work. Therefore, it is for people who are in a state of full occupation that Gurudev has suggested making your entire daily life a Sadhana.

Let no part of your life be divorced from Sadhana. Let no part of your life be merely worldly and secular, but bring God into everything you do and live in the constant awareness of your close relationship to Him. Live your life divinely, with the awareness of God's divine presence within you and the full realization of your own divinity. Always have the awareness of God-realization as the ultimate goal of all that you do.

This is Gurudev's distinct Sadhana for modern man. Do not let Sadhana be merely some particular portion of your life, but know that all of your life is Sadhana. The spirit of Sadhana should pervade your entire life and its actions. This formula is called 'Divine Life'. Let all your time have meaning as long as you are in this physical life, for it becomes insignificant and without meaning as long as you depart from Him.

Countless kingdoms, empires and dynasties have appeared and then vanished into nothing. There are ruins and sand dunes where once great empires flourished. Now, birds nest, lizards roam and spiders weave their webs in structures built for the Roman emperors. Countless numbers of human beings have come, played out their drama here and then gone. Where are Louis XIV and

Napoleon? This is the play that continues on life's great stage in this earthly theater.

Ours is but a brief sojourn here on this earth plane. Soon, we shall be gone, and humanity will not take any notice. Hitler, Mussolini, Churchill and Roosevelt have all come and gone. Lenin and Stalin have come and vanished. Because you have a body, you have need for food and shelter. You have certain activities to do here, but they have no enduring meaning or value. It is the same thing repeated day after day, from birth until death: eating, sleeping, waking; eating, sleeping, waking, etc. One day you stop breathing and you are put into the ground. This cannot be all of life. Certainly, such a life is not for you!

You are an immortal spirit, created and made into the spirit of God. There is something eternal and imperishable within your perishable body. That inner divine spirit is your true identity. It is what you are. You have to live your life in that dimension. Otherwise, your life is only physical, biological existence. If you are not active in your goal, it is only a living death.

Fill your life with real living. The spiritual goal of life is the real goal, for it is your true purpose here on earth. Therefore, have the proper sense of perception and take keen interest in your own highest spiritual welfare. No one else here can do that for you; neither father, nor mother, relative, nor friend. It is between you and God, your Maker. All the effort must come from you only. You can

get help from God's saints and other sources, but the main, central effort must come from you.

It is a great privilege and blessedness to make use of this gift of God called 'life' for the attainment of a higher subtle goal and purpose. Recognize this very clearly. Your being is an immortal, spiritual spark of God. You must live your spiritual life actively and purposefully, so that you will find yourself further towards your goal.

Each human life is a gift from God. A spiritual gift is an even greater gift from God. Have thankfulness in your hearts and carry on your Sadhana, prayers, spiritual study and worship with earnestness and devotion. You must be in love with your spiritual Sadhana. Your inner spiritual life must give you great joy. It should not be regarded as a task, but as a blessing. You must look forward to the beginning of each day, so that you can enrich it by filling it with a great deal of spirituality. Through every day you will advance nearer and nearer to that grand goal of God-experience, which is the only Reality. Other things pass and change. The fruits of spiritual life will live forever.

Your life will be evaluated and judged by the benefit you have brought to all God's beings around you, by your prayers and meditation, by the number of times you have glorified and remembered God during your life. Sadhana and Seva (service) constitute the real flowers of life. To

serve God's manifestations, and to abide in God's spirit is the real essence of life.

May God speed you upon your glorious, spiritual journey, without any obstacles. May you reach the golden shores of eternal sunshine. May Gurudev's and Ma's benedictions be with you. May the Divine Grace of God be yours throughout. God bless you.

O Children of Immortality!

In brief I wish to give you the essence of your culture, the ancient message which your ancestors have given to you, especially to the young and especially to the students. I want to tell you very clearly that the need of the students and young people was well known to our great sages of wisdom. And so they gave a due place to the young people in human society. They gave a special set of principles in the concept of their life, and they formulated a special set of principles for the young people to follow.

Before I try to lay before you their concept of student life, their principles for young people to follow, I give you four sentences, which I want every young man and woman, all students, to memorise and keep as guidelines for your life. They are four brief sentences and they contain a very important message. These four brief sentences which I want you to listen carefully and keep in your memory are as follows:

“When wealth is lost nothing is lost.

When health is lost something is lost.

When character is lost everything is lost.

A person without character is not a man but an animal”.

What distinguishes the human individual from the animal is our behaviour. There is a difference between the Charitra (character) of a Pashu (animal) and the Charitra of a Manava (human being). If the Manava does not keep up to this higher standard of Charitra, then even though he may be a human individual in Roopa (form) and Nama (name), he is only an animal because his life, conduct and behaviour is more suitable to the animal than to a man. Through your behaviour you must prove that you are a human individual. If you have no control over your senses, if you have no principles for your living, if you are subject to anger and passion and gluttony (Kama, Krodha and Vishaya Vilasa), if you have no moderation, then there you have the animal. Therefore, you have to prove your human status not merely by reading a few text books and passing a few examinations and getting a degree, but by the manner of your life, conduct and behaviour. The highest wealth in human life, the highest wealth of youth, is the wealth of character. The most precious thing is character. That is your real treasure. If you develop a noble character, then you are really a wealthy person, which means your life is rich with this Aishwarya (wealth) of Satcharitra (noble conduct).

What is the relationship of character to human life? The relationship of character to human life is the same as that of the foundation to the entire structure of the building which will be raised over that foundation. The most important part in the structure of the building is the foundation. If the foundation is well laid, if the foundation is strong, then the building will stand. You can raise it high, and it will last, it will be strong. If the foundation is weak or not properly laid, then any moment the building can collapse, the building cannot be lasting.

Even so is the life of the individual. If in young age, in his youth, in the period of student life the individual tries hard to develop noble qualities, to become strong in body, to acquire will power, strength of mind and he is able to overcome all negative qualities like selfishness, egoism, pride, dishonesty, greed, weakness, overeating and slavery to senses; if by using his will power, the young man is able to become master over his senses, overcome anger, and develop truthfulness and honesty and he becomes a person of integrity and thus becomes a master of his senses, such a student lays a strong foundation for his future life.

Upon the foundation of a well developed character and conduct, one can build up the

edifice or structure of a successful life. Whatever someone undertakes, he will succeed in it. Whatever profession he adopts, he will make headway in it. He will shine; he will earn the respect of all people. He will have a magnetic personality. He will have influence over his time. He will be a leader, for the power of character gives magnetism to the personality, and the power of character depends upon self control. Without self control you cannot be an ideal individual.

The secret of a successful career, the secret of a magnetic personality is self control and character which is the outcome of self control. The key to character is self control, and character is the basis of success in life. With character you can overcome every obstacle in life. You can succeed in all undertakings. You will shine brilliantly in every field of life.

THE ESSENCE OF BHARATIYA CULTURE

The essence of Bharatiya culture is character and the essence of character is in self-control, Samyama. All great personalities are people endowed with self-control, all people who have become immortal—Bhishma, Harischandra, Lakshmana, Markandeya, Savitri, Sita, Shivaji, Rana Pratap—all had strength of character. Therefore develop the great ideals of self-control,

character, virtue, will-power and mastery over one's senses.

THE ESSENCE OF EDUCATION

Who is really an educated man? He who can see two paths—worthy—unworthy, proper—improper, right—wrong, Dharmic—Adharmic (righteous-unrighteous), and he who has the strength to say, "I will choose that which is proper, that which is according to the principle of Dharma, I will reject that which is petty, that which is unworthy, even though it is attractive, even though it may be pleasant. I know that I am a Bharatiya. Therefore I have to fulfil a certain Adarsha (ideal), and I am also a divine being. I am not this body. I am not the five senses. I am not this little restless mind. I am not this limited intellect. Beyond body, mind, senses and intellect I am an immortal soul. My wisdom which I have inherited as a Bharatiya, my culture which is Adhyatma Sanskriti (spiritual culture), tells me very clearly:

*Ajo nitya saswatoyam purano,
na hanyate hanyamane sarire*

Unborn, eternal, changeless and ancient, it is not killed when the body is killed.

THE INDESTRUCTIBLE SPIRIT

In this body, there is an immortal imperishable Self which is not affected even when the body is destroyed by death. It is unborn. It is permanent, It is eternal. It is beyond time, Anadi, Ananta, beginningless and endless. Fire cannot burn it. Water cannot wet it, wind cannot dry it, weapons cannot injure it. That is my true Self. I am the imperishable, unborn, eternal, indestructible Atma Swaroop. Indeed there is the imperishable within the perishable, the divine within the human, the spiritual within the material, and I am the divine, I am the eternal. Divinity is my true nature, and my physical nature, my Pranic nature, my mental and my intellectual nature are only temporary attributes. They have been superimposed on my real nature. My true nature, my Nija Swaroop, is that I am Ajar (without old age), Amar (immortal), Avinashi Atma (indestructible soul), Nitya Shuddha Atma (ever pure soul), Divya (divine) Atma.

My Sanskriti has given me this knowledge. Therefore having received this as my heritage, I shall always be established in this inner consciousness. To be divine is my birthright. To be divine and to shine with divine qualities is natural to me. To exude fragrance is natural to sandal wood. To be sweet is natural to honey and sugar. Just as it is natural for ice to be cool and fire to be hot, the sun to be bright, even

so it is natural to me to be divine, to be noble, to be good, to be loving, to be pure, to be truthful, to be wise, because that is my Nija Swaroop. In this way, I should have this awareness, that "I am divine".

The individual, when he is young, when he is laying the foundation of his life, must fill the first stage of his life with divine qualities, with noble virtues, with Divyata (divinity). Then his whole life is safe; his success is guaranteed.

THE GOLDEN PERIOD OF LIFE

I will tell you, my beloved young friends, the individual's life between sixteen and thirty is the most precious period. That period of fourteen years is a golden period. It is the most precious period. If this period is properly managed, if you are established in virtue, self-control, purity, truthfulness, then your entire life will be full of light, full of joy, full of success. Therefore, be most careful to mould yourself in this period. In whatever shape, in whatever pattern you put your life in these fourteen years, that pattern will remain throughout your life. It will become your permanent asset, Shashwata Dharma and Aishwarya (wealth). Therefore with eagerness, with enthusiasm, wisdom, try to mould yourself into an ideal pattern. Then you have already attained victory. Whatever seal or stamp is there in this period, it will remain forever.

But if you are careless, if you don't give attention to this period, if you allow it to go here and there, if you have no self-control, then you ruin yourself. If you don't attain the most important virtue of self-control at this period, then your life is lost. No one is to blame. Therefore pay special attention and try to acquire healthy, strong habits. Your whole life should contain healthy habits. And from your life you must keep out anything unhealthy, either physically, mentally or morally.

AVOID BAD COMPANY

In this connection, I would like to say two things. One thing that every young man, every student, every young girl should avoid bad company. Fly away from bad company. Bad company is more dangerous than fire or poison. Poison may destroy one's body; if you take poison one body will be dead. But if you get into bad company and develop bad habits that will become your inner Samskara (impressions) and Vasana (desire), and bad Samskara will go from birth to birth. Even if this body is reduced to ashes, the Vasanas and Samskaras will continue in your next birth also. Fire will burn only when you come into contact with it. It cannot harm you from far off, but the proximity of bad company will drag you down and bring about your downfall. Therefore avoid bad company. Be alone.

It is better to have no company, rather than risk bad company. If you must have company, have company of such people who elevate you, who ennable you, in whose company you feel pure, you feel good, you are inspired towards higher idealism. This is one very important thing.

NEVER IMITATE THE WEST

As the second important thing for all students and young people, I will make this request. NEVER IMITATE THE WEST in its superficial fashion and way of life. There is nothing more shameful than imitation of Western or alien cultures. It shows moral bankruptcy and that you have nothing of your own. Therefore you are trying to fill it with something which is not your own. It is most shameful for the youth of Bharatavarsha. One should never imitate.

If you want to emulate the West, emulate the good qualities of western society, cleanliness, punctuality, honesty. They are people with a sense of duty. They are industrious. They try to excel, to show their skill, they try to do their best and they are never idle. They are always conscious of their duty. In our country we don't imitate these higher qualities of western men and women, we only imitate that which is superficial. So imitation of fashion and passion, imitation of dress, hair-dress and life style –this is shameful, this is ignoble, this is not worthy.

Any person who is a Bharatiya should know that his culture is a rich culture. It is full of idealism. There are many great things to learn and copy for which western people come here. Therefore better learn your culture. Better find out the rich, noble qualities of your culture and be proud that you are a Bharatiya. Cultivate for yourself a Bharatiya life style, and that Bharatiya life style is what I have just now described to you.

By the strength and power of character you can keep your senses subdued, you can control the little desires and passions of the mind—Asha, Trishna, cravings of the mind and be a master in your own home, not a slave in your house. Therefore avoid bad or impure company and do not imitate the western superficial life style. This is not necessary for us.

You must shine as an ideal Bharatiya and you must live in such a way. If western people come here they must see you and realize what you are. We have got enough light to banish the darkness that is prevailing in the material world. We have enough light to give them, to bring light upon their life's path. Guide them towards a higher goal. As a Bharatiya it is your privilege and duty to evolve this higher idealism. When you grow older you must be able to show the rest of the

world the higher culture and higher ethical values for which your country stands. This is the real essence of your country's culture. Therefore do not imitate and avoid bad company.

THE FOUR STAGES

What has your ancient culture to tell about youth and student life? Your ancient culture has divided man's life into four stages and given them the name 'Ashrama'.

Four Ashramas—what is this Ashrama Dharma? In each stage there are certain ideals and principles laid down, and that is the Dharma of that particular Ashrama. The fourth—the last Ashrama is Sannyasa Ashrama. At the end of life, the individual should take Sannyasa. The third Ashrama is Vanaprastha Ashrama. After having fulfilled the duties of the second Ashrama, one must retire and turn the attention to higher things.

The second Ashrama is Grihastha Ashrama, the stage of the householder. It means marriage, having a wife, children, doing Udyoga, professional duties, social duties, domestic duties to his own Parivar—his mother and father and relatives. The second Ashrama is Grihastha Ashrama. What is the first? It is the Ashrama in which you are living. It is called Brahmacharya Ashrama.

What is Brahmacharya? Brahmacharya has got two meanings. The real meaning is that Charya or that conduct of life which ultimately leads you to Brahma Jnana (knowledge of Brahman) or Brahma-Sakshatkar. That is Brahmacharya. The pattern of living or the way of living and acting will bestow upon you Brahma Jnana, Brahma-Sakshatkar. Secondly Brahmacharya means a life of self-control, control of all the senses, all impure desires, control of anger and passion. It means self control. This is Brahmacharya. It means not merely remaining unmarried. That is not the proper definition. It means the first stage of life that is youth.

In those days they regarded human life as being hundred years in span. But who lives for hundred years now-a-days? The life span has become shortened. In these first 25 years one must lead the student's life. By the time the engineering students, medical students, law students finish their degree, they are 23, 24 and therefore Brahmacharya Ashrama means till age 24. You can regard Grihastha Ashrama from 24 to 45 and Vanaprastha from 45 to 60. After 60 one must take Sannyasa. Now we are not concerned with the second, third and fourth Ashramas, but with Brahmacharya Ashrama, the most important stage, because upon this depend the three other Ashramas. If the Brahmacharya Ashrama is properly lived he will become an ideal Grihasthi,

he will become an ideal Vanaprasthi, and he will become an ideal Sannyasi. If in the Brahmacharya Ashrama you don't live properly, if you have no character, no conduct—then what happens? You cannot become an ideal householder. Your children will be unhealthy. If you have no self-control and your actions are not based upon virtue, your life will be full of wrong deeds, and in Vanaprastha Ashrama you will become a miserable person, and your whole life will become a failure.

Success or failure in life depend upon how you have lived the first quarter of your life, and in this connection they have laid down three great duties. What are the duties for the youth and the Vidyarthi (student) in the Brahmacharya Ashrama? One important duty is self-evident. The student's first concern is to attain knowledge—acquire knowledge. But in your ancient culture knowledge was not merely confined to history, science, mathematics, civics. It also meant knowledge of a profession and knowledge of life; how to live an ideal life. Why have you come here? To know your real nature!

It meant Naitika Vidya (moral science), Naitika Shikshana or Dharmic Vidya. It also meant Adhyatma Vidya (Self knowledge). You have to learn Bhautika Vidya (material knowledge) in order to have Udyoga (business) and be independent, earning income and be able

to support your wife and children when you enter the second Ashram, the Grihastha Ashrama. But if you want to live a noble life and get a good name in society, you must know what Dharma is, what Niti (ethics) is. So study Manu Dharmashastra, Yajnavalkya Smriti, the science of right conduct. You must also learn Naitika Shiksha (moral education).

Each student must know the Srimad Bhagavad Gita by heart, and you must learn a little Sanskrit. The Gita contains the essence of Adhyatma Vidya (spiritual knowledge). Your whole Sanskriti is based upon knowledge, the knowledge of the Vedas. Your Dharma is called Vedic Dharma, and the real name of your religion is Sanatana Dharma or Vaidic Dharma, which means Dharma based upon Vedas and the wisdom of Vedas contained in the Upanishad. The essence of the Upanishads is given in the Srimad Bhagavad Gita—containing only 700 Slokas. If you learn by heart one Sloka every day, in two years the whole Gita will be at your command. If you are more eager, if you learn by heart one Sloka in the morning and one Sloka in the evening, then in one year you will know the entire eighteen chapters or 700 Slokas by heart. In the Gita is the essence of the Upanishads—the essence of your Adhyatma Vidya—spiritual wisdom. So to attain wisdom, to attain knowledge—secular knowledge, ethical knowledge and spiritual knowledge is one

of the primary duties of students in the Brahmacharya Ashrama.

Secondly, if you want to make use of your own Vidya, your secular ethical and your spiritual wisdom—you have to translate it into action. You must live it, and you can effectively practise whatever you have learnt only if your health is good, if you have got a strong, healthy body. Therefore the second important duty of the student is a *Dharmarthakama mokshanam arogya mulamuttamam*. The basis, the root of Dharma, Artha. Kama, Moksha is a strong and healthy body. Therefore you must daily do exercises, Asana, Pranayama, Surya-Namaskar and develop a very strong body. You must cultivate healthy habits. Go to bed early, wake up very early in the morning. Take a cold bath. Do some Surya-Namaskar. Have some Asana practice, do vigorous physical exercise and eat moderately. First you must have a Vajrakaya (strong body) like Maruti. Hanuman should be your ideal. Bhishma should be your ideal. Swami Vivekananda should be your ideal and Bhima or Lakshmana should be your ideal. In this way you should be strong in your body. Then only you will have strength of mind. Because body and mind are interconnected. If the body is weak, the mind cannot be strong. You cannot develop will power. Therefore developing a strong body and establishing sound physical health—Arogya (health) is the second important duty. The body is

the instrument of Seva (service) and successful endeavour. Any Purushartha (endeavour), any Parishrama (hard work) is possible only if your body is strong.

Thirdly, the last most important thing is development of a noble character. Once this age passes, you cannot change your character, because in young age, you are like bricks which have not yet been put inside the kiln. The clay is still soft; you can alter the shape. You can put upon it any Chhap (imprint). You can mould it. You can change it. But once you have put a brick inside the kiln and it becomes hard, then you cannot change it. If you try to alter the shape, it will break. So whatever you want to do, do it in this stage. When a plant is tender, it can be turned in any direction. When it becomes a big tree you cannot bend it. It will break. So in this age, you can mould your character, you can make your behaviour, you can make your Swabhava (nature) in any way you want. But if you wake up too late and then try to change it, you find that you cannot. Your nature has become hard, crystalised. Therefore, now is the time when you can give any shape.

Remember the greatest disease of human society is selfishness. Arrogance and anger is not a sign of strength. Try to learn this. As a sign of self-control always be humble, simple and unselfish. Let your character shine with

selflessness. Let it be endowed with simplicity, humility and forgiveness. Study ‘Sure Ways of Success in Life’ by Swami Sivananda and ‘Self-Indulgence vs. Self-Restraint’ by Gandhiji. Let self-help, moderate living and character be your motto. Be an ideal student.

May God bless you!

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

We are happy to publish ‘Sacred Memories’ – English translation of Sri Omprakash Thakur’s Hindi book ‘Par Hit Saris Dharma Nahin Bhai’.

It is the great good fortune of Sri Omprakashji Thakur that right from his childhood, he has been blessed with the holy company of Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj and has received their love and grace in abundance. At the request of some devotees, Sri Omprakashji has made a humble effort to record his sacred memories with these two great saints in his Hindi book ‘Par Hit Saris Dharma Nahin Bhai’. The book presents his numerous inspiring and sublime experiences with them and also gives a deep insight into their glorious divine personalities. The Hindi book has already been published by us. We hope that the English translation of this inspiring narrative will be welcomed by the English knowing devotees of Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj.

May the abundant blessings of Lord Almighty, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Param Pujya Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—*The Divine Life Society*

Mysterious are the ways of the Lord. Nobody can say when He will take away something from someone or bestow graciously something on another unasked. About 78 years ago, our family had come to Haridwar for a few days' stay; but my grandmother loved the serene and beautiful atmosphere of Haridwar so much that she refused to leave Haridwar. She wished to spend her entire life at this holy place and since then our family has been living at Haridwar.

We are engaged in the work of marble inscription for earning our livelihood and work especially for the Ashrams, Dharmashalas and temples to inscribe the names of the donors on marble plates. Therefore, our family has been in close contact with many Ashrams and Mathas and has also got the blessed opportunity to meet many renowned saints and Mahants.

As far as I can remember, Sri Lakshman Singh (elder brother of Sri Palji) first came to my father with the order of making marble plates of the donors' names for the Yoga Sadhana Kutir of Sivananda Ashram. This was the beginning of our relation with Sivananda Ashram. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj was so pleased with the work of my father that he invited him to

Rishikesh. The Bhajan Hall had been constructed at that time. Sri Swamiji Maharaj asked my father to make a marble plate inscribing the activities of the Society to be engraved outside the wall of the Bhajan Hall and also discussed about marble floor for Sri Vishwanath Mandir which was being constructed then.

When father returned home, he shared with us many things about Maharaj Sri, especially about his simple, loving and compassionate nature. In his own words, "Today, I have got Darshan of a Divine Personality. Though I have met many revered saints and Mahants of different Ashrams, Mathas and religious organisations, but Swamiji is different from all of them. What he is - it cannot be described in words; one has to experience it oneself." The more my father described about Maharaj, the intenser my desire grew to have his Darshan. I requested my father to take me along with him to meet Sri Swamiji, he readily agreed telling that soon we all would go to the Ashram.

After finishing the work of marble plate for Bhajan Hall and marble floor for Sri Vishwanath Mandir, my father arranged for a bullock cart to take the material to the Ashram as at that time, Tonga or bullock cart was the only means of transportation between Haridwar and Rishikesh. Our Ashram was a part of Tehri Garhwal State then and the boundary of the State began from Kailash Gate.

I have heard that Sri Narendra Shah, Maharaja of Tehri State, was not even aware that one great saint was living in his State. Once when he was on a visit to London, one of his friends showing him 'The Divine Life' magazine asked about Sri Swamiji Maharaj. His friend was greatly surprised to know that he was unaware of the presence of a great saint in his own State. On his return from London, Sri Narendra Shah came to Ananda Kutir to have Darshan of Maharaj Sri. He was given warm welcome by Sri Swamiji. Before taking leave from Swamiji, he asked if he could do any Seva for Swamiji. Maharaj Sri didn't say anything but Tehri Maharaja himself donated the land over the hill where now Sri Vishwanath Mandir, Bhajan Hall, Samadhi Mandir and Press etc are situated. After receiving this land, Sri Swamiji got prepared Z shaped way to climb over the hill and also initiated the construction work. The present stairs, that we see today, were constructed after many years.

It was nearly 2 a.m., when my father along with the aforesaid material, reached at the border of Tehri Garhwal State. He was stopped by the police officer at the Kailash Gate and was told that due to the visit of the Viceroy, the road was closed for the public. But when he informed them that this material was for Sivananda Ashram; the officer, being aware of Tehri Maharaja's reverence for Sri Swamiji allowed him to go on a condition to return before 4 a.m. My father reached the

Ashram at midnight, the Sannyasins and Brahmacharins were roused to unload the cart immediately.

After some days my father took me, my uncle Sri Khem Singhji and my younger sister to the Ashram and we all were blessed with Darshan of Maharaj Sri. On knowing that we had lost our mother just one year ago, Sri Swamiji Maharaj was very much moved. He instructed all his attendants and also one of his reliable workers Sri Santram to take good care of us. We were given room in Yoga Sadhana Kutir and my father and uncle started their work in the vacant area opposite the Kutir. It was here, we met one white-clothed Brahmachari who later was known as Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj.

The preparation of consecration ceremony of Sri Vishwanath Mandir was going on; the idols of Lord Sri Ram, Mother Sita, Lakshaman, Hanuman and Lord Sri Krishna had been brought to the Ashram and were kept in the Bhajan Hall. But Swamiji Maharaj did not want the idols to be kept like this; so it was decided to conduct Akhanda Mahamantra Kirtan until the consecration ceremony. Thus with Maharaj Sri's instructions, the Akhand Kirtan of 'Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare; Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare' commenced on 3rd December 1943 at the Bhajan Hall. And when the idols had been installed in the temple, Maharaj Sri did not ask to stop the Kirtan.

Instead he said, “O ji when once it has started, why to stop it.” The Akhanda Mahamantra Kirtan continues till today at the Bhajan Hall.

Maharaj sent my uncle Thakur Sri Khem Singh to Jaipur to bring the statues of Lord Ganesha, Mother Parvati, Nandi and the Jalhari where the Sivalinga was to be installed. The consecration ceremony was organised with great enthusiasm and the Maharaja of Tehri State graced the ceremony. Many other distinguished guests and scholars had come to attend the ceremony at the invitation of Maharaj. There was a big Bhandara wherein invited and uninvited guests, sitting in a long line from Sri Vishwanath temple to the banks of Mother Ganga partook the sacred Prasad.

Maharaj Sri Swami Sivanandaji performed many great tasks in his life, but he never planned for them. He would start the work at his inner inspiration and never worried how the work would be completed or from where the money and manpower would be arranged. He would say, “This is the work of God. God will complete it.”

Seeing that there was no arrangement for the education of children, Maharaj started Sivananda Primary School in the building where we have Press now-a-days. With the blessings of Maharaj and the sincere efforts of Sri Satchidanandaji Maithani, the school was being run efficiently and the students from Muni ki Reti, Lakshman Jhoola and Tapovan used to come to get education. Sri

Swamiji Maharaj also gave the order for the arrangement of the books for all the students. The students had to arrange only for copies. It was compulsory for all the students to learn Gita by heart.

At that time, Sri Swamiji Maharaj's divine message was being spread through the monthly organ 'The Divine Life' magazine. All the Ashramites contributed despatching the magazine. Seeing the popularity of English magazine, Hindi magazine 'Yoga Vedanta' was started. By the grace of God, one Hindi knowing person from Almora came to the Ashram. His name was Dharmendra Singh and later he was known as Swami Satyananda.

The place, where we have post office now, was the main office of Maharaj. He used to come to the office daily. Sri Swami Vishuddhanandaji, Sri Swami Poornabodhaji and Narayana Swamiji were the organisers of the office and Ashram activities. The Cash office was nearby Swamiji's office. There was a little garden full of flowers in front of the cash office and Swamiji's office. Adjacent to the cash office, there was an open area and also some rooms wherein one room was used as store and one as kitchen while in another, Sri Swami Vishweshvaranandaji, Langar In-charge lived. The next room served as Ashram dispensary with one cupboard in it and the last room was post office where post office In-charge lived and worked. This post office was known as Ananda

Kutir; afterwards it was renamed as Shivanandanagar post office. The open area in front of these rooms was later converted into Langar (dining- hall).

Maharaj Sri used to come regularly to his office and met the visitors. In the evening, there was the Satsanga after the dinner. As per the time and weather, the Satsanga was conducted in the open area near Maharaj's Kutia, Bhajan Hall or Dharmashala of Ram Ashram. For many years, Durga puja was organised in the Dharmashala of Ram Ashram. Every year two Sadhana weeks were organised - one during the Christmas holidays in December and the during Easter holidays. The third main programme was conducted on the birthday of Sri Swamiji. Throughout the year, there were some or other festivals and Pujas conducted in the Ashram. During both the Sadhana weeks, Boat- Kirtan was the highlighting feature. In those days, the boats of Kali Kamali Kshetra provided free service of taking people across the Ganga. Sri Swamiji along with the devotees used to go across Ganga through these boats and would meet Sri Narayana Swami, do Satsanga and afterwards doing Kirtan, would return to the Ashram. On the last day of Sadhana Week, a drama 'Divya Jeevan' was enacted wherein Ashramites, visitors and guests would participate. My father got the blessed opportunity to play the role of Sri Swamiji Maharaj. Maharaj liked his performance very much. Once when

‘Sivananda Vijay’ drama was to be enacted, Sri Swamiji instructed Sri Shyam Sunder, the writer and the director of the drama, “O ji, I present the name of Thakur Prabhu Singh to play the role of Swami Sivananda, you can select people for other characters.” I, my father and sister were fortunate to play different roles in this drama. Sri Swamiji Maharaj awarded me with a silver medal as second prize and first was Sri Suresh. Many times Swamiji Maharaj would stand up and danced on the stage singing his favourite Bhajan ‘Agad Bum Agad Bum Baje Damaru’. Maharaj always encouraged the children to play. He used to say to our teacher, “O ji never beat the children.” But our teacher would beat us saying that without fear, we can’t learn.

Our teacher Satchidanandaji Maithaniji used to go to Ayurvedic Vidyalaya Dhanvantari Bhavan in Rishikesh for his studies in Ayurveda. After getting the degree of Ayurvedacharya, he came to Swamiji with my father and said, “My studies have been completed and I want to go for earning my livelihood. I need your permission and blessings.” Swamiji asked, “Can you prepare Chyavanaprash? Do you know about Shilajit medicine?” Masterji replied in affirmative. Then Maharaj Sri said, “O ji, why to go anywhere else, start your work here, all the material will be provided to you.” Swamiji also discussed with my father regarding preparation of Shilajit. And thus, this conversation resulted into the inauguration

of ‘Sivananda Ayurvedic Pharmacy’. My father was also instrumental along with Swami Vishuddhanandaji in establishment of Go-shala and Viswanatha Bag (garden) at Rishikesh.

Day by day, my father’s relationship with the Maharaj Sri grew closer. Sri Swamiji Maharaj bestowed His special grace upon him by listening to his Bhajan whenever he was in the Ashram. Once Maharaj Sri was going to Mumbai for recording of His Bhajans and Kirtans. As the train for Mumbai was to start from Haridwar at night, He came to Haridwar in the evening. At the Haridwar railway station, He asked my father, “There is much time in the departure of the train. Tell me where we can go.” Father replied that they could go to Mahant Shantanandaji as he had requested many times for Swamiji’s visit. Immediately came Maharajji’s response, “O ji, why should we not visit your house?” My father was speechless – such a great saint at my small house, what should I say? He could not say ‘No’ and didn’t have enough courage to say ‘Yes’. Then Sri Swamiji Himself said, “O ji, we will visit your house.” And thus Sri Swamiji blessed our small rented house near Har-ki-Pauri. Sri Swamiji was very much delighted to see the location of the house as it presented a beautiful view of Mother Ganga.

Before departing for Mumbai, Maharaj Sri asked the father what He could bring for him from Mumbai. My father requested for a special kind of

paper, black pencil and some other necessary items for drawing. Sri Swamiji brought all those items and my father made a beautiful and magnificent picture of Maharaj wherein Swamiji was shown sitting in deep meditation at the bank of Mother Ganga and Sivalaya of Swargashram was visible in the background. For many years, this picture has adorned the walls of the Bhajan Hall.

Once it so happened that Sri Swamiji Maharaj left the Ashram without telling anything to anyone. He felt that he had built a new home in the form of an Ashram therefore he should renounce this home also as he had renounced the previous one. When Ashramites came to know about Swamiji's sudden disappearance, they made an intensive search. Where could a glorious personality like Swamiji hide? It was soon found that Sri Swamiji was staying with a poor farmer in Jagjitpur village near Haridwar. This poor farmer known as Bhaktaji was a noble and sweet natured person. We were introduced to such saintly soul by the grace of Maharaj. At the humble prayers and requests of all, Sri Swamiji returned to the Ashram. Afterwards, whenever Bhaktaji came to the Ashram, he brought something produced in his own fields. Sri Swamiji Maharaj felt immensely happy to meet him. He had served Swamiji with intense love and devotion without being aware of the truth that Swamiji was the head of such a big institution. Maharajji always expressed his gratitude towards him for his loving service. I also

got the blessed opportunity to visit his home twice or thrice with Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj.

Saints, Sadhus and Fakirs have their own Mauja (sweet will) sometimes. One day, Maharaj Sri also expressed his Mauja to go to Devaprayaga to have Darshan of Lord Raghunath along with the Ashramites and the families living near the Ashram. Immediately, two buses were arranged and we all reached Devaprayaga under the leadership of Swami Paramanandaji Maharaj. As per Maharaj Sri's instructions, we did Kirtan throughout our journey. We had Darshan of Lord Sri Raghunath and sang Bhajan-kirtan in the temple. We also went to have the Darshan of the confluence of the sacred rivers namely Bhagirathi and Alaknanda. At this meeting point, these sacred rivers get their new name Ganga. Afterwards, Maharajji sat with us all and had lunch. We returned to the Ashram in the evening. Maharaj Sri used to organise such programmes many times at Vishwanath Bagh in Rishikesh.

Swamiji Maharaj followed religiously the principle of 'Forget and Forgive'. Once a boy, living nearby the Ashram, was trying to hit a monkey with his catapult. Maharaj Sri was going to his office then. The boy missed the mark and the stone, instead of hitting the monkey, injured Maharajji's foot. That boy was very much frightened. Maharaj Sri called him and said, "Don't do this. Monkey is also a living being like you. If the stone had hit it, how much pain it

would have felt.” The boy realised his mistake and touched the feet of Maharaj seeking forgiveness. Many such occasions came where we thought that Maharajji would be angry or upset knowing this or that but it never happened.

‘Bear insult, bear injury- highest Sadhana’ was not just an instruction by Maharaj Sri but was an integral part of his own nature. In 1953, The Parliament of Religions was convened. Swami Paramanandaji was the chief convenor of the Parliament. I also got the opportunity to offer my services for the programme along with Sri Ramratnaji. Our Seva was to receive the guests at the Rishikesh railway station and take care of their boarding and lodging. The Parliament was organised for three days with two sessions each day. It was the third day of the Parliament; the scholars representing all religions were seated on the platform. They were being invited one by one to deliver discourses and each was being garlanded by Maharaj Sri. Among them, one scholar introducing himself as the Guru of the king of Nepal, started criticising Swamiji in his discourse. He condemned Swamiji’s way of living, dressing and conversing in English in derogatory words. Sri Swamiji, instead of being angry, was smiling and also applauding his oratory skills. At the end of the discourse, Maharaj Sri garlanded him again and expressed his gratitude towards him for pointing out his faults while the entire

gathering and Maharajji's disciples were very much annoyed.

During our stay at the Ashram, many a times we have received Maharaj Sri's blessings and divine grace. Once during Sadhana Week, there was demonstration of Yogasanas by the children. Maharaj Sri liked my performance and rewarded me with his two silken clothes, biscuits and chocolates. In those days especially in rainy season, Malaria was widespread; therefore quinine mixture was always kept ready for the Ashramites and the residents of Muni-Ki-Reti. Once it so happened, my father, sister and myself got Malaria fever on the same day and we suffered a lot for many days. Swamiji Maharaj blessed us with medicines as well as his gracious words. Every day while going to the Bhajan Hall, he would stop at our Kutir and saying 'Hari Om' would enquire about our health.

With the sincere efforts of Swami Paramanandaji, the construction of Guru Mandir was completed during Maharaj Sri's lifetime. The marble work inside the Mandir was done by father under the supervision of Swami Vishnudevanandaji. The place just below the Guru Mandir was chosen by Maharaj Sri himself for the construction of His Samadhi. The designing and marble work for Sivananda Pillar was also accomplished by father with the support and suggestions of Swami Madhavanandaji. After the completion of Sivananda Pillar, Maharajji got

himself photographed with my father and his co-workers. The photograph is treasured till today in the Ashram's collection of rare photographs.

Before partaking the Prasad in the Ashram Langar, there used to be the recitation of the fifteenth chapter of Srimad Bhagavad Gita. Swamiji would be very much delighted to see the small children reciting Gita. Though there was a separate kitchen for Swamiji in his Kutir, but many a times he would sit with us to have Prasad. Once at the request of Mahant Shantananda Nathji of Haridwar, Sri Swamiji sent Ashram's children to his place under the guidance of Swami Shashwatanandaji and Satchidanandaji Maithani to participate in a special programme. We all won prizes in that programme. When Maharaj Sri came to know of it, he was very much pleased and immediately ordered the In-charge of Ashram Langar to get prepared special food for all of us and he also partook the Prasad with us. To appreciate and encourage the good work was one of the unique traits of Maharaj Sri's nature. And when someone did anything wrong, he would never become angry; he would just scold the person lovingly. But his loving rebuke was of such nature that it pierced into the heart of the wrong-doer and he would then and there decide never to repeat that mistake.

One day, I and my friend Sureshchandra were climbing down the Ashram stairs very fast. As the stairs were made of wood, our fast

movement was creating loud noise. Maharaj Sri was sitting in his office in Diamond Jubilee Hall. Being disturbed with this rattling sound, he sent one of the Brahmacharins to call us. He tenderly reprimanded us thus, "O ji, these are wooden stairs and can break with such fast movement and the people working in the office also get disturbed by the noise. So, be slow while climbing up or down. Achhaji, never repeat it again. Now chant 'Om Namah Sivaya' ten times. Be a good boy." Thus we have been blessed with the constant flow of Maharaj Sri's Grace- Ganga.

By the grace of Maharajji, I was engaged to the sister of Sri Trilok Singhji who had been personal attendant of Maharaj for some time. The august presence of Swami Chidanandaji in my wedding ceremony was a great blessing for us. Knowing about his arrival, Sri Sundarprakashji and Harnamprakashji, Mahants of Kali Kamali Swargashram also attended the wedding from bride's side and welcomed Sri Swamiji. My father was overwhelmed with feelings of gratitude towards Maharaj Sri who had showered his grace upon ordinary persons like us. After the marriage, my father took us all to Maharaj to offer our Pranams and to seek his blessings. Maharajji called Swami Sharadanandaji to take our photograph with him and also blessed us with special Prasad.

On 14th July 1963, the news of the passing away of this great soul was broadcasted on All

India Radio. In spite of hearing the news, we could not believe it. My father made a phone call to the Ashram to confirm this tragic news. After being confirmed about the authenticity of the news, we started for the Ashram. On reaching the Ashram, we rushed towards Maharaj Sri's Kutir to have the last Darshan of His divine form and offer our floral tributes. My father had been a person of great patience and fortitude and I had seen him firm and unshaken in such circumstances where an ordinary person could lose his patience. Even at the untimely death of my mother, he was calm and serene. But that day, he could not keep his patience and wept bitterly as if his most beloved and precious possession had been snatched away from him. He was gazing at Maharaj Sri's mortal frame and tears were constantly streaming through his eyes. As per the desire of Maharajji, his mortal remains were interred in the place which he himself had chosen. Within three days, Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj gave a definite shape and design to the Samadhi Shrine; he asked my father to carve foot prints of Maharaj on the marble surface and blessed me with the Seva of bringing a Narmadeshwar Sivalinga along with a small Jalhari to be installed on the upper surface of the Samadhi. The marble work inside the shrine was also done by my father.

Thus, we have been constantly blessed by Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. The divine grace of these

two saints has made our family foremost in many important works of the Ashram. Apart from the marble work in the Ashram, my father has been instrumental in the inauguration of Sivananda Ayurvedic Pharmacy and organising of the first Sri Satyanarayana Vrata Katha in the Ashram wherein Maharaj Sri himself listened to the Katha narrated by Sri Satchidanandaji. I was the first student of Sivananda Primary School and I also got the blessed Seva of bringing Narmadeshwar Sivalinga for Samadhi Mandir.

This is the fourth generation of our family and we all have been fortunate enough to receive the loving grace and blessings of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj and Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj for the last sixty years. We all will be ever grateful for this supreme grace. May their abundant grace be ever upon us and upon all, is the humble prayer of this servant at their lotus feet.

Hari Om Tat Sat.

As I have mentioned earlier, when my father was engaged in his work outside Yoga Sadhana Kutir, one saint in white robes used to visit him to enquire about his wellbeing and also the progress of the work. He was addressed as Raoji by all the Ashramites and the guests. His full name was Sri Sridhar Raoji and today he is known as Sri Swami Chidanandaji.

ARRIVAL IN THE ASHRAM AND SERVICES

Sri Swamiji Maharaj came to the Ashram in the year 1943. Seeing his intense zeal for selfless service, Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj gave him the responsibility of the Ashram dispensary. At that time, the dispensary was being run in a room with a single cupboard wherein medicines, bandages and all other necessary articles were kept. During the rainy season, the Ashramites generally suffered from Malaria and in summer, scorpion bite was a great menace. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj knew the healing Mantra for scorpion bite. The person who had been stung by a scorpion would come crying and writhing in pain to Maharaj and would return smiling. Maharaj Sri taught this Mantra to Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj also.

The last week of December 1943 was the week of joyous festivities as the consecration of Sri Vishwanath Mandir was to take place on 31st December. After the consecration ceremony, Sridhar Raoji was made the first Pujari (priest) of the temple. Sridhar Raoji along with Sri Poornabodha Swamiji performed worships in the temple. They both used to go to the forest to collect Bael leaves and flowers for worship and also made big and beautiful flower-garlands for the Lord.

Sri Swamiji has also competently discharged his duties as an English teacher in Sivananda Primary School. His wonderful teaching method and his loving nature endeared him to all the students and they wished that he should continue teaching them even after the class was over. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj was not in favour of punishing the students but in spite of that other teachers used to punish them. Sri Swami Chidanandaji never punished anyone.

Sri Swamiji Maharaj established Yoga Museum in the Ashram wherein he had kept pictures and charts depicting salient features and stages of all the principal Yogas. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj was so much impressed with his Yoga Museum that he would bring all the distinguished guests of the Ashram there and ask Sri Swami Chidanandaji to explain the details. When Sarvapalli Radhakrishnanji, President of India and a great philosopher, visited the Ashram,

our Swamiji Maharaj also took him to the Museum and he himself explained everything.

MESSIAH OF THE MISERABLE

Sri Swamiji Maharaj came to the Ashram on Buddha Purnima day; it was his first meeting with Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. While coming to the Ashram, he saw lepers sitting on the roadsides. Their open wounds and heart-rending way of begging aroused the deep feelings of compassion in Sri Swamiji and he decided that there should be a respectable way of living for these miserable brethrens. He thought if God willed and he would be in some position to do something for them, he would definitely do. And the grace of God brought that day when he became General Secretary of the Ashram. With the generous donations from the Ashram, Kali Kamali Khetra and government, he made suitable arrangements for their boarding and lodging to ensure that they need not beg on the roadsides. He also showed them the path to respectful living. It is the fruit of the untiring efforts of Sri Swamiji that today the residents of Brahmapuri Leper Colony are not only free from this wretched disease and but also have become useful members of the society by weaving carpets and Asanas etc. Similarly, rooms have been constructed in Lakshman Jhula and Dhalwala Leper colonies for them and adequate medical facilities have also been provided.

Once I went to Guru Niwas to meet Maharaj and on reaching there, I found that Maharajji was about to go somewhere. Seeing me, he said, "Om! You come with us." Happily, I sat inside the car with Swamiji. The car stopped at Dhalwala Leper Colony where the residents of the colony and some Ashramites had already been waiting for Maharajji. They all heartily welcomed Swamiji and showed him the newly constructed and renovated rooms. There was also a beautiful place for Satsanga. Maharajji sat there and conducted Kirtan. Thereafter, he listened to their problems and also gave instructions to the concerned members regarding suitable solutions. One leper was very happy; he participated in the Kirtan enthusiastically and did not put up any demand or problem before Swamiji. When Swamiji was leaving the colony, he started repeating 'Maharaj Ki Jai' expressing his great delight. Swamiji asked him, "What is the matter, brother? You look very happy? He replied, "Yes, Maharaj, it is a matter of great rejoicing that today our Lord has come to our house. All the arrangements for our food, clothing and shelter have been made. What else do we need? And Maharaj, this disease is the fruit of our own actions which we ourselves have to bear." Maharaj was glad to hear his answer and said to him, "You have learnt the art of living."

Meanwhile, a Bidi (small roll of tobacco for smoking) seller reached there on his bi-cycle and started telling about the qualities of his product.

Maharajji said, "Why are you singing the glories of Bidis, sell some good thing." Immediately he retorted, "Maharaj, I earn my livelihood by selling Bidis; I do not beg." Maharajji wondered why he replied in such a rude manner and then he watched him closely. Actually that Bidi seller was handicapped; he was doing all his work through one hand only. Then Maharajji asked him where he would go next. "Swargashram," he replied. He was asked by Maharajji to stop for a while at Guru Niwas while going to Swargashram. He came to Guru Niwas and Maharajji sent a packet for him with the message – "This is the Prasad from Guru Maharaj Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj." Maharaj had never met him and there were rare chances of meeting him again but the happiness Maharaj gave to that stranger is unimaginable. It is an innate part of Swamiji's nature to be constantly striving to give happiness to others and to bring smile on the sorrow-stricken faces. There are uncountable examples of his noble deeds of such kind.

And if anyone has rendered any service to Swamiji, he not only gives him his due payment but also expresses his gratitude towards him. Presently, where we have Garhwal Vikas Nigam near Kailash Gate, a river used to flow there during rainy seasons. Sometimes, the services of the elephants of the Tehri Maharaja would be needed to go across the river. Tonga was the only means of transport to go to Rishikesh from the

Ashram and that also was of no use in rainy season due to the swift current of this river. During such times, bringing necessary articles and especially vegetables for the Ashram from Rishikesh was the most arduous task. And this Herculean task was performed with great ease by one Nepali porter. Perhaps his name was Manbahadur but he was addressed Bahadur by one and all. He used to cross the river carrying vegetables and other necessary things on his back from the Rishikesh market. Swamiji Maharaj would not only pay him his due wages but always expressed his heartfelt gratitude towards him for rendering such great service to the Ashram. With the passage of time, this courageous man Bahadur fell ill; Swamiji always used to take care of his health, medicines and other requirements. I have read that letter which Maharaj Sri wrote from America to Sri Swami Vimalanandaji seeking information about the health of Bahadur. In that letter, he had also given instructions to him go to Bahadur and touch his feet; ask about his well being on Swamiji's behalf and give the Prasad saying that this was Prasad for him from Guru Maharaj Sri Sivanandaji. The Prasad included money along with many other things. Now-a-days, people do not care for their own relatives whereas our Maharaj treats strangers as his own. Actually, for him there is no stranger; all are his very own.

Once Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, observing the self-sacrificing service of Sri Swami

Chidanandaji, had remarked, “Chidanandaji is equivalent to ten doctors.” It is an old incident when private buses used to ply from Haridwar to Lakshman Jhula. Once a bus going to Lakshman Jhula, while taking a turn near Tapovan, fell into deep ditch; all the passengers excluding one little child were injured. As soon as the news of the accident reached the Ashram, Sannyasins and Brahmacharins rushed towards the accident site. All the injured passengers were brought to the Ashram for necessary medical aid. The Ashramites offered their services in different ways to them under the guidance of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. Someone was doing bandage; the other was giving medicine and while someone else was bringing tea from the Ashram Langar and another one was preparing beds for them. Sri Swami Sharadanandaji, the head of Ashram studio, was busy in taking photographs. On that day, observing Sri Swami Chidanandaji’s spirit of service and diligent efforts, Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj had made that glorious remark.

In 1953, Sri Swami Paramanandaji organised Parliament of Religions under the guidance of Guru Maharaj Sri Sivanandaji Maharaj. The dignitaries representing various religions had participated in the event. The contribution of Sri Swami Chidanandaji in this momentous programme was indeed praiseworthy.

In earlier days, Maharaj Sri lived in the first two rooms of Yoga Sadhana Kutir. I also got the blessed opportunity to live with him in those rooms. It is said that great intimacy leads to the end of all formalities. Once I committed a blunder due to my so called intimacy or ignorance; I cannot say. I was a student of class tenth then and used to go to a school in Rishikesh. One day as I was getting ready for the school, I found that one of my sandals had given way. As there was no cobbler nearby the Ashram, I was upset thinking how I would go to school. Then all of a sudden, an idea flashed into my mind that I should borrow Swamiji's sandals for one day. I knew that Swamiji mostly remained in his room and worked and moreover, the size of my feet was also same as that of Swamiji's. Being happy at my brilliant idea, I rushed to Maharaj Sri's room and said, "Swamiji, one of my sandals has broken and I have to go to school. Can I borrow yours for one day? I will get my sandals repaired while returning from the school." Maharajji lovingly smiled and gave his permission. Little did I realise then what I was doing. When I returned from the school, I informed Swamiji that I had got my sandals repaired and had kept his sandals at their place. Maharajji said, "No, no, now onwards they are yours; you can use these both." And from that day, he started moving barefoot not only in the Ashram but even when he went outside the

Ashram. He would go to Delhi or to any other place barefooted. I could not understand much at that time.

Once when Swamiji was planning to come to the Ashram from Delhi, he invited many devotees of Delhi including my father to attend the Sivarartri celebration at the Ashram. Most of them got ready to come along with him but he sent them all to the Ashram saying that he would come afterwards. There is one saying in Hindi ‘Aayi Mauj Fakir Ki, Diya Jhopra Phoonka’— You cannot imagine what a God-intoxicated saint can do in his ecstatic mood; he can even burn his hut and laugh. In such an exalted mood, Maharaj Sri started travelling from Delhi on foot. He would stop at the villages on the way; beg for food and again resumed his journey singing the name of the Lord. Walking continuously barefooted caused blisters in his feet and it became very painful to walk but he kept on walking slowly. And see the grace of the Compassionate Lord, one truck driver stopped his vehicle on his own and asked him if he was going to Haridwar. As Maharajji nodded his head, he asked Maharaj to sit near his seat. Before sitting, Maharajji informed him that he had nothing to pay to him. He said, “Maharaj, do not worry. Please sit comfortably.” Thus, Maharaj Sri reached Haridwar and rested for a while at my uncle’s house. He refreshed himself by taking a dip in Gangaji; took some money from my uncle and

came to the Ashram. On our frequent queries, he narrated this whole incident. Maharaj Sri Sivanandaji also came to know that now-a-days Sri Chidanandaji moved without shoes or sandals but he did not say anything. Once, Maharaj Sri received an invitation from Allahabad University to deliver a lecture. He called Swami Chidanandaji and asked him to go to Allahabad and also advised not to go barefoot. It was then, his severe Tapas (austerity) of moving barefoot came to an end.

A GUIDE TO THE PILGRIMS

These days, Badrinath Yatra has become very easy but earlier it was not so. The pilgrims had to walk a long way enduring many hardships. During Yatra season, a large number of devotees would come to Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj to seek his permission and blessings and also guidance regarding the journey. Swamiji would apprise them of the difficulties which could beset them during the journey; the necessary articles and the medicines which they would need; the suitable places where they could stay for night halt and also the important shrines which they must visit on the way to Badrinath. He would describe some places in such an elaborate and precise manner that the listeners could actually visualise them. I had been associated with Swamiji for a long time and in my knowledge he had never been to Badrinath. Therefore, I was perplexed how he could guide the pilgrims and also describe these places with such accuracy as if

he himself had visited them. One day I asked Swamiji, "Swamiji, when did you visit Badrinath?" Then Swamiji told that he had never been to Badrinath. To clarify my doubts, he further explained that the devotees who visited him before commencing the Yatra invariably came again to him after the completion of the Yatra and used to narrate the details of their journey. Thus, he had gained so much experience that when he himself would visit Badrinath, he won't feel that he had come there first time. That day I learnt from Swamiji what it was to be benefitted by the experiences of others and also to be beneficial to others.

THE SUPREME GRACE OF ALMIGHTY LORD

The Lord has showered His grace upon us many a times by saving our beloved Swamiji's life. During my stay at the Ashram, I often got the opportunity to accompany Swamiji in his walks to nearby forest. During one such occasion, Swamiji narrated one incident how God's grace had saved his life. One day Swamiji and Ramchandra Swamiji went for a walk in the forest behind the Ashram. Walking leisurely, they covered a long distance and moved far in the forest. When they thought of returning, the evening had already set in. The sky was overcast with dense clouds intensifying the darkness. Suddenly, it started torrential rains. They decided that they should stay at the place where they were as they won't be

able to find their way in such darkness. And they spent the whole night sitting at that place in singing Lord's name. At the daybreak as they started to walk, they found that they were sitting at the edge of a deep ditch and if they had moved further even a step, they would have lost their lives. They expressed heartfelt gratitude towards that Supreme Saviour, who being the Indweller, inspired them to sit at that place and not to move further.

One another incident comes to my memory. As we all know, Swamiji's body cannot bear the extreme heat therefore summer season is little painful for him. It was the time when the construction of Sri Vishwanath Mandir had just been completed and the piles of bricks were lying around the temple. Swamiji used to go to the terrace of Sri Vishwanath Mandir to sleep at night. He used the temporary wooden stairway that was kept there during the construction of the Mandir. Once he was in deep sleep, it started raining all of a sudden. He woke up and started walking towards the stairway but due to the intense darkness and effect of the sleep, he missed the exact direction of the stairway and moved ahead. As a result, he fell upon the pile of the bricks and was severely injured. The mark of that injury is still there on one of his feet. Falling from such a height upon the pile of bricks, anything could have happened. It was only the loving grace of the Lord which protected our Swamiji.

After a few months of becoming the President of the Divine Life Society, Sri Swamiji intensely desired to have Darshan of Lord Kedarnath. He asked one of my friends Sureshanandaji to accompany him. Sureshanandaji was very happy to receive this invitation and readily agreed. They took one porter along with them and started the journey and reached Gaurikund first travelling by bus up to Rudraprayaga and afterwards walking on foot. From Gaurikund, the journey was to be more arduous. Suddenly the weather changed for the worse; dark clouds covered the whole sky and stormy winds began to blow. The porter got fever and it became difficult for him even to walk, how one could expect from him to carry the luggage. Swamiji and Sureshanandaji took the luggage from him and carrying it themselves continued walking. As it was the last day of the Yatra seasons, all the midway shops and inns had been closed and there was no one on the path except these three persons.

After sometime, snowfall began and soon the whole path was covered with the thick layer of the snow. They were not able to locate the way with their torch light as only white expanse all around was visible. They were in great difficulty as how to move further. By the grace of God, the postman of Kedarnath met them there. He was going to Kedarnath to deliver the last post of the season. He told them that they themselves won't be able to find the way and might fall in some ditch.

Therefore, they should follow him as he was much familiar with the way due to his regular visits. Walking behind him, they reached Kedarnath safely in the night. The postman went towards his destination after showing them the way to the Shrine.

Their bodies were almost frozen due to walking in icy cold winds and rain and now they were not able to walk a step further. They stood there looking all around for night-shelter. Some houses were visible but all of them were closed. Somehow summoning courage, they knocked at one door and asked for shelter. One priest opened the door and took them inside his house. They all hastily moved towards the fireplace but the priest forbade them to do so and gave them warm Ghee for massaging the whole body. After the massage, he gave them tea and only then he allowed them to go near the fire. Swamiji was very much delighted to see his spirit of selfless service. He had served them with so much love without knowing who they were. Swamiji expressed his gratitude and also offered him some other things. And later on, whenever anyone from the Ashram went to Kedarnath, Swamiji always sent some special Prasad for this priest. Thus, Lord Kedarnath saved His devotees and also showered His grace upon us all.

Once, during his South India tour, Swamiji was going to the airport by his car. Due to the sudden brake failure of the car, the driver had to

stop it striking it against a tree. The acute pain which it caused to Maharaj Sri's frail body persisted for many years. Again and again, we express our heartiest gratitude to the Compassionate Lord for saving our beloved Swamiji's life.

BRIMMING WITH MOTHERLY LOVE

All the Ashram children were fortunate enough to receive Swamiji's motherly love. He took care of all of us with such love and affection that everyone missed him a lot when he went to America. One of us was Sri Ramrakshpalji whom Swamiji had given a new name Nadchitswarupaji in appreciation of his musical talents. Whenever Sri Palji used to write a letter to Maharaj, he would address him as Ma (Mother). And this is indeed true. Sadguru also is our mother. As a mother gives birth to a child, a Sadguru gives us a new life in the spiritual world. In our Hindu culture, we first remember and offer our salutations to the mother aspect of the Supreme Reality when we chant *Tvameva Mata* or *Sitaram* or *Radhakrishna* or *Umashankara*.

The readers today may not believe that Swamiji Maharaj has fed us many a times with his own hands as a mother feeds her babies. Sri Ramratanji, one of my companions, loved Swamiji very much but also quarrelled with him sometimes on certain matters. Whenever he used to quarrel with Maharaj, Maharajji would listen

patiently to his arguments and simultaneously would spread butter on the toast and offer him lovingly in a plate. Then Ramratanji used to retort thus, "I am not Suresh or Omprakash that I would be happy eating toast or rusk. I am very angry with you." He had an intense desire to organise an All India Tour for Swamiji Maharaj on the similar lines as that of All India Tour of Gurudev organised in 1950. Swamiji had also acceded to his request but unfortunately, Sri Ramratanji was called by the Lord to His feet at the very early age. However, his desire was fulfilled and our Maharajji not only visited all India but went all around the world with the sublime mission of propagating Gurudev's Divine Life message. He endeared himself to everyone and made the whole world his family by his loving and compassionate nature.

THE EMBODIMENT OF RENUNCIATION AND TAPAS

Sri Swamiji Maharaj hails from an affluent Jamindar family but he renounced the comforts and luxuries of that life to walk on the path of dispassion. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj has seen his Poorvashram house. It is a palatial building having a tennis court wherein Europeans also came to play tennis. But that luxurious life could not allure Maharaj Sri and renouncing it, he joined Gurudev's Ashram. And here in the Ashram, when Guru Maharaj asked him to take

the post of General Secretary, he tried his level best to decline the proposal but ultimately he accepted the Guru Ajna (order) with great humility. Similarly, when he was invited to visit America, he expressed his unwillingness saying that he wished to go to Badrinath instead of going to America but here also Guru Ajna and the noble aim of the service of the humanity made him submit. After returning from America, Sri Swamiji Maharaj spent 14 months as a wandering mendicant. I believe, he intended to live an austere life after living amongst the comforts and luxuries of America. It has been usual practice with Swamiji to live in a hut or an ordinary Kutir for sometime if he has been made to live in a palace or a big bungalow.

Pundit Chiranjilalji, one of my friends, is a resident of a village Banali near Narendranagar. Once I saw him extremely worried over some issue. On being asked, he told that Swamiji Maharaj had called him and said, "O ji Chiranjilal, we will go to your house." And his problem was – he could not say 'no' to Swamiji and the condition of his house was such that he could not even offer a suitable place to him to sit comfortably. Then, I told him that he should not worry about it at all as the Lord who had expressed his desire to go there, would also make all the arrangements for it. He should just surrender to the will of the Lord. Maharajji went there and he himself made all the arrangements for his sitting and having

refreshment as if he was in his own house not in someone else's place. Due to the grace of Maharaj, today Chiranjilalji is owner of three houses.

During his mendicant life, Maharaj Sri went to such places where he was asked not to go; otherwise he would have to remain hungry as people would not give alms to him. But he went there and the Almighty Lord made all arrangements for him. He returned from those places receiving love and respect of the people.

During such times, once he came to the Ashram to have Darshan of Gurudev and wanted to go next day, but he was compelled to stay due to the illness of Guru Maharaj and then on 14th July 1963, Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, one of the luminous stars of spiritual firmament left his mortal coil. There was mournful silence everywhere. Only the soft chanting of 'Hare Rama' Mantra was reverberating in the Ashram premises. All eyes were filled with tears cherishing the sacred memories with the Holy Master. But Sri Swamiji Maharaj was absolutely calm and serene and supervising all arrangements and providing guidelines for performing the Samadhi rituals.

After the sixteenth day of Mahasamadhi, there were discussions regarding the selection of the President of the Institute and all wished that Sri Swamiji should take the place of Holy Master but Swamiji strongly opposed it. During one of such discussions, I was present. Dr Kutty Mataji

was very much insistent upon Swamiji to accept the post, but Swamiji said, "I was not in the Ashram and if Gurudev had attained Mahasamadhi in my absence, you would have certainly made some other arrangement. Please do that now." Dr. Kutty Mataji replied, "Swamiji, you were now in India; even if you had been in any corner of the world, we would have brought you here and appointed you President." In spite of so much insistence and requests, Swamiji did not attend the meeting of the trustees saying they could decide anything in his absence. The decision was made to appoint him the President and he was informed in the evening when he returned to the Ashram.

He has discharged his responsibilities as the President wholeheartedly. After becoming the President, all started requesting him to come and stay in Guru Maharaj's Kutir. Swamiji would listen to their requests and smile. Once when he was being insisted again, he replied, "According to you, Guru Maharaj does not live in the Kutir but for me, he still lives there. I will not go there and I will stay in Yoga Sadhana Kutir." Maharaj Sri lived in Yoga Sadhana Kutir for many years.

Sri Ramniwas Gupta, son of Sri Kashiramji Gupta of Calcutta, got constructed one building Guru Niwas for Swamiji Maharaj. Its inauguration was done by Maharaj Sri himself. Sri Ramniwasji requested Swamiji Maharaj to live in that building but Swamiji Maharaj politely refused. He pleaded

again and again saying that he had made the upper floor only for Maharaj Sri and the ground floor for his personal use. If Swamiji did not accept his request, all his efforts would go waste. But Swamiji was unwilling to come.

Once Swamiji fell seriously ill and was taken to Dehradun for treatment. He was advised by the doctors to take complete rest in some clean and quiet place so he was brought to Guru Niwas for rest. After getting well, Swamiji insisted to go to Yoga Sadhana Kutir. Meanwhile, Sri Ramniwasji came from Calcutta hearing the news of Swamiji's ill health and reiterated his request. And ultimately, he succeeded in his efforts and Maharaj Sri started living in Guru Niwas and thus, the name of the building 'Guru Niwas' fulfilled its meaning.

PRESIDENCY PERIOD

During his Presidentship, many important decisions were taken, many beautiful buildings were constructed and nice arrangements were made for providing accommodation to the aspirants and the guests. With these developments, problems also increased. New aspirants started requesting for special rooms. Once when I was with Maharaj Sri, one Brahmachari came with a request for Kutir. Swamiji Maharaj lovingly told him that today he could see nice arrangements for everything. But he should remember those times when they came

in the Ashram. They all were asked to stay in Bhajan Hall and after staying many years in Bhajan Hall, they were allotted rooms. As there were no bathrooms, they had to go to jungle to answer the calls of nature. They had to go to Gangaji for water and had to carry woods on their shoulders for kitchen and had also to lend a helping hand in the construction work. He might think that Maharaj himself was living in a room and giving a lecture to me. But the truth is if Guru Maharaj had not entrusted him with this responsibility, he would have preferred to live in a hut under a tree. After receiving the Prasad, Brahmachari left happily. Swamiji also assured him for the arrangement of a Kutir.

BIRTH CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

The celebration of Birth Centenary of Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj during Swamiji's presidentship will remain memorable event for all those who attended it. Many schools and hospitals were opened at different places. To commemorate this glorious occasion, a big arch with inscription 'Be Good, Do Good' was constructed at Haridwar Badrinath highway near the Headquarters Ashram. All the Centenary programmes were organized in a big and beautiful Pandal at Govardhan Dham. Though it was rainy season, but such was the arrangement that rain-water could not enter the Pandal and the devotees could attend and enjoy all the programmes. After

the successful completion of the programme, Maharaj expressed his gratitude towards organisers, workers and volunteers and also felicitated the chief organiser Dr. Kutty Mataji. To plan the programme for Centenary Celebrations and to organise it at different places in the country and outside the country was very difficult task but Maharajji performed it in a marvellous way with the support of his disciples and devotees.

Fortunately, I got the opportunity to closely observe one such event. Generally, our Ashram does not participate in Kumbha Mela (Fair) at organisational level but there is no restriction for individual participation.

KUMBHA MELA

In 1986, Kumbha Fair was to be organised at Haridwar. Maharaj Sri decided to participate in it at organisational level. The devotees were informed about it. Sri Arun Kumar Misraji, Mela Officer allotted a nice place near Har ki Pauri to put up our tents. A beautiful replica of Sivananda Ashram was created in the tent colony. The tents were erected and named as Parvati Kutir, Yoga Sadhana Kutir, Bhajan Hall and Annapurna Hall. Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj was greatly surprised to see the arrangements and the activities of the tent colony going on as per the Ashram schedule. A special tent 'Guru Niwas' was also erected for Maharaj Sri. Maharajji delighted the hearts of all the devotees by living

with them. He also participated with other saints in Shahi Sawari (Royal Procession). What a great difference between him and other saints – they all were seated in their vehicles in blessing postures and our Maharaj Sri walked with us greeting everyone with folded hands. He said that our ancestors have made such a nice arrangement that lakhs of people are coming without an invitation. This is the cosmic form of the Lord. We should bow our heads and offer salutations to His cosmic form. See the magnanimity of his soul.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Being encouraged by Birth Centenary programmes, the organisers decided to celebrate the birthday of Maharaj Sri on a grand scale and sought his permission. Maharaj politely refused saying that in the Ashram only Guru Maharaj's birthday should be celebrated. He also asked what is the birthday for a Sadhu? Every day is his birthday, so it should be celebrated daily. The organisers put forward many arguments saying that in these programs so many devotees gather together and are benefited by Kirtan-Bhajan and discourses of eminent saints. For him, his birthday has no importance, but he should grant his permission for the welfare of common people. Being pressurised, he gave the permission with an instruction to celebrate it at all places by fulfilling the needs of that particular place. Accordingly, the programme was made where there a school was needed, school was opened; where medical

facilities were required, hospital was opened. Needy women were given sewing machines and many homeless were blessed with homes. The flood-stricken victims of Rishikesh were provided clothes, bedding and food material and the earthquake victims of Garhwal were provided clothes, blankets and tin sheets. Maharajji was so considerate that he even made arrangements for Bidis for men and Bindis for women. These were also considered as their needs in such difficult times. Maharajji is very particular about the smallest as he is with the biggest thing; nothing can escape from his vision. The perfection of his thinking surprises all. One devotee from Mumbai expressed her emotions thus, "We have been to many places and have visited many Ashrams and social organisations but all are interested in taking something from others. No one knows how to give as does this Ashram." This indicates that there is no difference between the saying and doing of Gurudev and Swamiji. They themselves follow what they preach – Serve, Love, Give. The birthday of such great saints should be celebrated daily.

Once Swamiji had to attend one spiritual retreat organised specially for the foreign devotees at Pattamadai, the birthplace of Gurudev. His birth- date also came during those retreat days. Taking advantage of that occasion, many devotees planned to come to Pattamadai. When Swamiji came to know that many devotees were planning to come to celebrate his birthday, he declared

publicly that there was no birthday celebration and he was not available on 24th of September. If any gentleman wanted to come for this purpose, he should not make any programme and cancel his railway reservation. Nobody knows where he (Swamiji) would be on 24th September and if anybody knows somehow, he should not try to meet him on that day; otherwise Swamiji would never see his face again and never talk to him. Actually, Swamiji did not want his birthday to be celebrated.

Once Gurudev decided to celebrate the birthdays of his senior Sannyasins disciples. As Swami Chidanandaji's birthday came in the same month as that of Gurudev himself, our compassionate Gurudev thought about the difficulty of the devotees who would have to come twice in the same month for these celebrations. Beloved Gurudev decided to celebrate Swami Chidanandaji's birthday on 24th June instead of 24th September. Thus, Swamiji's 39th birthday was celebrated with great spiritual fervour on 24th June 1954 and Swamiji attended it following his Holy Master's instruction. Apart from other speakers, Gurudev and Swamiji Maharaj himself gave inspiring lectures on the sacred occasion. When this news was published in 'The Divine Life' magazine, devotees also started celebrating his birthday on 24th June every year in their respective areas. It was in 1965 that his birthday was celebrated on his true birth date. I have

observed that whenever his birthday was celebrated in his presence, it seemed he was bearing it all unwillingly.

FLOWER GARLANDS

Similarly, I used to observe that he did not like it when people garlanded him. His face expressed his displeasure as if some injustice was being done to him. I was immensely moved to see his reactions therefore I decided not to offer him garland and also advised my friends to do the same. After sometime, Swamiji himself declared publically that nobody should bring flower garlands for him as it caused him great pain. The flowers blooming in the gardens beautify the environment and also keep it pure. So let them bloom and blossom in the gardens. I was very happy as Maharaj Sri revealed in our hearts what he wished to say.

HAPPY IN MAKING OTHERS HAPPY

Maharaj Sri's compassionate heart always goes out to help others. His happiness lies in making others happy and he is always ready to undergo any amount of pain to bring joy in the lives of others. It is his innate nature to give love and respect to his younger ones especially children. Sri Uttam Singh Rana, former chairman of Municipal Corporation of Muni-ki Reti is one of those children of the Ashram on whom Maharaj Sri has showered his abundant grace. When

Uttam decided to file his nomination for the post, he came to Guru Niwas to seek Maharaj's approval and blessings for his decision. Fortunately, I was also present there. Maharaj smilingly said that Uttam's decision was Uttam (best) and when he sought his blessings, Maharaj looked at me and said, "Om! Ask him how he could feel that my blessings are not with him. My blessings are always with him". He advised him to remember Gurudev and start his work. When Sri Rana was married, he sought appointment with Swamiji to meet him along with his wife for blessings. Maharaj Sri agreed but on that day he had to go to Dehradun along with senior Swamis of the Ashram for some official work. At Dehradun, when he was reminded of his appointment with Sri Rana, he immediately started for the Ashram. Other people asked why he was in so much hurry. On being frequently asked, he replied that Rama and Sita were to come to his Kutir, therefore he had to reach there at the earliest. His such noble feelings and magnanimity of heart makes us bow down at his lotus feet.

Sri Sureshchandra Suman is also one of the recipients of his grace. From his education to his marriage and during other struggles of life, Swamiji's grace has always been with him. After his death, his family is receiving Swamiji's love and care. Once when Swamiji was staying with my uncle, he fell ill and suffered for many days from fever. My uncle served him during those days and

Maharaj never forgot his loving service. After getting well, they both decided to go to have Darshan of Ma Chandi Devi. After the Darshan, my uncle insisted that they should also visit the temple of Anjana Devi. Our jovial Maharaj said that though he didn't wish to have a son, but they should go to have Darshan of Anjana Devi otherwise her son Hanumanji would be angry with them. Seeing the beautiful and serene surroundings around the small shrine, Maharaj was absorbed in deep meditation and sat there for a long time. After opening his eyes, he saw that visitors were standing there in a queue waiting for Prasad. Perhaps they might have thought that Swamiji was the priest of that shrine. Swamiji asked my uncle what Prasad they could give to them. As they had nothing except their food, Maharajji gave it as Prasad and they both remained hungry.

Maharaj Sri forgets his own pain and suffering in making others happy. It is the incident of 1974 when many programmes were being organised in different parts of India. Suddenly, Maharaji Sri got ill and was admitted into Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, Kankhal for treatment. He suffered for many days and had to remain confined to bed. Everyday someone from the Ashram came to see Maharaj. Once Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj came to enquire

about his health and seeing his condition, requested Maharajji to cancel all his programmes. But Maharaj Sri said that he would soon get well and attend all those programmes. According to Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj, even after the recovery Maharaj Sri would need complete rest for some time. Therefore, all his programmes should be cancelled with immediate effect. Then Maharaj Sri agreed to it and made a special request not to cancel ‘All Ceylon Conference’ as the poor devotees of Ceylon had worked very hard to organise it and he also expressed his strong determination that he would go there, come what may.

When the day of the ‘All Ceylon Conference’ approached near, I asked Maharajji who was accompanying him to Ceylon as Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj was in Germany at that time. He answered that he was going alone. Then, I requested to take me along with him as it was not good for him to travel alone in this fragile health condition. Maharaj Sri happily agreed and I got the opportunity to accompany him. At Jaffna, observing the great love, devotion and indefatigable spirit of service of the people, I understood the reason of Maharaj Sri’s insistence on not cancelling this programme. Many dignitaries representing different religions attended this Conference and they all gave

discourses highlighting the salient features of their respective religions. But all were wonderstruck at Maharaj Sri's deep knowledge of their religions and his all embracing love and reverence towards all religions. In his simple and lucid language, Maharajji drove home the message of Divine Life into the hearts of all present. Thus in spite of his ill health, Maharaj Sri attended the Conference for the sake of devotees of Sri Lanka.

A GIFTED ARTIST

During Gurudev's time, the Satsanga on the last day of the Sadhana Week comprised of performance of a drama. Usually, 'Divya Jeevan' drama was enacted. Our Maharajsri is a talented artist and has given his brilliant performances in many dramas and has also directed many of them. Once 'Sivananda Vijay', a Hindi drama written and directed by Sri Shyam Sundar Mukut, was to be enacted. At Gurudev's instruction, my father was called from Haridwar to play the role of Swami Sivananda as he used to perform this role beautifully. In the drama of this life, Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj is the Guru of Sri Swami Chidananda but in this drama 'Sivananda Vijay', Sri Swami Chidananda played the role of Sri Swami Vishwananda, the Guru of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. When the son will become the father or when the father will become son in this drama of eternity, only the Lord knows.

HIS UNIQUE WAY OF TEACHING AND BESTOWING GRACE

It happens sometimes that devotees seeking permission to meet Maharaj do not get the opportunity and some fortunate one receives his grace unasked. Once Maharajji was going to Dehradun from Delhi, I went to Haridwar station to have his Darshan. There, I was given some luggage to be taken to the Ashram. Immediately, I started for the Ashram and at the Ashram I was informed that Maharajji had asked me to come to Dehradun in his car along with Omprakash driver. From there I was to accompany Maharaj to Barluganj, Mussoorie. Thus, I got the blessed opportunity to live with him for three days at Mussoorie. One day, while taking a walk with Maharaj, we reached near the tomb of a renowned Sufi saint Bulle Shah. Maharaj Sri cleaned the surrounding area of the tomb with his own hands and also asked us to do so. Then, he burnt incense and offered his loving reverence to the saint. For him, all the holy places are places of worship to whichever religion they may belong to.

One morning, we heard a vendor crying ‘Take pastry, biscuit, bread, cake.’ Immediately, a thought flashed into my mind that now Maharajji would call him. And lo, Maharajji said, “O ji, call this breadwala (bread seller).” Swamiji sat beside him and purchased bread, biscuits and cakes. He gave him his due payment and thanked him. Meanwhile, he noticed a group of students; he

called them and interacted with them. Then he said, "You all are on a study tour from Dehradun to Mussoorie. As you are walking continuously, you might be feeling hungry. It is the time of breakfast, have these bread, biscuits and cakes as Guru Maharaj's Prasad." Saying this, he gave them all those eateries. Thus, Maharaj has taught us many things, not merely by his words but by his actions. Once I was talking to a devotee in the Ashram and he, like many others, was complaining that Maharaj Sri had no time for the Ashram; he was mostly on tours and the inmates and the visitors of the Ashram were deprived of his Upadesha (teachings) and guidance. Then I asked him what kind of guidance they sought from Maharajji. Maharaj's entire life is his Upadesha (teachings) and Sandesha (message).

EACH HAS HIS UNIQUE FAITH AND DEVOTION

One old lady devotee from Rajasthan, known as Narayani Mai, lived in a Kutir near Hanuman Mandir. This white-robed lady spent her most of the time in the remembrance of God and went on foot daily to Kali Kamali Kshetra, Rishikesh to take her Bhiksha of potato and milk. Swamiji Maharaj had great reverence for her. Narayani Mai had made a resolve and she had expressed it many times before Maharajji. She ardently desired that Maharajji should offer her dead body to Mother Ganga after performing the last rites. Swamiji always replied her thus, "Mataji, I am

mostly on tours and sometimes I am out of India too. Therefore, please don't make such resolves." Narayani Mai often came to meet Swamiji and Swamiji would fulfil all her needs unasked. Therefore she was so much assured that Swamiji would definitely fulfil her last wish. Sometimes on her arrival, when Swamiji would ask her to wait due to some urgent work in hand; she went away saying she would come again as she did not want to cause loss to her Bhajan. Such was her dedication to her Sadhana. She came to meet Maharaj for the last time just one day before her death. As Swamiji Maharaj was busy in his work, his personal attendants Sri Swami Vimalanandaji and Nagarkarji did not want to disturb him. They told Narayani Mai that Swamiji could not meet her today as he was very busy. She kept on requesting and finally went to her Kutir in a dejected mood. Next day, Swamiji Maharaj got the news that Narayani Mai had passed away. Then, he was also informed about her yesterday's visit. Swamiji Maharaj said, "O what have you done? O.K. let's accept, what was to happen has happened." Maharajji arranged for a boat and kept her body in the boat and thus fulfilling her last wish offered it to Mother Ganga with his own hands. Such was the great resolve of Narayani Mai.

Similarly, there was an old Sannyasin Swami Hariomanandaji, who lived in the Kutir adjacent to Maharaj Sri's Kutir. He did not take anything

from the Ashram, not even food. He arranged for his food on his own and himself carried water from Gangaji for his personal use. He always repeated Lord's name – Ram, Ram, Ram. As he was living in the Ashram, he considered it his duty to offer some Seva; therefore, he used to bring letters from the post office and delivered them to the Kutirs of the addressees. He had such an intense love and affection for Maharajji that he called him as his son. He used to ask others, "Where is my son? Where has he gone today? He is always on tours. I will die without meeting him?" Therefore, once he told Swamiji to meet him before going out of Rishikesh. Then onwards, whenever Swamiji was to go on a tour, he invariably went to meet Swami Hariomanandaji. Once when Swamiji felt that this was their last meeting, he met him and also garlanded him lovingly before going. Swami Hariomanandaji also understood and said that they would not meet again.

As far as I am concerned, I and four generations of my family have been blessed enough to be recipients of Maharaj Sri's perennial grace. Swamiji Maharaj has always regarded my father and uncle as his elder brothers. Many times, he has come to our house to meet them. He never thinks that people seek his permission to meet him and he himself goes to meet these ordinary persons. How kind and compassionate he is! Personally, I am highly indebted to him as I am alive today only due to his divine grace.

His blessings have been showered upon us in many ways. Our present house has been sanctified by him as he has laid its foundation stone and has also graced the auspicious occasion of House-warming ceremony by his sacred presence. It so happened that once Swamiji Maharaj was coming to Haridwar through Mussoorie Express and he had to reach the Ashram on time to lay the foundation stone of a building. When Swamiji got off the train at Haridwar, he came to know that he could not attend the ceremony as their train had reached Haridwar quite late. Then Vedaprakashaji requested to Maharaj, "Swamiji, please perform that sacred ritual here which you were to perform at the Ashram." On being asked, Vedaprakashaji clarified that today foundation stone of Omprakash's new house was to be laid at Bilkeshwar Nagar and it would be a great blessing for all of them if Maharaj Sri laid the foundation stone with his holy hands. Maharajji thought for a while and agreed saying that since it was Omprakash's work, he could give five minutes.

When the construction of house was completed, we performed the Puja on an auspicious day. But we did not get shifted to the new house, as my wife Saraswati intensely desired that first Maharaj Sri should sanctify the house by his visit. She insisted that I should request Swamiji Maharaj to visit our new house whenever he came to Haridwar but I was a bit hesitant to do

so. Maharaj Sri heard her sincere prayer and one day I got a message from Brigadier Sabbarwal that Maharaj Sri was arriving Haridwar next morning and he would visit our new house and take some refreshment after having a dip in Gangaji. Our joy knew no bounds as he had fulfilled our wish unasked.

He is an ocean of grace and his abundant blessings have been showered upon us many a times. Our heartiest gratitude towards him cannot be expressed in words.

For the last few years, Swamiji Maharaj has been going to Gangotri in summer for seclusion. Once a desire arose in my heart to spend some time with Maharaj Sri in Gangotri. I expressed my desire to one of his personal attendants requesting that during Swamiji's next visit to Gangotri, he should seek permission on my behalf too. He replied that if Swamiji Maharaj himself wished to take someone along with him, one could accompany him whereas he would not permit anyone at the behest of others. He also suggested that I should personally request to Swamiji if I had intense desire to go to Gangotri with him.

After sometime, as usual I went to Haridwar station to have Darshan of Maharaj Sri, I was told by his attendant that Swamiji was going to Gangotri next morning and I could seek his permission now. But I did not think it right to talk to Swamiji on this matter at the railway station, so I kept quiet. Then, Swamiji's personal attendant

himself said to Swamiji Maharaj, “Swamiji, Omprakash wants to come to Gangotri.” “Yes! He can come”, Swamiji replied. And then Maharaj Sri called me near to himself and explained everything in the most loving way as a father does for his little child. I was given detailed instructions regarding what things I should take, how I should live there and how I should utilise my time etc. Thus I basked in the sunshine of Maharaj Sri's divine grace during my stay at Gangotri. I returned with him one day before Guru Purnima and also attended the Guru Purnima Mahotsava at the Ashram.

ESSENCE OF HIS TEACHINGS

Maharaj Sri's favourite Bhajans—‘Chidananda Chidananda Chidananda Hun, Har Hal mein Almasta Satchidananda Hun’ and ‘Jis Hal mein Jis Desh mein Jis Vesh mein Raho, Radharaman Radharaman Radharaman Kaho’ epitomise his essential teachings. He has taught us to always remember God and live blissfully amidst all the vicissitudes of life. He has never been tired of reminding us that human birth is the most precious gift of the Lord and one should utilise it in the constant remembrance of God and service of His children.

The Lord has blessed our motherland with many a great saints from time to time. Jagadguru Sankaracharya, Vallabhacharya, Ramanujacharya, Sri Ramakrishna Paramhamsa, Swami

Vivekananda, Swami Sivananda, Swami Chidananda—all these great saints have blessed the humanity with their divine presence and illuminating teachings and have left their footprints on the sands of time. May the grace of Lord Almighty be upon us all. May we all be blessed with the loving benedictions of Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj.

Om Tat Sat.

MAHARAJ SRI'S ENTIRE LIFE IS HIS TEACHING

*I have seen Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj,
Worshipping the Lord as a priest in*

*Sri Vishwanath Mandir,
Bringing Bael leaves and flowers from the Jungle,
Rendering service to the patients in the
dispensary,*

*Dressing the wounds of an injured one,
Giving injection to other suffering brother,
Serving lovingly the forlorn lepers,
Offering reverential Pranams to Mother Ganga,
And then jumping and swimming in her
cool waters*

As a child playing in the loving lap of mother.

*I have seen Maharaj Sri
Teaching the lesson of selfless service
By himself carrying the bricks to the
construction site,
Bringing water from Gangaji
and wood from the jungle for the Ashram kitchen,*

*Packing the Divine Life magazines for despatch,
Digging the earth with pickaxe,
Singing fervently Lord's name in Nagar Sankirtan,
Playing his role brilliantly in the dramas and
Directing some dramas too,
Performing marvellous magical tricks,
Making the dog and cat eat from one plate,
Calling lovingly a monkey Rishiram
And I have also seen Rishiram
Following Maharaj Sri's instructions.*

*I have seen beloved Maharaj Sri,
Bowing to Mother Cow and serving her,
Going to Vishwanath Bag (garden) riding a bicycle
even after being the President of the Society
and taking care of plants and flowers.
I have seen Swamiji Maharaj
Discussing seriously with Sri Gaurishankarji,
A retired judge living at Swargashram,
Sitting with great saints and conversing about
the need to walk upon the path of righteousness,
Talking with same love and reverence
to a sweeper of Muni Ki Reti and the President
of India.*

*Maharaj Sri teaches us by being and doing,
And thus his entire life is his teaching.
May the Almighty Lord bless us all
To follow his Divine Life and Teachings.*

Om

In our grand Indian culture they conceived of life in four stages: the preliminary stage, the development stage, the flowering or blossoming stage and the culminating fruitful stage. The satisfactory growth of the latter three stages truly depends upon the management of the first stage.

The Student Stage

The supreme value of the student period is incalculable. Student life is the most precious life. The way in which you utilise this period will decide the nature of the coming years that lie ahead of you. Your happiness, your success, your honour and your good name all depend upon the way in which you live now. In this present period, my dear student, you are preparing your future. Remember this.

I wish you to be great. The world has put its faith in you. Your elders keep their hope upon you. Now is the time for you to wisely mould your life, your character, your physical health, your entire nature. It is like the laying of the foundation for an important building you wish to construct. If this building is something very important to you, then just think how much more important its

proper foundation becomes in your view. The strong and continued existence of the building depends certainly upon the foundation. This is the stage you are now in.

Let your preparations be wise, correct, and of such a kind that will lead to your true welfare, supreme good, and lasting happiness. You should acquire knowledge not only of History, Geography, Mathematics, etc., but also about human nature, the science of self-control, the art of developing a pure mind, the duties of men and women, and the proper relationship between you, the world and God.

Thus, the first 25 years of human life should be dedicated to acquiring good health, perfect character, self-control and all that is necessary for you to know in order to live life righteously, to be financially independent via some trade or profession, and to thus attain lasting satisfaction and happiness.

The Second Stage: Married Life

Having already created a firm and ideal foundation, the student enters into the second stage of life, the householder's life. One is not merely entering into a physical partnership with another physical creature, is not entering into a social relationship with another family, but is entering into a spiritual partnership with another soul in order to fulfil a mutually shared divine

destiny, so that the relationship between husband and wife is essentially a spiritual partnership between two souls. Your spouse is to you everything: companion, friend, consoler, helper and partner in this great spiritual adventure. Such is the ideal and total concept of this relationship.

With such an understanding, the home becomes not only a place for living the normal worldly existence, but a place of worship and devotion. Daily worship, helping those in need, and honouring the guest (especially the chance visitor who happens to be at your door at the time of food) become primary duties of householders.

Another aspect of the householders' duty is to evolve between themselves reciprocally a certain ideal behaviour of mutual love, honouring each other's individual freedom. Such an atmosphere becomes the ideal ground for nurturing the new generation. The children find that between their parents exists a beautiful relationship of harmony, love, mutual respect and tolerance, which creates an ideal atmosphere for their growth. Through their personal relationship the parents place before the children an exemplary way of conducting themselves which becomes the first educational process of the child. Home is, therefore, the nursery of the nation, nursery of the world. Providing an ideal setting and an ideal

atmosphere for the generation of tomorrow is an important duty of the married couple.

Third Stage: Retirement

Having fulfilled the duties of raising children, making them adults capable of standing on their own feet, a new stage of life comes into being. Up till now you were entirely preoccupied with your family and your profession, providing for your parents, wife, children and other dependants. To a certain extent, it was a self-centred life, although one practised selflessness for the sake of the children and family. But now one must give way to the new generation.

Having retired, with a little more leisure on your hands, and with a vast reservoir of professional experience and expertise, one has the time to become true selfless servants of the society, to become altruists and philanthropists. This is also the time for husband and wife, together, to enter more into the inner life, study, meditation, prayer, pilgrimage. We must realise that a time comes when we have to say "Good-bye". We have to prepare for that last journey.

The Fourth Stage: Renunciation

At this time of life the only duty is to gather together one's mind and place it upon the Supreme Being. That is the fourth quarter of life,

the sun-set period of one's life, when all your relationships and connections are coming to a close. At this time, your entire mind should be fixed upon the Eternal, no more on the passing world. You have fulfilled all your duties, and now you have to depart. The river is reaching the ocean, and a time will come when it has to merge into the ocean.

Here one's mind has become calm, steady and pure. One's heart is desireless and free from all cravings. One is established in perfect self-restraint and virtue. This ideal state is the fruit of right living. Here, one automatically becomes absorbed in the contemplation of the Supreme and moves towards God-experience. He or she reaps the harvest of a rich inner spiritual life, supreme peace and bliss, obtaining that ultimate objective for which one has taken birth. That is the goal to be reached.

You are a teenager now. Remember, you are a divine child of God no matter what age or stage you are in. Therefore, at all times be divine in your thoughts, words and actions. Be strong. Be fearless in truth. Have firm courage to be yourself. Do not be weak and wish to imitate others, but be spiritually strong and bold and do not be afraid to differ from the crowd, if you think that is the right thing to do.

To flow with the stream is easy but to swim against the current needs guts. That is what being Divine means, namely, having the guts to remain what you are without being dragged into being what every A B.....Z is nowadays. Independent and original! That's what this Swami wants to find in you at all times, in all conditions, under all circumstances, in all crowds—Head and shoulders high above the rest, but with no snobbery or superiority, just simply, with humility, but with strength.

You will get respect. You will help others that way because you will show a new way, a way out of the mess which teenagers are in since the past 25

years. God bless you and may you shine as a Light.

Be an excellent student. Be an understanding son or daughter. Be an ideal human individual and also a true lover of all that is good, virtuous and beautiful.

Live simply, but think nobly. Feel Divinity and act ideally. Be perfect in small things and little acts day by day. Try to make each single day full of truth, selflessness, nobility and purity. Life will be grand and glorious then because your life is made up of single days one after another. Take thought of your day!

There are Twelve Keys to successfully managing a student's life.

First, you must form a correct conception of how you wish to develop and perfect yourself. You must cultivate a clear-cut idea of what you want to become. Without such an aim, your life cannot move forward powerfully and progressively. You will be pulled in different directions and your mind will be distracted and much energy will be wasted. You can avoid all this if you have a well-defined aim or a set of a few definite objectives. Then there is no confusion in your way. You know what you wish to attain and in which direction to proceed. Therefore, you also understand what is right and what is wrong. What is desirable and what is undesirable. What is to be accepted and what is to be rejected in moving towards your aim of life. Such definiteness gives you great inner strength. It develops will-power. It makes you a positive personality. There will be no more negative trends in your life.

The second important thing is to draw up for yourself a wise programme to help you to develop along the desired lines and to gradually attain the aim of life. Such a programme will provide a plan of action in meeting with all problems that face the young student, the growing youth, to deal with all the situations that arise in your life, to meet and overcome temptations with a firm mind and to surmount obstacles with boldness and self-confidence. The power to do this exists within you already in its latent state. It has to be unfolded and activated. A proper understanding of your own mind, its behavior and habits, and the law that governs the inner activity of the mind become very, very helpful in living this wonderful and interesting period of your life.

Now we come to the factors upon which depends the proper working out of your programme of life. Health is the key factor. Without health you can do nothing. Without health you can succeed neither in studies, nor in character-building, nor in sports and social activities, nor in home-life. Health is a matter of careful living. It is got not only from things you eat and drink, but it is also obtained from your wise and careful avoiding of such things that are not good for your health. Eat for your health. Eat for

your strength and not for your taste. Eat to live and to serve. Do not live to eat. Eat simple food. Go to bed early and get up early. Acquire healthy habits. Do regular exercise daily. Be moderate in eating and drinking. Chew your food thoroughly. Do not overeat. Do not eat without hunger. Avoid things that do not agree with you.

Then you must conserve your energy. Never waste your energy in useless pursuits. Too much talking and gossiping, aimless wandering, habit of worrying, losing your temper frequently—all these drain away your energy. Give up all habits that are likely to have an adverse effect on health. Smoking and illegal drugs are a curse upon students. Be established in perfect Brahmacharya. Abstain from sexual activity. Preserve health, conserve energy, develop physical and mental strength and thus lay the foundation of a successful life.

Value character more than anything else on earth. Be perfectly truthful. Do not let your speech be vulgar or rude. Speech must be clean, polite and joy-giving. Cast away egoism, pride and selfishness. These three form the blemish upon human character. They arise out of ignorance and greed. Ignorance makes you proud and egoistic.

Greed makes you selfish. They lead to dishonour and unhappiness and failure in life.

By leading a simple life and having a cheerful disposition under all circumstances, you can overcome selfishness and egoism. Your life and conduct must be the cause of happiness in other people.

Adopt certain virtues and principles and stick to them in all your activities. Never leave these principles. Never move away from virtue. These principles will be your true friends and helpers. They will assure your progress and ultimately grant you supreme happiness and success. Periodically make certain simple resolutions to practise those virtues. Maintain a personal diary wherein you make a careful note of your day-to-day conduct, speech and behavior. This will reveal to you how far you are advancing and show you your mistakes and where you must correct yourself. Such a diary will be your friend. It will reveal your weaknesses and teach you humility.

Pray to God and ask Him for inner strength and guidance. God's Divine Name has immense power. Repeat His Name always and remember Him in all situations.

Remember God with love in your heart. Have absolute faith in your inseparable relationship with Him. Cultivate constant remembrance of God by seeing His invisible presence in and through all things in this universe. God is not far away from you. God is here and now. He is the all-pervading Reality, the ever-present Divine Spirit pervading this entire universe. And also He is your innermost Self. He is closer to you than your very breath. Never forget this. Even when you are engaged in your daily activity, begin to feel the presence of God.

Reflect upon the lives of ideal personalities. Draw strength and inspiration from their lives and teachings. Try to mould your life upon their pattern. Always have a great ideal before your mind. Think of it at all times—morning, noon, evening and night. Develop it into the constant background of your thought. Then your mind will never be idle or vacant. This is important because right thinking is the key to noble living.

Out of your life there must flow ceaseless love, kindness and compassion. Never hurt anyone. Never hurt even the least of God's creatures either by thought, word or action. Even

in dreams you should never think of harming or hurting any creature. This sublime principle of non-injury, harmlessness, is given a very great place in the eternal Vedic way of life. Be a centre of help, be a centre of benefit, be a centre of happiness and peace to all. Never injure, never hurt, never harm any living creature.

You must be rooted in absolute truthfulness. Even at the cost of your life, never utter falsehood. Never be dishonest in any of your dealings with anyone in this world. Be a person of integrity, of verity. Become established in truthfulness in thought, word and deed. Truth is God. One who practises truthfulness rigidly will attain God. God is present in this human world as the sublime principle of truthfulness.

The vexing problems of this modern world, its clashes and conflicts, its greed and exploitation, its hatred and hostilities, its mad craze for selfish acquisition will never cease or be relieved until and unless there is a change of outlook in man towards his neighbours and towards the life around him. Man makes life what it is. And life around man is but a reflection of what he is. The only rational and lasting solution to the afflictions

that beset the organised society of civilised persons is a reinstating of the spirit of selfless giving into its rightful place. The more you give of yourself, the greater will be your conquest over sorrow and suffering and your ascent into peace and bliss.

There can be no greater joy than seeing the smile on someone's face whom you have helped. The gift of giving comes back a hundred fold in inner peace and contentment. It is a greater good to find ways to help those outside the family. Don't be afraid to offer to help carry something for an old or disabled person. Your healthy body was created for service to the world.

As you think, so you will become, just as you reap what you sow. In the same way, you will ultimately experience and attain what you constantly think and feel. Your inner thoughts lead to outer action. Repeated actions grow into habits. Such habits become permanent qualities in your very nature. This nature goes to form your character. Your future and your destiny is the direct result of your character. Understand this very well. Carefully bear this in your mind. Think and act with this knowledge. Your inner thoughts are the seeds of your ultimate destiny. Safeguard

your thoughts and feelings. Think nobly and virtuously. You will become a noble man or woman. You will attain greatness and make your life fruitful. More than all the books that you read and study, more than all your lessons and examinations, more important than everything in life is the cultivation of virtues. This is the source of ultimate happiness. Become good and great.

What distinguishes the human individual from the animal is our behaviour. There is a difference between the Charitra (character) of a Pashu (animal) and the Charitra of a Manava (human being). If the Manava does not keep up to this higher standard of Charitra then even though he may be a human individual in Roopa (form) and Nama (name), he is only an animal because his life, conduct and behaviour is more suitable to the animal than to a man. Through your behaviour you must prove that you are a human individual. If you have no control over your senses, if you have no principles for your living, if you are subject to anger and passion and gluttony (Kama, Krodha and Vishaya Vilasa), if you have no moderation, then there you have the animal. Therefore, you have to prove your human status not merely by reading a few text books and passing a few examinations and getting a degree, but by the manner of your life, conduct and behaviour. The highest wealth in human life, the highest wealth of youth, is the wealth of character. The most precious thing is character. That is your real treasure. If you develop a noble character, then you are really a wealthy person,

which means your life is rich with this Aishwarya (wealth) of Satcharitra (noble conduct).

The Relationship of Character to Human Life

What is the relationship of character to human life? The relationship of character to human life is the same as that of the foundation to the entire structure of the building which will be raised over that foundation. The most important part in the structure of the building is the foundation. If the foundation is well laid, if the foundation is strong, then the building will stand. You can raise it high, and it will last, it will be strong. If the foundation is weak or not properly laid, then any moment the building can collapse, the building cannot be lasting.

Upon the foundation of a well developed character and conduct, one can build up the edifice or structure of a successful life. Whatever someone undertakes, he will succeed in it. Whatever profession he adopts, he will make headway in it. He will shine; he will earn the respect of all people. He will have a magnetic personality. He will have an influence over his time. He will be a leader, for the power of character gives magnetism to the personality, and the power of character depends upon self control. Without self control you cannot be an ideal individual.

The secret of a successful career, the secret of a magnetic personality is self control and character which is the outcome of self control. The key to character is self control, and character is the basis of success in life. With character you can overcome every obstacle in life. You can succeed in all undertakings. You will shine brilliantly in every field of life.

In deciding upon a profession, you must now take a new look at the professions and reconsider what professional activity really implies. It constitutes your service and your contribution to the welfare and progress of the society in which you are living.

Professional life is self-giving, is giving of oneself for the service, benefit and happiness of all beings. Its income bringing aspect is secondary and not primary. This must be clearly understood. It must be subordinated to the basic ideals of self-giving and service. Otherwise man is not a man. He is but a beast in human form, a wolf in sheep's clothing.

As long as you have a body, you have to work hard for your livelihood. You have to struggle to provide yourself with the necessities of physical existence—food, clothing, shelter, medical aid. But your efforts to earn your livelihood should not be immoral, unethical or unrighteous. Right conduct should be the basis of your professional or business activities. Ply a trade, do a business, be a farmer, be a doctor, it will not come in the way of your attaining supreme success in life, provided you ever adhere to right conduct.

Similarly, your social life should not become mere frivolity, dissipation, extravagant entertainment and a waste of time, energy and money in meaningless status keeping. Social life has to be constructive, creative, ennobled by fellow-feeling, compassion and the spirit of sharing. It must be gainful in terms of increased happiness, welfare and benefit to all beings amidst whom Providence has placed you.

Be helpful to your brothers and sisters. Desire to serve your own neighbour. Desire to serve the society, nation, all creatures, even plants and insects. Desire to be serviceable to all. And do not forget that great being who gives us life itself—our Mother Earth. Without pure water and clear air, thick forests and fertile pastures, life on Earth cannot continue in a healthy manner. Already so many species have become extinct due to greed and selfishness. This will be our fate also unless great effort is put forth to turn the tides. Let your time be spent in these worthwhile pursuits.

Householders should not forget even for a moment that marriage is a sacred thing. The sanctity of marriage has to be realised in all its fullness and in all its seriousness. Marriage is a sacrament. It is not just the union of two bodies. That is the least important part of it. Marriage is bringing together by God two souls in this vast, vast phenomenon called life, in the vast stream of existence where countless millions of souls are moving in their individual planes of spiritual evolution towards the Divine. Through the grace of God, through the Divine Will, and through the operation of certain mysterious laws that govern this universal life, two souls are brought together. That is the meaning of marriage.

Through the coming together of these two souls, God means an important process to be worked out, and that is the sharing of the spiritual impulse between the two. The husband and the wife are to share what they have earned, what they have learned and also their spiritual potential. The husband is to enrich the spiritual life of the wife, the wife is to enrich the spiritual life of the husband, and both are to go hand in hand towards the supreme attainment of the

Divine Consciousness. That is the true inner meaning of family life. Marriage is sacred. It is not to be treated lightly. Marriage is an alliance, which is for something more than mere physical enjoyment or the propagation of the race.

The wife should be devoted to her husband, and should not think of any other man. All the rest of humanity should be to her like children; she is the great mother. The husband must have the vow which Rama had – the vow of a single spouse. That means that the thought of another woman will never enter his mind. In this way the whole family set-up becomes sacred and holy, and the interior life of the spirit goes on unhampered. There is nothing in the exterior life – either in the family life or in one's own personal life – to hold back or obstruct the spiritual life.

As the children are to be brought up to respect the law of celibacy, of continence, so the husband and the wife should adhere to the law of continence and celibacy in the form of a strict moderation of marital life. And thus, both husband and wife go in perfect harmony, and on the dual wings of exterior activity and interior prayerfulness, their lives go to the ultimate state of supreme God-consciousness. Blessedness becomes theirs, in and through their family life.

The home should be known to be a sacred place. The home is a sort of counterbalancing factor for all the bustle, for all the restless activity of your daily professional life. The moment you leave home, you give attention to things of this world, you are brought away from your centre, and your inner spiritual closeness to God is completely lost. In the home you are centred in the Self, you are recollected, you are in God. So the entire atmosphere of the home should be pervaded by a sense of God's presence. You should feel God in every nook and corner of your home. It should be a place where, the moment you enter, the mind which was brought out forcibly due to the secular, professional activities, is once again brought back into its own. It finds rest and peace in God. God should be the centre of the home. You should not feel "this home is mine", but rather should feel, "this is the abode of God, and here I am privileged to work out my Salvation, my Liberation."

The sanctity, sacredness and holiness of the home atmosphere are of paramount importance. The home should be kept sacred. This is essential. If the spiritual atmosphere of the home also is

destroyed, then how can you find your spiritual centre? Then how can you build a spiritual life? Therefore, in the home everything should be spiritual. There is enough of materialism, enough of forgetfulness and heedlessness of God all around you outside. So why should you add to it and let the home atmosphere also become vitiated? Keep God intact in the home. Let every atom in the atmosphere of the home be full of holiness, and do all that you can to maintain that atmosphere. Keep it sacred. Keep it sanctified. Always feel the home to be a place where you can get very close to God. If the home is ideal, with a harmonious atmosphere, with love for God as the centre of your family life, then you will love every minute you live in the home and no one of the family will want to get away from the home. And the time spent at home will be full of spiritual gain.

However, this spiritualisation of the home atmosphere should not be done in an eccentric fashion marking you off as a superior person, way above your neighbours, but it should be accomplished simply with a spiritual naturalness adorned with humility and thankfulness to God for the gift of this awareness.

In the domestic sphere the concept of Goddess Lakshmi is wonderful and unique in this blessed land of Bharatavarsha. For the home itself is regarded as the abode of Lakshmi, where the Mother manifests Herself in the worshipful form of the Grihini (house-wife or mistress of the house). Therefore, we are familiar with the expression Grihalakshmi, the Mother who presides over the auspiciousness, welfare and progress of the home-life and family. She is conceived of as the very embodiment of Goddess Lakshmi. In the West the woman is more conceived of as the wife, an equal partner to the man, vying for privilege with him in all spheres of activity and trying to assert not only her equality but even further her personal independence. Whereas, to the Hindu heart, woman is the mother. It is the motherhood of the woman that is ever present in the consciousness of the true Hindu. This is the blessing of being born in this Punya-Bhumi (sacred land), for out of this concept we shall be able to rise to the realisation of the Motherhood of God. This Matri-Bhava or the attitude and vision of the woman as the mother is a means of purifying our hearts and minds and elevating us

to a higher state, wherein the descent of divine light becomes facilitated.

Every home in Hindu society is a temple of auspiciousness, of Mangalya, presided over by Lakshmi in and through the pure person of the Grihalakshmi. The greatness, the power and the radiance of the Mother as embodied in the mother of the home is the radiance of chastity, Pativrata Dharma, which forms the grandeur, the glory and the inner radiance of the Grihalakshmi. Hers is the power that is unsurpassed in the whole world. To the Grihalakshmi in her sphere of the home, the husband or the Patidev is what to the Sadhaka and the seeker in the spiritual life the Guru is. The Sadhaka looks upon the Guru as the Supreme Being Himself, as identical with God, as brought out in the couplet:

*Twam hi Vishnur Virinchistwam
Twam cha devo Maheshwarah
Twameva Shaktiruposi
Nirgunastwam sanatanah*

This the Patidev is for the wife. Pativrata (devotion to one's husband) is the greatest treasure a woman can possess, which makes her not merely exceptional, but a veritable Goddess-upon-earth. We must always bear in mind that in the eyes of Hindu idealism, modesty is a virtue of paramount importance, and in this form the Mother manifests Herself in and through the ideal of noble Indian womanhood. Another way of

honouring Lakshmi and worshipping her, is that no harsh word, no rude speech, no hard utterance should ever cross the holy lips of the presiding deity of the Hindu home, for graciousness and sweetness are part and parcel of the Hindu concept of the Grihalakshmi.

Another custom which is not properly understood, is the adornment of the Grihalakshmi with two important things, besides the Mangala Sutra (the marriage string with black beads woven into gold, worn around the neck). These are flowers and the Tilak (vermillion mark on the forehead). A Hindu woman should never go without the Tilak. There is a special significance and a deep reason for the wearing of a sizeable Tilak upon the forehead. There is a real necessity for this Tilak both from the subjective point of view of the lady wearing it, as also from the objective point of view of all people who have to contact her during Vyavahar (mutual dealing). Flowers are the very manifestation of Lakshmi. But, at the same time we should not forget that Mother Lakshmi acts both as Vidya Maya and also Avidya Maya. Therefore, in this aspect as Avidya Maya she is always to be worshipped from a very safe distance and we should daily pray to Her that she may save us from that aspect of Her play and only bless us as Vidya Maya.

Goddess Lakshmi Herself is the greatest exemplar of this sublime Pati-Seva. For, the

Vaishnavite concept of the great Mother is as an eternal Sevika (servant) of the Lord in Vaikuntha. She is ever at the feet of Bhagavan Vishnu, ever intent on the eternal service of the Lord.

Manifestations of Lakshmi in the Home

Coming from the person of the Grihalakshmi to the surroundings of the house, cleanliness is the one important way in which Lakshmi is present. Dust and dirt about the house is Alakshmi (inauspiciousness).

Then, lamps. The moment the time of twilight and sunset comes, we will find that in every Hindu home a lamp is lit and saluted and thus brightness and illumination will come before darkness sets in.

Worship of the Gods. This is of paramount importance. Where the Gods are not worshipped, there Lakshmi does not stay. She may of course come and take Her abode in Her extreme Avidya aspect. Money may be accumulated, but ultimately prosperity will go from the home, and grief, suffering and sorrow will be the ultimate fate of those homes. This is a very important factor which people of this sacred land, who have come to be increasingly influenced by occidental thought and Western ways of living, have to bear in mind, if they really wish their ultimate happiness and the prosperity of the family. If the days like Janmashtami, Rama-Navami, etc., are

neglected, we see that there is no auspiciousness in that house.

Charity. This is also an important manifestation of Mother Lakshmi in the Grihasthashrama. The Grihastha (householder) has the unique privilege of sharing what he has with others of the three Ashramas—the Brahmacharis who wish to carry on their studies, the wandering Sannyasin and also the Vanaprasthin who has renounced home and is living a holy life and preparing to qualify for the fourth order of Sannyasa. To give charity to these three classes of beings is a rare privilege of the second order, and to utilise this privilege is to manifest the power of Goddess Lakshmi.

Hospitality to the Atithi (unexpected guest) is an important aspect of Lakshmi. Where a stranger or a guest is turned away, there Lakshmi does not abide. But where there is a welcome for the beggar and the unexpected guest, there Lakshmi dwells in all Her radiance and blesses that home. Hospitality, charity and generosity are important aspects of Goddess Lakshmi which have to be diligently and religiously preserved by the devout Hindu Grihastha.

There are two more things which are peculiarly Hindu and in which Goddess Lakshmi manifests Herself. One is the sacred Tulasi (basil) plant. No home should ever be without the Tulasi. For this is one of the living forms in which

Goddess Lakshmi is present upon earth. She is the direct Vibhuti (manifestation) of the Divine Lord. I may say that the Maharashtrians are very particular about this; every home will have at least a small pot where the Tulasi plant grows. The moment you enter the house, you will see the Tulasi plant. The Mother blesses such families where She is worshipped in this form. No Maharashtrian Grihalakshmi will ever take anything until she has at least offered a flower or burnt a little camphor or done one Pradakshina (circumambulation) and bowed her head in devout salutation to Tulasi-Devi.

The second form of the Goddess, which is unfortunately fast disappearing in the urban areas, is the sacred cow—Gomata. It was the custom of all Hindus, a couple of generations ago, to worship the cow every day. Without Gopuja the devout Hindu wife would not take her food. In cities it is very rare to see a cow and all milk is supplied in bottles from dairies. Therefore, this is a tradition that is dying, except in villages. To make up for this, as a sort of Prayaschittha (expiation), at least upon one or two sacred days a year, every devout Hindu lady must make it a point to perform this Puja. There is of course one particular day which is specially set apart for Gopuja; and people somehow manage to worship the cow. Opportunities for this Puja should be created wherever there is this manifestation of the

Goddess in the form of the sacred cow, which at one time formed the grand concept of wealth.

Spiritual Wealth in the Sadhaka

Now we come to the most important aspect of Goddess Lakshmi as the Moksha-Dayini (bestower of liberation). Mother in Her aspect of Lakshmi is of the Rajo-Guna; because through Rajas activity is kept up. Life has to be preserved by dynamic processes. But yet She has within Herself the inner resources of pure Sattva, because Vishnu partakes of Sattva Guna and ultimately She has to merge in Her third aspect as Goddess Saraswati. As we approach the border-land between the manifestations of Lakshmi and Saraswati, Mother Lakshmi manifests as Moksha Lakshmi—that is the means that help us to attain deliverance.

The Sixteenth Chapter of the Gita gives us some of the main qualities in which the Mother is manifest. She is manifest as fearlessness, purity of heart, steadfastness in knowledge and Yoga, alms-giving, control of the senses, sacrifice, study of the scriptures, austerity, straightforwardness, harmlessness, truth, absence of anger, renunciation, peacefulness, absence of crookedness, compassion to beings, uncovetousness, gentleness, modesty, absence of fickleness, vigour, forgiveness, fortitude, absence of hatred and pride. These are the twenty-four Daivi-Sampati (divine qualities), aspects in which Goddess

Lakshmi takes Her abode in the heart of the spiritual aspirant.

Sama and Dama are two divine attributes that are manifest in the heart of the Sadhaka, serenity as opposed to fickleness, selflessness as opposed to selfishness which all possessions bring about. Obedience is another important aspect in which the Mother manifests in the heart of the Sadhaka.

Mother manifests Herself in the Sadhaka's personality as keen observation, alertness and wakefulness, qualities which are of paramount importance upon the path of Yoga. One should not be lethargic; one should not miss important things from which one can learn invaluable and priceless lessons.

One must have spiritual discipline. This is a sign of auspiciousness, because it springs out of self-control and firmness of mind. As the preservative aspect, Mother as power gives us the necessary quality of firmness and determination of mind. Therefore, continuity and regularity in one's spiritual Sadhana are two ways in which Goddess Lakshmi as Vishnu-Sakti manifests in the heart of the Sadhaka. They sustain the Yoga-Abhyasa of the seeker.

Persistence and perseverance are important aspects of Daivi Sampat. Also a feeling of

desirelessness and self-sufficiency, contentment or Santosha are the expressions of Goddess Lakshmi within our hearts.

Just as cleanliness in the domestic sphere, so also Saucha in the life of a Sadhaka is an expression of Goddess Lakshmi—inner as well as outer cleanliness in all aspects of the seeker's life.

Health and cheerfulness are two more aspects of the Goddess.

Slight Not the Mother

Having thus summed up the manifestations of the Mother both in the domestic sphere and the sphere of Yoga and Sadhana, we have to bear in mind an important law with regard to the manifestation of the divine power of the Mother. Where Lakshmi is worshipped and propitiated, there She stays. One must be very careful and avoid all slighting of the Mother. When such manifestations of Goddess Lakshmi are present, if we do not make use of them, if we ignore them, then we slight the Goddess. Therefore, if Lakshmi is neglected and if She is slighted, prosperity and happiness, secular as well as spiritual, will depart from that person.

Realising this important law, we have the belief that one should not get angry when one is sitting down to take food. One should not speak harsh words at food-time. To refuse food is a very great blunder; for it becomes a direct insult and

sighting of the Goddess in Her visible form of sustaining the very life upon earth. One should never slight food or treat it with disrespect. Therefore, in the Hindu family where this important fact is recognised, the Grihalakshmi will never allow food, especially rice, to be thrown about on the floor, for to tread upon rice is a very great mistake. Anna (food) is Lakshmi. One should never waste or throw away food unnecessarily, because by this we fail to recognise the worth and importance of this manifestation of the Goddess. We may by all means give food in charity, feed the animals, the cow, the dog, the cat, any hungry creatures; but wantonly we should not throw away food. For if She comes to us of Her own gracious will, and we thus fail to recognise Her worth, then at times of need, we will find that She is absent.

One more important manifestation of Lakshmi in the Sadhaka is memory. *Yaa devi sarva bhuteshu smriti rupena samsthita* (O Devi, who abides in all beings in the form of memory). Mother is Smriti (memory) in all beings, says the Devi Sukta. That is Smriti of the precious and sublime words of Upadesha (spiritual instruction), the words of wisdom from the lips of the Guru and all great saints, the men of God in this world, from whom we obtain this knowledge. It is through Smriti that these gems of spiritual instructions are preserved. If we do not bear them in mind, do Manana (reflection) and Nididhyasana

(deep meditation), we will not be able to reap the full benefit of this Upadesha. Therefore we should not neglect this important aspect of Goddess Lakshmi; and give the excuse "I did not remember". If we do not remember the Guru's Upadesha, we will be the losers.

Therefore, may we pray to Mother Lakshmi to bless us and grace both our homes and our hearts in all these divine aspects of Her Vidya nature and may we make the fullest use of Her presence and thus devoutly honour and worship the Mother. May we thus attain our eternal welfare here as well as hereafter.

I have four or five things which I wish to tell you. Where elders are respectfully honoured, there prosperity prevails; and where elders—father and mother, grandfather and grandmother, uncles and aunts—are treated with contempt, with harshness, with scant respect, there is no prosperity.

These things are not known. So when people are miserable, when people are unhappy, when people lack prosperity, it is not known why it comes about that way. It is brought about by oneself by a total breaking of these laws. And then you try to find out the consequences of the bad situation by looking at the diary, or statistics, or expenditure and income account. Perhaps you blame economic conditions. But, no—you create your bad conditions by breaking the spiritual laws. Where elders are treated with respect and honour, are treated with reverence, there, in that family, in that house, prosperity will abide. In the life of that person who honours his elders, prosperity will always rest.

Secondly, where the women of the house are treated with reverence, where they are put upon

the pedestal which they deserve, there is prosperity. Where are we all, where is humanity if it is not for the women? It is the Supreme Mother who is the very source of the whole universe, and where the mothers, the women, are treated with the reverence that is due to them, in that house, there is prosperity. And where women are treated with disrespect, unkindness, harshness, prosperity cannot come. Prosperity does not abide in that house where the wife and the mother are made to weep, where tears of women fall. Prosperity takes wings and flies away from that house where the woman weeps.

Thirdly, for the womenfolk themselves, modesty is the magnet of prosperity. For a woman modesty is the highest ornament. The ornament of a woman, the beauty of a lady, is not in the jewellery she wears or in the type of material or the dress she wears—no, that is not beauty. After all, what is the beauty of the body? The moment you take leave of the body, it is just a useless thing here. So the true beauty and the grace of a woman is modesty. If a woman is modest, if she is chaste, she becomes worshipful; and prosperity becomes the servant, the handmaid of that family where women are adorned by the ornaments of chastity, modesty and gracefulness.

Sometimes it is very pitiable to see women getting unsexed in some of the modern, high-born societies. They are losing their feminine quality.

After all, the thing that makes a woman a woman is her feminine quality—her tenderness, her grace, her kindness, her forgiving nature, her forbearing nature. These are the things which make a goddess of a woman. If these are not there, if women are sharp-tongued, if they are caustic, if they are bitter, if they are full of hostility, there prosperity cannot come. It cannot come where a woman wants to be, in all respects, like a male. No! She can claim a certain type of equality, but not equality in all ways. If in this craze for being equal with man, woman loses her grace, her modesty and her chastity, then she has lost the most precious thing that God has given to her.

A Vedic declaration says: “Where women are worshipped, there indeed, the gods dance with joy”. And where woman loses this right of worship by her own immodesty, there prosperity cannot be.

And, last but not the least, where God is worshipped every day, there the whole house becomes blessed with the highest prosperity. All joy, all blessedness, all prosperity comes to that house where God is worshipped regularly. Say thanks when you get up in the morning, for your health, for your body, for a clean mind, for energy in the body to live a life of usefulness to yourself and to all, and in the evening, thank God again for

the bounty of a good day, for clear weather, fresh air, good health and energy, opportunity to serve and be useful to yourself and to others. If every day there is thanksgiving and you always worship God in your home, there is bound to be prosperity. Where there is worship, in that place, there is the tangible presence of God, and where there is this tangible presence of the Deity, what to say of prosperity? Everything that is good, everything that is blessed, will pervade that house, will fill that house.

Where God is, all auspiciousness, all blessedness, all prosperity is there as a matter of course—just as luminosity is there, radiance is there, where there is light. So, if you wish to fill yourself with prosperity, be worshipful. Do not make the temple or church alone the place of prayer and worship. Let every house be a place of worship. Let every house be a centre of prayer. Let every house be the abode of God. And, let women be the repository of such virtues as modesty, chastity, purity and graciousness, and let the children of the family and the male members of the family give due respect to the ladies and treat them with kindness, treat them with courtesy, treat them with the dignity that is due to them, and let the children revere their elders. If these things are followed, if these things are fulfilled,

prosperity will become an axiomatic condition. There can be no want, there can be no difficulty, there can be no lack in such a house.

This is the ultimate wisdom of the ancients. They say: "Prosperity is created by the behaviour of the human being". Outside factors are secondary factors only. They are not the main factors.

Each householder should have an ideal daily routine. The home life should not be left to itself, but taken care of. In addition to those unexpected things that come up every day—a visit of someone, a telephone call, an invitation to go out with someone—every one of you should have an accepted basic programme, a basic schedule for your daily life, which should include an hour of prayer in the morning and an hour of prayer in the evening. The prayer hour might include the reading of scriptural texts, the reading of sacred and inspiring spiritual books, a few minutes of quiet indrawn meditation, a few minutes of actually articulated prayer, inspiring prayer. The prayer can be spontaneous; it does not necessarily have to come out of some book. Or it can be both, as there are some very inspiring short prayers in the Gospel and also in some other books. The children should also be trained in this way.

There should be some actual act of external worship. After all, we are embodied creatures and we wish to exercise our bodies also in devotion. When you are in a state of worship, the body also

should take on the attitude of worship. You should light a lamp or a candle, burn a little incense, bow before the deity, offer supplication, ask Him to enlighten you, to fill your heart with virtue, fill your heart with divine love, goodness and selflessness, and then, bowing low, kneel and press down with your forehead. In this way, you humble yourself in the presence of God. As the body prostrates and humbles itself, it has a chastening effect upon the mind. We cannot become completely heedless to these reactions of the body upon the mind and the mind upon the inner spirit. Therefore, each day, you should have an hour when you have scope for the exercise of these aspects of your being—for the exercise of the body, the heart and the feelings in prayer; for the exercise of the mind and the intellect in study, reflection and enquiry; and for the exercise of the spirit in inner contemplation, silence, indrawnness and meditation.

Each member of the family should have a private altar. The mother should have her own nook or little corner, where she has her prayer and conversation with God, asking for guidance, a little intimate communion with God. The husband, likewise, should have a small altar for himself, and if this cannot be had, at least he must have some time for himself, when he communes with the Maker individually. And the children should be trained right from the very beginning to have such separate little corners for

themselves. Just as they have one corner for their toys, another for their books, a third for their pets, so they must have a corner for their own communion with the Most High, and if this habit is developed from childhood, then later on they will be able to have their own independent spiritual life.

The training of children is a great and onerous responsibility of the parents. You are only the trustees of these souls and have no permanent connection with the children, whom God has given to you. You should try to do what you can in the little time they pass through your hands, and make their lives more radiant. Therefore, the proper training of children is one of the most onerous duties. And if this is done in the attitude of being privileged to be the parent of His own children, then everything you do towards your children becomes part of your Karma Yoga and of your spiritual unfoldment. For, by giving to them the impulse for the spiritual life by your own ideal lives, you become the partaker of God's life. You are thus fulfilling the great gospel of Karma Yoga, which is selfless service of doing something good to others with only love in your heart but without attachment. If you train them along the path, which will take them to their eternal welfare of true blessedness, then, that is the highest bestowal that one person can confer upon another in this earth-plane.

Children are imitators. The great bestowal upon them, therefore, is the bestowal of the inspiration of your personal example. The parents have to be ideal at home. Their speech, their actions, their behaviour with each other, their conduct, their behaviour in relation to their neighbours – if these are ideal and based upon virtue and ethically perfect in all situations, then they do not have to give anything else to children. The children get all their education just by basking under the radiance of the parental influence. It is worth more than anything else that can be given to the children.

You can train them even before they are born. Even when they are within you, you can send towards them all holy thoughts, inspiring spiritual vibrations, spiritual ideas about God, prayer and love. Then a part of that nature will be imbibed even by the unborn child.

There should be a separate hour set aside for worship and devotion in the morning and again in the evening. Retire early to bed. Do not be glued to TV. This destroys the spiritual life of children. There is no sin greater than to bring forth a child and not to care about its ethical and spiritual development; for such parents have betrayed a trust. Out of their own volition they have created a trust and betrayed it. This should not be done.

Om Namo Narayanaya!

I bow again and again at the feet of all of you who are the very embodiment and symbol of the Almighty Mother. I am very happy to get this opportunity of giving this message in your service. Our most worshipful Master Swami Sivananda used to consider Indian women as the manifestation of the Universal Mother.

The key to the future development and progress of any nation is held by the women, because the mother is the first teacher of any child in every generation. Home is the elementary school for all children for inculcating good habits and higher values for the future development of the nation and the most effective element of education. Just as a potter or an idol maker takes hold of highly plastic clay and shapes it at will, likewise a mother shapes the character of a child by the manner of her speaking and conduct. Thus important and effective power is yours, and you have to keep this in mind while taking proper care and train the children in your family for building a strong future India.

The preservation of our culture is the responsibility of women and not men. Woman is the custodian of the culture of the land. Any soul born in a home gets initially conditioned and that too seriously by the atmosphere prevailing therein. The mother influences the child far more than the father. The hand that rocks the cradle, rules the nation.

You should understand yourself. The real you is your imperishable soul. The real you is neither male nor female and has neither any name nor any form. Do not forget this truth even for a moment. To realise the great divine power of the imperishable Self is as much your birthright as it is that of men. This has been firmly established in the ancient culture of India. The country, which produced great realised sages, also produced great ladies, who could participate on an equal footing with those sages in the debates on the knowledge of the Self. The main amongst them were Gargi, Maitreyee, Sulabha, Chudala, Madalasa etc. You are directly connected with this tradition. Not just in the past, but in modern times also we have great realised ladies like Anandamayee Ma, Janaki Mai, disciple of Ramana Maharshi, Sati Godavari Mai, Ramadevi, Mata Krishnabai etc.

To consider women as the weaker sex is a retrograde view point. You are all very powerful. You have the power to uplift man from the state of

incompetence and deficiency. You are the very embodiment of the all powerful Divine Mother. You will not find this elevating sentiment about women in any other society. During marriage ceremonies in Bengal the bride is given a sharp knife, when the bridegroom and the bride come into the marriage pandal. This symbolises the liberating power which can release man from bondage. You should understand this well and preserve your exalted status bestowed on you by the Indian culture.

Even in the polluted atmosphere of today you can make home a heaven on earth. Conduct daily prayers in the home. Display pictures of great saints. Read life stories of Sarada Devi, Meerabai, Madalasa and other female devotees and realised souls. Tell your children the stories of devotees, patriots, warriors and hermits. Stop all worthless talk. Your home itself will be converted into heaven if you maintain a sublime atmosphere in the home. Safeguard and perpetuate the flame of the lamp of Indian culture.

May God bless you all! Hari Om Tat Sat.

Question: Why do children born of the same parents and brought up in similar manner turn out to be totally different from each other? Given the identical training, surroundings, opportunities and facilities we find frequently one turning out a wise man and the other a fool. How is this?

Answer: This phenomenon results from the operation of several factors. They may be classified into three types of factors. The first of them is the fundamental physical and mental capacity of the individual himself. Even though the external factors of training, of surroundings, of opportunities, environment and other facilities are identical, yet it is the individual's inborn talent, brain power and physical health condition that lays down the limit of the extent to which the growing individual can draw upon these factors, receive them and respond to them in the shape of growth and development. Each mind in this universe differs from the other. The brain capacity varies from individual to individual. Health and strength also differ. Hence despite all external, social and domestic factors being identical, different individuals develop differently.

The second cause of factors is more psychological and hereditary. Herein you have to understand a little of the law-governing conception of the individual as also of prenatal paternal behaviour. The ancient Hindus were adepts in this science and have laid down an elaborate system of rules and regulations, do's and don'ts for the parents-to-be and also for the expectant mother during the period of her pregnancy. The child that is born is definitely affected by the physical health, the condition of the nervous system, the mood and emotional and psychological state of mother and father at the time of their marital relationship. This neuro-psychic background may differ from child to child. Also the nature and later development of the child is powerfully influenced by the food, the environment, the occupation and the thoughts, emotions and aspirations of the mother during the entire pregnancy period. According to these, does the child turn out to be.

Now we come to the most essential and the fundamental factor at the bottom of this phenomenon. It is the Hindu who is fully awake to the significance of this factor. This is called Vasana or Samskara. It is the impressions of the past experiences that get stored up in the conscience of the individual. Actions done in the past incarnations, experiences undergone in the previous births—all get embedded as subtle impressions called Poorva-Vasanas in the Chitta

of man. They form the seeds of his nature. The individual carries them all from one incarnation to the next. They are dormant in the infant and the little child. But they slowly commence to manifest themselves as the individual begins to grow. Eventually these basic qualities tend to manifest themselves fully, notwithstanding whatever environment, training and opportunities the individual may be put into. Ultimately this is the deciding factor which gives the direction to the personality and the development of the individual to whomsoever he be born, wheresoever he be placed and howsoever he be trained.

The Present Situation

The entire modern civilisation has engendered a way of life in which parents are responsible for their child's development based only upon material consideration, and never in terms of the spiritual level which is the only real and correct basis. There is a great spiritual dryness in the entire relationship parents have with children. It is based upon ignorance, attachment and mostly a total identification with the physical aspect. The child is thought of only as a physical being who has come into the family upon this physical plane through our own physical bodies. Therefore, everything is physical. The relationship is totally physical, never spiritual.

Humanity itself has lost that vision and, therefore, it is no wonder that when children of the present generation reach adolescence, reach the teenage years or young adulthood they have no direction, they have no goal or clarity of perception. They have not perceived the meaning of life and are therefore aimless, adrift, without purpose. Their life becomes a wild fling in all directions, trying to get what little happiness or

satisfaction they can from this sense-experience or that sense-experience. It is all sense driven upon the physical level, because they know of nothing better. They have no alternative. They are like children lost in a jungle or a traveler lost in the desert.

Yet they are not to be blamed if they are in pursuit of pleasure. The whole modern life is pleasure-seeking, sensation-seeking. How can you blame the children? That is how they have been brought up, blank, empty inside, yet madly driven in their search for happiness. In childhood they are taught that to have a good time means going to places or doing things or getting objects. And so, children grow up in this delusion. The adults which are produced are at the mercy of things which are outside of themselves.

Today our teenagers are a nightmare to their parents, to their teachers, to the society. Their own professors and principals are afraid of them, and the police doesn't want to be bothered with them. They are a constant headache. Why? Because of a basic error right from the very start. Their life unfortunately was started upon the wrong note. Confusion and chaos are inevitable where there is no goal, no ideal, no sense of direction, no purpose, no vision, where the significance of life, of this grand gift of God, is nowhere within their ken. That is the great error. But even a grain of proper understanding of this

world, as it really is, instilled into young people, would grant a rich harvest in terms of happiness and joy.

Children! Little Sparks of Divinity

The great ideal put before us from the Upanishads, Bhagavatam, all our great scriptures, says that children are little sparks of Divinity that have come into our circle due to some mystical past connection, some karmic connection. They are souls on a great pilgrimage, on their way towards the attainment of a divine destiny. Therefore, we have to perceive of them as such, as souls on their way to divine perfection. And whatever we can do in order to help them on their onward journey, their ascent into divinity, is the need of the hour. In what way can we touch the inner depth of being of this little beautiful creature which is to be awakened? Through our affection, through our intuition, through our vibrations, what can we do?

It is the impressionable and formative years of childhood that constitute the correct time to set the child going in the right direction, to mould it, to make it wise and aware of its goal in life. During the early years the parents fill the entire world of the child, so that whatever they radiate to it, that is what it receives.

*"That person indeed is the real mother,
That person indeed is the real father,*

*That person indeed is the real relative,
That person indeed is the real well-wisher,
Who right from infancy and childhood
Manages to impart to the child a love
For the Divine and the Divine Name.”*

Who is father? Who is mother? Who is relative? Who is well-wisher? That person who right from the very start of your life manages to impart to you a love for that which is high, that which is sublime, a love for God and God's Name, who manages to impart devotion. That is what the scriptures have to say about this.

Queen Madalasa—An Enlightened Mother

We also have the lofty example of queen Madalasa. She made full use of all the privileges her queenly status gave her to cultivate the company of scholars, of people learned in the ancient lore.

A standing order was given to all the ministers of the royal court that any holy man, any sage, any saint must be brought to the palace and presented to the king and queen. And whenever a holy man was presented at court, queen Madalasa never missed the opportunity of having a little Satsanga with him, of imbibing whatever spirituality it was her God-given good fortune to receive. So gradually she developed discrimination, right enquiry, philosophical thought and knowledge. Ultimately she became

enlightened and was full of inner spiritual awareness. She knew that her aspect as queen was only something secondary, a little temporary part she was playing in this life's drama. In truth, in reality, she knew she was the ever-pure, ever-awakened, ever-free, ever-perfect Atman—*nitya-suddha*, *nitya-buddha*, *nitya-mukta*, *nitya-paripurna atma*.

Queen Madalasa bore four sons. And as she placed them in the cradle, what was the lullaby that she sang to her children? The queen sang to them wondrous wisdom songs:

*You are the ever-pure Atman, o beloved child.
You are the ever-awakened Atman.
You are spotless, the perfection of purity.
O my darling baby, you are that Atman
Which is beyond darkness, beyond the veil
of Maya.”*

“Suddhasi bhuddhasi niranjanosi”

(*suddhasi* means ever-pure, immaculate
buddhasi means ever-awakened, illumined
niranjanosi means spotless)

*“O beloved child, you are the ever-pure,
the ever-awakened, the ever-spotless.
You are completely free from Maya,
free from the illusion of this earth-life.
Already you are awakened.”*

So, she put these positive suggestions into the children's consciousness right from their infancy. "You are not bound by Maya. You are already beyond illusion." Why not? Born to such a mother it is no wonder! This was the thought and feeling she gave when she suckled them. And with the milk of the mother came this wisdom milk of Vedantic awareness into the consciousness of the children. And the Upanishads say, that as the children grew up, they grew with the radiance of awakened consciousness in their inner being. They not only flourished physically, being royal princes; they also had the good fortune of being blessed with a mother who was an illumined being. They grew up into Jnanis. By the time they were sixteen they were Purna-Jnanis.

Lord Vinayaka is an Akhanda Brahmachari. He has no consort. There is a story of deep significance behind this vow of celibacy. It is said that once when He was a small child, Ganesha in a mood of playfulness beat a cat and injured it rather severely. He did not know what this ultimately implied. Later, after the play was over, he happened to draw near to His Divine Mother Parvathi and He found marks of severe injury upon her. The child was shocked and queried His Mother: "What is this? Who inflicted these injuries on you?" The Mother replied: "And just who else but you by your own hand." For a moment Lord Ganesha did not understand how this was possible. He said: "What do you mean, Mother? I have never injured you." Then the Mother said: "Try to recall, child, whether during the course of this day you have inflicted injury upon any creature?"

Ganesha reflected for a while. Immediately He remembered His play with the cat. "Yes, Mother, after all I beat a little cat; that is all." Then the Divine Mother smiled and said: "Can you not understand that whatever you see, whatever names and forms there are in this universe, it is

only I who have become all these names and forms. There is nothing else in this universe except Myself. There is nothing in the universe but your own Mother." This is what Parvathi revealed to Ganesha.

This Truth entered into the innermost consciousness of this Divine Child and He realised the Truth of it then and there. He took a vow that He would never take anyone as His consort, because when He knew that the entire universe of diverse names and forms was the manifestation of His own Mother, all women became as Mother unto Him. This reveals to us the highest secret declared by the Vedas and Upanishads, in all the Agamas and Shastras, viz., *sarvam shaktimayam jagat*, whatever is in the universe is but the manifestation of the dynamic aspect of the Supreme Almighty Self.

There is another story which contains the highest wisdom of the Upanishads, *sarvam khalvidam brahma*, whatever is, is none other than the Almighty Being. It is this Almighty Being that has projected Itself as the entire universe. So, if we adore the Almighty we adore the entire universe.

Lord Ganesha possesses a priceless necklace of gems and the story behind this necklace is that once when Lord Siva, Parvathi, Ganesha and Karthikeya were all together, there arose a desire in the mind of the Divine Mother to test the

individual calibre and knowledge of Her two great divine sons. Therefore, she held out the necklace she was then wearing and said: "Here is this necklace. He who will go round the entire universe once and reach me first—to him will I give this necklace of gems."

Immediately, Karthikeya thought that it was as good as His, because He knew that with His ponderous girth it would be very difficult for Lord Vinayaka to go round the universe. Karthikeya himself had a very fast vehicle, the peacock, which would take him quickly round the universe; immediately He was off on the peacock.

But, Vinayaka was not in the least perturbed. He sat before His Parents for a long time. When He thought that it would be time for Karthikeya to return, He went round in Pradakshina of Siva and Parvathi once and prostrated Himself before His Mother and held out His hand.

Devi Parvathi at once divined the depth of wisdom which had made Him do this. She saw that His intuition was such that He beheld the entire universe as made up of nothing else but Siva-Shakti. He beheld that they were immanent in all things and within them they contained the entire universe. Thus He got the necklace, and when Karthikeya returned after His strenuous circumambulation, he found that the prize had already been given to Ganesha.

God as the Universal Mother has a special appeal to man due to numerous reasons. Firstly, the mother is the earliest recognisable friend of the infant; she is the supreme wish-fulfiller of the individual and, at a certain stage, the all-in-all. Secondly, of all human relationships on earth, the sweetest and the most loving is this relationship with one's mother. Thirdly, the father image is always associated with sternness and discipline; whereas, the mother image is that of spontaneous love, compassion, protective tenderness and care, forbearance and forgiveness too. No wonder then that erring man is naturally drawn to this approach to the Supreme Being as the Mother Divine rather than as the Universal Father. Seeking comforts, solace and forgiveness, man turns to the mother rather than to the father. Stern justice is more likely to stem from the latter, whereas solicitude, forgiveness and love would be expected from the mother. Thus, down the ages, man has evolved this approach to the Supreme Deity in Its aspect as the Cosmic Mother through the time-honoured tradition of Mother worship.

In this worship of the Mother Divine, the worshipper naturally feels himself as a child of the Mother. As a child approaches the mother confidently and with full trust in the mother's all-goodness, even so one adores the Mother, pouring forth the heart's love in surrender and sweet trust. This relationship has a profoundly transforming effect upon one's personality. Crude egoism gives place to child-like simplicity, crookedness to guilelessness, self-assertive arrogance to silent submission, fear and awe to fearlessness and trust.

Mother means love, compassion, protectiveness and tender care. This must be well borne in mind, if our worship of the Mother should maintain a sublime spiritual level and be effective in taking us towards the ultimate goal of all such worship, namely, God-realisation. The process of worship is aimed at bringing about a gradual divinisation of your consciousness. To experience the Divine, you must become the Divine. To invoke the love and the grace of the Mother, you must become a radiating centre of love yourself. An ascent into divinity is from Tamas to Rajas, Rajas to Sattva, and Sattva to Suddha Sattva, whence one goes beyond the three qualities and attains the divine state. True and correct worship of the Divine Mother is therefore a lofty spiritual technique of the highest Sattvic quality. If the purely impersonal aspect of the deity is stern and remote, this personal aspect of the deity is tender,

close, intimate and fully approachable. The Divine Mother is a love-filled Mother who waits with outstretched arms to draw the devoted soul to Her divine bosom.

Distinctive Forms of Mother Worship

Worship of the Mother, as it presently prevails, is to be found in three or four distinctive forms. Certain sections of the Saktas devote themselves to the worship of the Mother according to methods laid down in the Sakta Tantras. This is a highly technical mode of worship entailing specific rituals, into which one must be initiated as per Sakta tradition.

There are other sections of the Saktas as also non-Saktas, who engage themselves in the worship through pure Bhakti, with simple ceremonials. This is far less technical than the Tantric worship and it tends to invoke Her solely as love.

Then again, Mother Divine is worshipped throughout India by all sorts of people during the nine days of the Navaratra Puja. In this countrywide annual worship, the Mother is invoked mainly as auspiciousness and blessedness and prosperity.

Here it will not be out of place to make mention of yet another form of Mother worship. It is really a degraded and impure form that deserves to be renounced. It is Mother worship

through fear and superstition. In this form, the Mother is regarded as a dire deity given to anger and vengeance. She is more in a mode of punishing than loving. This is not Mother worship at all. It is a travesty of the concept of Motherhood. This is a Tamasic form of worship which evokes in the worshipper the Tamasic qualities of guilt, fear and cruelty. To appease this dire deity, the worshipper takes recourse to the despicable means of committing violence upon other living creatures. He takes life which he cannot give and which, therefore, he has no right to take. What such a blind worshipper fails to see is that the Mother is not the mother of man alone, but that She is the Mother of the entire creation. Every fish, fowl, beast and insect is a divine child of Her's. All life is sacred. If murder of man is a crime against the law, the murder of dumb beasts is a crime against Dharma. Their murder in Mother's Name is a crime against God Himself. Such sin cannot bring down Divine Grace. It will only bring the inevitable result in the form of much suffering. Worship should not contradict the universal Dharma of love and compassion. Cruelty cannot be condoned under any name. It may have the sanction of ignorance and superstition, but it has not the sanction of Sanathana Dharma. It takes the worshipper farther and farther away from God and will ultimately lead him into hell. It should be abandoned immediately.

There is a deeply significant thing to be noted with reference to one aspect of Motherhood. Upon occasion, she is worshipped differently as Maha Lakshmi, Maha Sarasvati and Maha Parvathi or Durga. Worshipping Her as Durga, you invoke Her Power to destroy the evil within you in the form of egoism, anger, lust, greed, jealousy and delusion. These lower qualities of darkness constitute the animal within man. It is the impure Pashu (animal) inside the Manushya (man). The worshipper is expected to offer as sacrifice this inner lower self made up of egoism, lust, anger, greed, falsehood and hatred. This is true sacrifice that elevates the worshipper and takes him near to God.

Worship the Mother with the flowers of compassion, peace, mercy, forgiveness, truthfulness, simplicity. Approach Her as the Mother of love. Approach Her for the highest blessedness of Moksha. Then She is no other than the Supreme Almighty and She can give you Kaivalya Moksha. O, Children of Sanathana Dharma! Approach Her for this highest gift and not for any petty objective here. The real glory of Mother worship can bring far quicker response than the approach to God as the Creator and Law-giver. Mother is especially there to forgive and save, whereas the Lord has to dispense justice. Thus the devotees of the Universal Mother laud their approach.

(This saying on the wall of the Samadhi Mandir was read carefully by Sri Swami Chidananda before giving the following talk.)

The essential point for all of you to ponder is that time is flying away. Days turn into weeks, weeks into months and months into years. Day by day our life span decreases, various distractions take our mind away from the goal. How do you expect or hope that your life will be crowned with God-realisation, illumination, liberation, bliss, peace, perfection? How do you expect?

It is only when one thinks ceaselessly of God and God alone, when one thinks of God alone to the exclusion of all thoughts other than God. For such a person there is not only the possibility, but we may almost say, taking into consideration the factor of God's grace, that there is the certainty of

attaining God-experience in this very life, even now and here.

For a person who has one's mind, one's inner gaze, steadily fixed upon God and God alone, ceaselessly without break, who does not allow any other thought to intrude—one who is totally fixed in God, one hundred per cent, without the intrusion of any other thought—the interior of such a person is not human, it is no more mental, the interior of such a person is God. For God dwells, infills totally the inner firmament of that being's consciousness. That being is in a state of God-consciousness, not human consciousness.

For this we should pray. For this we should ceaselessly make effort—with humility, without egoism—aware that even this movement is being initiated by God, carried on by the power of His grace—where I am nowhere and He alone is. And we pray to the Almighty, the transcendental Being, and we pray to Holy Master that they may vouchsafe this blessing and boon upon one and all of you! Amen.

Blessed Atman! The key to blessedness lies in being aware of blessedness. If your awareness is turned in different directions, towards what you do not have, or what you think or imagine you do not have, then this wrongly directed pattern of thought will make you unaware of the many things that you have.

Each one is distinct and unique in the eyes of the Creator; there is none like that particular being, there is no second. So each one is precious and specially valuable to the Creator. In the eyes of God, therefore, each one is something special. This should always be remembered. No one can replace you in the role that you fulfil in God's creation at any given place and at any given point in time. You are most necessary and indispensable for that particular set-up, in that particular time-space context. And therefore rejoice and be grateful to the Lord that He has given you a role to perform.

Whether you perform your role perfectly and in a meaningful manner or not is irrelevant, because God expects each one to do what one is capable of, at any point, at any time. God does not

expect an ant to haul a great timber as the elephant does in the forest. Nor does God expect the elephant to fly gracefully in the air as do swallows and doves. He expects birds to fly and He loves them for what they do. He expects elephants to fulfil their role, giving dignity to the forest and doing incredible jobs of strength. And He expects man to live as man. And each one in his own place, in his own sphere, can fulfil a task and gladden the heart of the Maker and contribute something to His plan on earth.

And this is the truth. And to be aware of the truth is to be worry-free, anxiety-free. To be aware of the truth is to be grateful to God: “You have made me unique, You have given me a role, and You have prompted me and brought to me all helpful factors to fulfil my role and play my part. For that I ever give thanks.”

No one is dispensable. No one is useless. No one is lesser in the eyes of God or in the eyes of those who try to avoid human judgment and human standards of criticism, who accept God’s creation as it is, because God created it. For them, whatever God thought fit to make, in any manner whatsoever, is perfect; there is nothing wrong in it, and it is acceptable. For them, whatever emanates from God partakes of His divinity and perfection, and therefore in God’s own plan, and in God’s own way, is fully complete.

In this way, if we accept this truth that to God we are unique, and so we are to all those who are trying to look with the impartiality of God's vision, then in the presence of God and of those who are devotees of God, we must feel at home, we have arrived; we may no longer feel distressed in heart. One should rejoice in serene calmness of spirit: "I have arrived, I am at home, I am in the presence of God and I am totally accepted, I am totally accepted."

Things are as they should be. The Lord is in heaven and all is well on earth. This is the faith, the firm belief of those who have faith in the infinite love of God, who have trust in the infinite goodness of God and who are sure that in God's heart they have a special and unique place. This is ever kept reserved for them and no one can take it away from them, because God's infinite heart is large enough to hold the entire cosmos and everything within it.

Thus knowing, we should have great comfort in our heart, great satisfaction and contentment. And that is the secret of inner joy, the key to blessedness and the pathway to peace, serenity and inner calm, where there is no fretting, agitation or restlessness.

The peace of God pervades the entire earth; the peace of God pervades everywhere, without and within. The peace of God is the one great truth underlying all things, ever-present, ever-

accessible and available, ever-full and inexhaustible. Try to live in the light of this truth, and the heart and mind will be at ease. Never compare and contrast, because there is no comparing and contrasting amongst unique things. Every little fledgling hatched from an egg is unique to its parents; so is each being unique in itself, for God is the parent of all. Hence, sages and saints and men of wisdom look upon all with equal vision.

Therefore, rejoice that you are special to God in His infinite love. Rejoice that you have your own special place and role to perform in this creation of God. And rejoice that His love is immediately available to you, for He is not a remote reality, but He is the indwelling Reality, nearer to you than anything else on earth. And rejoice that within you is the peace of God as your own Self. You are God's peace and you have a duty to perform, that is, to spread this peace which you are to one and all. Live to spread this peace!

Almighty Lord, prompt these Sadhakas, prompt these devotees of Yours to ever walk the path that leads to their own highest blessedness. Prompt them to live their life in such a way that it creates for them a spiritual Karma that liberates them forever from all Karma. That is my humble prayer at this moment.

Radiant Divinities! We receive from others what we make them do. It is not people who do things to other people, rather it is people who make other people do things to them, in a way which they have worked for, whether known to themselves or not. If you have keen introspection, analysis, then after a situation has occurred you find, "Yes, indeed, it is I who worked for it."

Sometimes we invite temptations, sometimes we invite aggravated situations by working for them, many a time half knowingly. We play with life in such a way that things do not merely happen to us, but we make them happen to us. Most of the time this is so. Karmic occurrences and experience are there no doubt; we do not deny it. But over and above, in addition, it is we who many a time bring about situations through our folly or through our wantonness.

It is said: “Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.” And that is why many a time mystics have prayed to God: “O Lord, save me from myself.” This is a point seekers should be aware of. We, by our behaviour, our thoughts, our intentional acts, attract to ourselves situations. People act towards us in certain ways, not because they wanted to do it, but because we invited them to do it.

We then complain to God: “Why, how could this happen to me?” Why not? You have asked for it; you have worked for it. Therefore, when they speak of trying to discriminate between what is favourable and helpful to our spiritual life and what is not helpful, it is not only in regard to outer things and people, outer factors and environment, but also we have to discriminate within as well, find the very subtle, little known, hidden motivations for our actions.

If, day after day, a young girl in a house, instead of busying herself with helping her mother and trying to be a useful member of her family, continuously comes out on the balcony and attracts the attention of a neighbouring youth who then starts whistling at her, whose fault is it? Is it the fault of the person on the street, or is it the fault of the person in the house? She will say: “Father, that young person watches me and whistles to attract my attention.” Father will lodge a complaint with the police. They will go and interrogate the young man. And they will never

know that the whole situation was brought about not by anyone else, but by the so-called aggrieved person who caused it by her own actions.

In this way, from inside, we many a time harbour thoughts and motives that attract towards us certain situations, and then we blame God, take a report to God: "How can this situation come to me? I am doing Japa, I am worshipping daily, I am reading the scriptures, meditating." Yes, you are doing all these things, but the fact is, that inside, you are also doing something else that no one knows. But you should not think that God does not know. Other human beings may not know, but there is Someone within you and He is nothing but Consciousness, knowing, knowing, knowing everything from all the ten directions. Even if something misses you, it does not miss Him. He is awareness—Prajnana. He is Jnana-svarupa (full of knowledge). Nothing misses Him.

So when this is the situation, how can you complain: "How cans this happen to me?" How can anything else happen to you when inwardly, by stages, you have worked for it, you have created it outside from inside? Therefore, it is necessary that seekers and Sadhaks be wise, not go into self-deception, not be asleep inside. Gurudev said: "Even inside, you must decide what is favourable to me, what is unfavourable, what are the deep, hidden motivations of my actions. Know yourself in this level, in this sense also and

make the requisite adjustment, requisite change within.”

A deep thinker said, “Life is a mirror.” You see in it what you show into it. If you stand before a mirror and make a pleasant face, a pleasant face looks back at you. If you make an unpleasant face, an unpleasant face looks back at you. What comes to you from inside the mirror is created by you standing outside. Because happiness and misery, favourable environment and unfavourable environment, to a large extent depend upon our state of mind, how we look at it. Happiness is not contained in things, situations or the environment outside. Happiness or unhappiness is in how we look at it through our mind. It is, therefore, the situation within. It is the state of our mind that makes our happiness or unhappiness.

If that inner state is adjusted and corrected, then nothing has the power to give us any experience except that which we give to it. We give it the power to affect us in either this way or that way by the state of our mind. If our state of mind is right, then even a situation which may put an unwise person into sorrow or unhappiness will not have the power to put us into sorrow or unhappiness. Because our mind approaches the situation in a different state.

It is told that a traveller into a rural area asked a shepherd: “How do you think the weather

will be today?" "Oh, it will be weather that I like." "How do you know it will be weather that you like, how can you say that?" The shepherd answered: "It is like this, sir, knowing that over such things as the weather I have no control, knowing I cannot change it, long ago I decided that whatever weather comes I will like it. And therefore, now I am at peace. I am always sure that I will get weather that is to my liking 365 days of the year. Because I cannot change it, I have started liking whatever I get. Instead of always trying to get only that thing that I like, I decided that it is wiser to like whatever thing I get. Therefore, I always like the weather I get." So it was not the weather that mattered, it was his inner state of looking at it, relating himself to it, perceiving it, that mattered. So, he had the key to happiness.

The key is inside. It is a state of mind that we diligently create within us that ultimately has the effect of creating happiness or misery for us. Therefore, mind alone is the cause of bondage and liberation. Mind is the cause of pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow. Whatever it is, Mana eva karanam manushyanam—for human beings, mind itself is the main cause. And in the higher metaphysical sense, Vedanta says: Manahkalpitam jagat—this world is created by your mind.

That is too high for us, we need not bother about it. Let us not look upon it from this great truth. Let us look upon it from a psychological

angle, an immediate angle, that which is of relevance to us here, now, today. Today let us apply this truth, find out this truth: “I make my day; I make my happiness and misery; I make my darkness and light; I from within create it.” A picture does not paint itself. It is the artist with his brush who paints it. If he dips it in green, he cannot expect blue to appear on the canvas; if he dips it in red, he cannot expect yellow. So what he uses, that appears for him. Apply this truth and then see what happens. God bless you!

Worshipful adorations to the sacred spiritual presence of beloved and worshipful Holy Master Guru Maharaj Sri Swami Sivanandaji, into whose presence and proximity you are all fortunate enough to draw near, day by day, morning after morning, to start the day in as sublime and perfect a way as it is possible to start it.

Pratah smarami, pratar-bhajami, pratar-namami (I remember Thee early in the morning, I worship Thee early in the morning, I bow down to Thee early in the morning). With these words several of the hymns of salutations and adorations, several of the well known Slokas of Adi Sankaracharya begin. So much so, that this triplet of verses has come to be known as the Pratah Smarami Stotra. What is the speciality about praying early in the morning, worshipping God early in the morning? Mahatma Gandhi, in Sabarmati Ashram, as well as Sevagram, used to hold the morning prayers when it was still semi-dark. There is a reason. There is a speciality in this early morning hour.

“Start the day with God,” they say in the West. And very shrewdly, with a touch of humour, there is also a saying, “The early bird catches the

worm”, which means it pays dividends to be early. The earlier you are up, the more time you have. The more time you have, the less hurried you are, the less under pressure you are. The less under pressure you are, the less tension, which is better for your health, your heart, your blood pressure, your entire nervous system, even your digestion. This is the pragmatic reason. If you are up early, you have greater leisure. If you are not up early, you are more hard-pressed for time, and it is not good to start a day being pushed for time.

But what is the higher meaning? The higher meaning is that it is a period when your consciousness is in the most suitable condition to receive higher impulses from the inner world of the Spirit, the divine world; your consciousness is most sensitive as well as receptive. Your inner Antahkarana, the normal human consciousness, which you exercise during your active hours of waking, is in its most calm and Sattvic condition at this hour. This is conducive to introspection and prayerfulness.

For, when you are fully awake and have started to move in this world, your entire mind is outgoing. It is completely drawn into the world of the many, into the field of names and forms and ever-changing activities. So it is completely occupied and caught up, dominated by the visible, the outer, the material, the phenomenon. Therefore it is not available to receive higher

impulses, unless it has been trained to receive them even in this state of being completely drawn out. Then too, that same mind when it is caught in deep sleep is totally unreceptive and completely closed to all higher impulses, sublime divine impulses.

But in the early dawn the Antahkarana is freed from the Tamas of sleep and is still yet free from the domination of the Rajas of the outer world, the compulsions and impulsions that catch it and draw it into this very hectic field of many tasks to be done, many people to see, and very diverse types of thought forms, due to the diverse fields in which the mind is required to be engaged and involved in.

So you are free in this interim period from both the handicaps of the sleep state as well as the shortcomings and involvements of the fully wakened state. Here, therefore, is a period of openness, of receptivity, of Sattva—a period most suitable, most propitious—when you can give yourself a lift and enter into God. And that sets the tone for the entire day.

If in this way you start the day with God, you start with *Pratah smarami*, *Pratar-bhajami*, *Pratar-namami*, then the whole day is beautifully qualified with this Bhav or attitude of prostration, of worship, of remembrance. And that is the secret of being in the world but yet abiding in God—being

in Kriya (action), yet inwardly there is a centre of silence, Nishkriya (without action).

A mystical poet has beautifully given to us, in brief, this little secret of the right way of starting one's day, so that one reaps a golden harvest of fullest benefit from this charming, this wonderful, this magic period of the early dawn.

*I met God in the morning
When my day was of its best,
And His Presence came like sunrise,
Like a glory in my breast.
All day long the Presence lingered,
All day long He stayed with me,
And we sailed in perfect calmness
Over a very troubled sea.
So I think I know the secret
Learned from many a troubled way,
You must seek Him in the morning
If you want Him through the day.*

—Ralph Cushman.

Thus it is that there is this special quality, a special state of consciousness prevailing in this interim period between the disadvantages of both the sleep state and the fully awakened, pre-occupied state. Both are necessary, but both contain obstacles in total communion, inner communion with the Spirit, the Supreme.

I have great joy in sharing with you, therefore, this secret of why our ancients said *Pratah smarami, pratar-bhajami, pratar-namami*. Because they knew this secret, this inner Yogic secret, the mystical secret of the state of consciousness that the individual possesses in this early morning dawn hour. It sets the tone for the entire day, and then you live with God, you move with God, you sail the troubled sea of Vyavaharic life with perfect calmness and serenity, because God is with you. You do the sailing with God as your companion.

May we benefit ourselves fully from this golden hour and make each day a further ascent towards the great Goal, attaining which you become blessed. May you all be blessed!

Gurudev Swami Sivananda has given us four wonderful mottos and maxims for our guidance, each holding a world of meaning, a world of significance. These four words are meant to make our life full of peace and joy, free of restlessness, sorrow, clash and conflict. And these four are: Serve, Love, Meditate, Realise.

Serve: When you go out of yourself and seek to serve others, two great things happen: your ego becomes less important, and the off-shoot of the ego, selfishness, becomes gradually eliminated. Because when one is self-centred and egoistic, peace is not possible; happiness is not possible, neither for oneself nor for others.

Love: Here it specifically means Bhakti, love for the Supreme Reality. By Bhakti we plug in, as it were, and make a contact or create a connection between ourselves and that which is profound and perfect peace, peace that passeth understanding, that which is the perfect joy, that which is the Param Ananda (supreme bliss). And naturally when you relate yourself, make a connection, with that which is the very embodiment, an infinite, limitless, immeasurable ocean of that very thing—then who in the world can prevent you from having that peace, that joy? So connect yourself

with that supreme peace and joy, ocean of peace and joy. Then, what no one can get, you will get. What is nowhere available in this world is available to you, wherever you are. Whether you possess anything or not, whether you have anything or not, you will have peace, you will have joy, you will have a supreme state of fullness and satisfaction.

Meditate: Why be short of it? Once you have made this connection, take it to its logical conclusion and you yourself become the embodiment of peace. Instead of experiencing the peace and joy of the Divine, you yourself become the very ocean of peace and joy; you yourself become divine, for you are divine. Put an end to this forgetfulness once and for all, forever, and shine with divinity.

Realise: Keep what has just been said as the one supreme goal of your existence; never forget it even for one moment. Each day, when the sun rises and you begin a day, keep realisation as your supreme goal. Let that be the very meaning, the direction-giver, the propelling force of your life. Let your life be vibrant with the aspiration for realisation. Let this one principle, this one maxim and motto, this one factor of realisation enrich your entire life, your thoughts, your feelings, your actions. Let it dominate your entire life, so that you live your life and direct your actions towards that great consummation of realisation, liberation.

Serve, Love, Meditate, Realise! These four significant words have a relevance to each one of us in our attempt to seek and find happiness while we live upon this earth, which is Anityam, Asukham, Duhkhalayam, Asasvatam (evanescent, without happiness, an abode of sorrow, impermanent), while we are seeking happiness upon this earth which is Janma, Mrityu, Jara, Vyadhi, Duhkha (birth, death, old age, disease, sorrow). Yet you can fully succeed in attaining the highest happiness, highest bliss, highest peace and satisfaction, if you hold on to these four words, ponder their meaning, and manifest them in your life. They will lead you to peace and joy.

God bless you all! I wish you peace and joy of the highest quality, not second rate, third rate, fourth rate, petty, petty, petty peace. No! Peace and joy of the unparalleled, unique, supreme, highest quality, which is divine peace and joy, which is ever your birthright. To attain this, you have come here into this world of pain and death. To attain this, you have been blessed with human status, with the power to think, feel, reason, listen, receive and understand.

May today become the starting point of a vigorous onward ascent into that state of peace which is awaiting you, to ask for it and get it, to seek it and to find it. It is awaiting you. Let us not lose the opportunity!

Blessed immortal Atman! Beloved seekers and Sadhakas! *Patram pushpam phalam toyam yo me bhaktya prayachchati*. You see, Bhaktya (with devotion)—He who offers to Me even a leaf, a flower, a little fruit, a little water with devotion [Gita 9.26], if it is given with the right feeling – noble, sublime, lofty feeling—then it becomes far more acceptable than any pompous ceremony done with a great many things. One should keep this feeling ever fresh, ever present.

For that you should pray to the Lord: “*Dehi me kripaya Sambho tvayi bhaktirachanchalam*—O Lord, give me constant, unswerving, unwavering devotion to Thy feet, devotion to Thee that never varies.” This is the key to success in Sadhana, in all devotional practices. This you must cultivate. Pray to the Lord with a genuine Bhav.

It is the Bhav that converts Karma into Karma Yoga, work into worship, an ordinary action into a spiritual process. A sweeper sweeps the street, may be reluctantly, and cursing his fate. A devotee takes a broom and sweeps in front of Vishwanatha Temple. He may be a high official, but here he feels himself to be a humble servant of the Lord. What is the difference? There is a world

of difference. The outer act is the same, but the Lord beholds the feeling. It is the feeling that brings in a spiritual quality to an action.

There is a narration about a little, neglected shrine of Lord Shiva in a remote, deep forest where once in a while a priest used to come and worship. A forest-dwelling hunter, by chance, saw that. So whenever he got a chance, he also tried to do little worship. He used to hunt some animal, cut it and take some raw meat in his hand, and some flowers which he carried on his head, as he had no plate. There was no vessel to take water, so he used to put it into his mouth and spit the water upon the image. In the context of Hindu religion, all this was unfit for offering to any Deity, but he did not know it. However, he offered what he had with a heart full of devotion. And ultimately the Lord gave Darshan to this uncivilised, uncultured tribal. What was his merit? The genuineness and great depth of his feeling.

Let us not forget this essential point. Let us purify our heart, and that purified heart will have sublime Bhav. Devotion, compassion, meditation, combined with Bhav please the Lord and make your Sadhana successful.

God bless you!

True life is made up of “now”. True life is not made up of bygone yesterdays of uncertain tomorrows. What we have is like a lump of clay in a sculptor’s hands or a piece of gold in goldsmiths shop. We can create out of it what we will. At this moment, what are we doing with the time we have? Are we thinking of something else? Are we forming opinions of people who are sitting beside us? Or of the person speaking to us? Or, are we engaged in making our life sublime, enriching ourselves, uplifting ourselves, drawing nearer to the Divine and awakening within, unfolding ourselves, shinning with the awakened light? What are we engaged in doing in this moment? This moment, this concept, this word, this fact, this truth is the most tremendous truth of life. Life is made up of this moment and this moment only – not of dead yesterdays nor of unborn tomorrows. But your life to each one of you is not even today. It is this moment. This moment is what we effectively have. Other aspects of time are present in your mind as ideas and concepts. They are most deceptive ideas.

If you make this moment all that it ought to be, it will bring something improved the next

moment. Because you have already enriched yourself this moment, the next moment will be built upon it and therefore will be one step higher and may be one shade brighter. Each moment can be an ascending step, a manifestation of a brighter light from within you. Moment by moment, illumination is attained. Moment by moment, enlightenment is brought about. Moment by moment, is liberation ultimately experienced. Moment by moment is the supreme Goal achieved.

You do not have to wait for any moment; you do not have to exercise patience. On the contrary the moment does not wait. It comes before you with each breath. Therefore, great mystics have said: "Oh Lord with every breath may I remember you. With every breath of my life, may I ever seek to draw nearer to you". Because the moment does not wait, it does not tarry. If you take it and live it, then you have it. If you daydream, allow yourself to be diverted elsewhere, get bogged down in something else, then you lose it. It is no longer yours; it is gone forever.

Each moment is your real wealth, more precious than gold, diamonds and precious stones. Each moment is your very life. Each moment is what you are and what you can be. There is nothing that can compare to it. The tremendous importance of the moment, the incomparable value of this moment, is the most

important insight and understanding that a living individual must have. "My wealth is each moment that is before me now. It is now I have to live my life, not in yesterdays or tomorrows. I have but this moment to live, to mould and to fashion, to make something out of it. This is my effective life."

Remember, we do not have to work for it, we do not have to ask for it. It is continuously being given, constantly. It is always immediate. It comes. It does not delay, but you cannot ask it to wait. You cannot afford to allow it to pass by and then imagine you can do something about it. When it has passed, it is no longer yours. When you confront it, it is yours; you are master of the situation, you have full claim. It allows itself to be taken by you and made use of in any way you like.

Hence the adage Uthistha Jagritha (Arise Awake) – come, come, slumber not, be up and doing, arise, awake. For they knew this truth: that life is now. There is no other life but now. They knew that the only thing the individual soul has for his highest evolution, his supreme blessedness, is this moment.

Ponder, ponder well this great all important truth of your life. Go on pondering it and never stop deeply pondering this truth. For it is the most important truth. If it is grasped, life is yours; there is nothing that is withheld from you. If you do not grasp it, life is in vain. A hundred things will come and clutter up your consciousness, and your

consciousness will lose the most precious of all things – the now, the moment, here. Wherever you are, at whatever time, you are at that moment in-charge of the moment, in-charge of your life. If you allow it to pass away, then no lamentation can bring it, no effort can recall it.

Therefore they say: “Grasp time by the forelock”. Even before it is before you, have it in your hand. For the moment is all that you have, and that is more than enough. If you take care of your moments, you have your whole life. Life will take care of you. And there is no limit to what you can attain if you take care of this moment, this now. For it becomes a dynamic moment, full of power, full of potential, full of unlimited possibilities—this moment. Live now, live effectively. Make this moment your wealth, be enriched and move towards your great divine destiny.

Simplicity of life is the true secret of happiness. Unhampered experience of the joy which lies within comes out of simplicity. Your life should never be complicated with too many things. Due to too many things, due to too many desires, modern man unfortunately has missed this joy. Modern man allows his life to become so complicated though he knows that simplicity is the secret of happiness.

Have the capacity to derive joy out of whatever situation you may find yourself in. A simple and a contented life depends more upon God-made things than upon man-made objects. There are hundreds of things that can fill you with happiness if only you have the eyes to see. When you get up in the morning, you can step out of your room and look at the dawn and be happy. When the sun rises, still more happiness. When you feel the cool breeze blowing, there is no end to happiness. Know the technique for deriving happiness from these simple things - from the dawn, the sunrise, the birds, the laughter of children, the beautiful blue sky, the white Clouds slowly sailing like majestic ships, little dancing

flowers. They can inspire you if only you know how to derive joy.

Learn to experience joy from the happiness of others. Instead of becoming envious, become filled with joy whenever you see others happy. Feel happy by beholding the happiness of others. Train yourself to derive happiness out of bringing happiness into the lives of others. Learn the technique of getting joy by making others joyful. Your happiness will multiply a thousand fold.

Learn to accept the experiences that come through life. There is no use fretting and fuming and making yourself miserable over them. Have calm and wise resignation. There is one Supreme Intelligence that is guiding the lives of men here and these experiences that come from that source, learn to accept like human beings. Endure the little troubles that come through life.

Be friendly to all. Do not give way to anger. Anger destroys happiness. Maintain rational restraint over the senses. Base your life upon virtue, truth and purity. Keep close to that great Inner Source of all happiness, all joy, all bliss. Love the Supreme. Practise the Divine Name. The Name of the Supreme and the Supreme are not two, they are one. If you have the Divine Name within you, you have the Supreme within you. This is Great Spiritual Truth. God bless you and may your life become radiant with joy.

Blessed Divinities! I wish to share with you one Bhajan, which is full of instructions, inspiration and great strength. It goes to the heart of the life that overcomes and triumphs over all obstacles, all trials and tribulations, everything. Its refrain is:

grVmam' grVmam' H {hE, Om{h {d{Y amlo am' Vm|h {d{Y a{hE &

The gist of the Bhajan is: "O man, in whatever state the Lord has placed you in secular life, be content. Be where God has placed you, and be full of inner serenity, inner joy. Never mind what your mind may say, what people may say. Know that all comes due to the supreme will of the Almighty; everything is in His hands.

In all conditions, at all times, amidst all experiences, in all trials and tribulations be serene, be powerful. Rejoice in the Lord knowing that you are safe in His hands. For He, the infinite goodness, love, compassion, justice, wisdom, can never do anything that is wrong, harmful or inimical to your highest welfare. Thus by accepting His dispensation for you, surrendering to that great Will, be at rest; keep on chanting His Name, glorify Him, praise Him; ever send your voice towards His throne.

Let your hands be always engaged in His service, let your tongue ceaselessly keep chanting His glorious, divine Name. Never think you are alone, abandoned, for it can never happen. For He is the all-pervading, indwelling Lord, who is ever by your side; you are never alone. Know this.

Knowing fully well that He is the dispenser of the destiny of all beings, just forbear. Success or failure, gain or loss, good or bad, whatever comes, endure knowing He is the supreme dispenser. Say, “His will is most acceptable to me.” Thus accept all conditions and dualities that fill the world and be at peace. In whatever way the Supreme Being has been pleased to keep you, O beloved pilgrim soul, be thou content with His dispensation, and rejoice in glorifying Him and chant His Name ever and ever.”

This is the quintessence of Prapatti Marga (the path of surrender) and Sharanagati Rahasya (the secret of surrender). God speed you and grant you success!

Radiant Immortal Atman! Beloved brethren in the divine and my very dear fellow citizens of Bharatavarsha! This disciple and servant of beloved and worshipful Guru Maharaj Swami Sivanandaji is very happy to be amidst you all and have this golden opportunity of serving you by this three days' sharing.

Peace is essentially an inner state of mind. Whatever is being shared is not so much only for knowing but also for practising. If you want to gain a certain tangible outcome from anything, you have to work for it. Then only results start coming. Science students have theory classes in chemistry, physics etc. But they also have to go into the laboratory where the theories are actually proved. It is practice that ultimately leads to results. And continuous practice makes the results a permanent gain. Otherwise they can come, and they can also go.

A journey is a continuous activity until the destination is reached. Even if you are very enthusiastic to reach a certain place, you start by taking steps. But if you stop in the middle, your gains will be limited to that particular point. In this connection, I would quote for you two sayings: one very, very ancient and the other ultra-modern. The ultra-modern saying is given to us by Guru Maharaj

Swami Sivanandaji. I say he is ultra-modern because he lived to see the first Russian sputnik go into orbit. He was here when the negative outcome of scientific technology resulted in snuffing out 25,000 lives in the mid-forties, the result of nuclear fission. He knew what such atomic energy was. He knew what a test-tube baby was. Gurudev's saying is, "What you know is to be put into practice". The immediate starting should not be postponed. The more you postpone a beneficial process, the more you deprive yourself of its fullest gains. When your action is going to bring about some good to you, you must set about doing it immediately. You must have a concern about your own highest good.

Just as our ancients said, "You must be conscious of your own good and you must work out your own good". Why? Because, if you are in a good condition, you will be able to be of maximum benefit to humanity. That is the highest utilisation of life.

Now, willy-nilly man has come to realise, that it is not enough to be good only to fellow human beings and to other creatures for the sake of compassion. Compassion is the great passion of the human heart, and it is necessary to be kind and protective to all forms of life. They have now discovered that the entire fabric of life is one single, homogeneous, interconnected phenomenon. It is a delicate structure, where everything else affects everything else. And so, we cannot isolate ourselves as human society and ride roughshod over other forms of life; even moss and other legions that grow in water and moist places, they are part of a delicate ecological system within which

everything supports everything. They have found that all life is One, all life is totally interdependent. You cannot harm one aspect of this life and get away with it. It will ultimately have a repercussion in some totally unexpected way, even upon your own life. We are all totally interdependent. Therefore, our beneficial attitude and activity towards all living beings has become a must. They call it Para Upakara.

The total evaluation of our life is by trying to make ourselves fit instruments for doing maximum good to the maximum number of creatures in the maximum number of ways that we can, at all times, at all places and until the very last breath. This is the good life, and we should not postpone. Gurudev, who was a very modern saint, gave us the dictum: D.I.N. Do it Now.

More than anything, the desire of modern man in this concluding decade of the 20th century is for Peace. People are tired of war, violence, hatred. All want Peace. Everyone is intensely hankering for Peace. When people are too much tormented by the environment with its pressure and all that, they want to go away somewhere. They go and spend the whole day in Dakshineshwar Temple and come back. Of course, this is an external method to enter into a state of temporary quiet. When they come back, they are in the same situation.

Sri Ramakrishna told a funny story, when someone asked him, "Thakur! If a bath in Gangaji absolves one from all sins, then everyone who takes bath would become freed from sin and he must be qualified for heaven?" Sri Ramakrishna said, "You see,

it is true. But then, just as you are intelligent, the other side also is intelligent. All the sins that are within a person become alert, ‘Oh! This man is going to take a dip in mother Ganga, we will all be destroyed.’ So as he starts going down the Ghat, they all get off and sit on a tree near the Ganga Ghat. They don’t want to be destroyed. So this man thinks he is destroying all the sins by taking his bath, doing some Mantra and Arghya. But he is in a fool’s paradise. After everything is over, cloth washed and squeezed and he comes back, as he goes under the tree all the sins once again get on his back and within him. So the sins do not leave him and therefore, Gangaji is not able to do anything because the sins are very clever.” Therefore, we have to try to take such practical steps that are not of a temporary nature. It should be like homoeopathy or naturopathy or even better.

This great country has had two supreme ideals for which it has always lived and worked. Unwritten history, beyond known human historical times, proves it. Written history also will prove it. The unwritten history is the spiritual history of Mother India. And written history knows in how many periods great rulers of India have come to realise that war and violence only lead to greater violence, and greater hostility and enmity are no solution to any human problem. On the contrary, they keep the problem intact and worsen it. More than 2500 years ago, the enlightened world teacher Tathagata Buddha declared, ‘*Not by hatred is hatred overcome, but by love hatred is overcome*’. And the realisation in a very terrible sanguinary form came to the great Emperor Ashoka who was like any other

king, very ambitious, wanting to conquer and expand his territory. And it was during the Kalinga war, when he invaded the Kalinga territory, and his powerful army annihilated the soldiers of the opposing forces. But the Kalinga people were a very brave race of people, and they went on fighting. When the soldiers were annihilated, the civilians started fighting. And when the civilian youths were also slaughtered, then Ashoka's commander-in-chief was aghast when he saw coming towards his army old people with sticks and behind them women and children. The soldiers could not proceed, they stopped fighting. Then he tells an emissary, "Ask them, what they have to do in this place? This is a battlefield. Why are they here? Tell them to go away." When the emissary went and asked the elders, "What are you doing? Why are you here?" The elders replied, "Tell your emperor, your army has slaughtered all our forces, all our youth, only we are left. Therefore we come to confront your army because there is no one else." When this information was taken to Emperor Ashoka he started pondering, "Ah! I have slaughtered the flower. Our soldiers have not only fought with soldiers, but they have slaughtered even the youth, and there is no young man left, only old people, women and children." Then the shocking realisation came, and it is said that the Dhauli River ran red at that time. He realised the horror of what he was doing, and he said, "Never again will Ashoka cross his borders to conquer other territories. If he goes, he will go as a friend and bring harmony. Enough! I shall expand the territory of my heart and not the territory of my dominion and power." Warrior Ashoka became

Dharma Ashoka. He took the Buddha Dharma for himself. So we have a tradition of a great Emperor whose empire covered the whole of India, the great empire of Ashoka. His edicts are found everywhere from far South until far North. So here we have the adoption of Shanti (Peace) as a political policy.

And the Jagadguru Sankaracharya of Dwarikapeeth in Gujarat said, "The name Bharatavarsha indicates that this is a country that has great love for Prakash, Jnana, light: light of wisdom, light of knowledge, light of highest Brahma Jnana. *Jyotishaam api tajjyoti tamash parama ucchyate* (That, the light of all lights, is said to be beyond darkness.) He said, "Many people say Bharatavarsha got the name from King Bharata. It is a land where the people are great lovers of light. 'Bha' means light and 'Ratah' means those who are engrossed in light. Therefore, the land where people have intense love for wisdom is Bharatavarsha." The culture of such people is Bharatiya Sanskriti. Our religion stems and originates from the mass of ancient wisdom, the Vedas. And the Vedas declare that attaining divine wisdom alone can liberate the human soul from this wheel of birth and death. All that the Jivatma is undergoing now, this Samsaric experience, is due to Ajnana, Avidya (ignorance). And the only solution is Vidya (knowledge). Darkness can go only through light. Therefore they insisted upon this truth that only the experience of that supreme principle, which is Kevala Jnana Swarupa (knowledge absolute), can liberate the human being from the state of bondage and Tapatraya (threefold afflictions). If we ponder our culture, our Satya

Sanatana Vaidika Dharma, we see that we have essentially been a wisdom-based and a wisdom-destined race, so you are all peace originating and peace destined beings. If there is one Tattva which is held far above all other values, it is Peace.

Our Upanishads start with the ultimate declaration: everything seen, heard, tasted, smelt or touched is only a temporary vanishing experience. This world is a great carnival of vanishing names and forms; they were not there before, and they will not last into the future. That which is eternal, without beginning, without end, is the ultimate reality and it is the Atma Tattva. And everything else exists, no one denies it. Even Sankaracharya did not deny its existence. But he said it exists only for the time being. Therefore you cannot rely upon it. It is Asat (unreal). Sat Tattva is something that persists in all the three periods of time — past, present and future — without the least alteration. You can rely upon it 101%. It never changes. That is the classical Vedantic definition of Sat (real) and everything else is Asat. Nothing comes up to this very clear-cut definition. When those who had turned away from the temporary rose into the direct experience of that great reality, they discovered that there is no word to describe it. But they discovered that it is profound peace— infinite, immeasurable peace! *Shanto Ayam Atma!* That Atman, that supreme non-dual principle, one without a second, called Brahman, is absolute peace. And where there is that absolute peace, there is supreme joy, supreme Bliss. Peace and Bliss are the obverse and reverse of the same coin. So those who are hankering for peace are actually in search of

happiness. Happiness is the ultimate quest of all life. Happiness can only exist in a state of absolute inner peace.

Thus, our great country long ago discovered that peace and bliss abide in that supreme reality, not in lesser things. Tyagaraja, the great saint and founder of Karnataka music and who has given innumerable compositions in Sanskrit, Telugu and Kanarese, sings, “There is no happiness without peace”. And in Geeta Jnana Upadesha, Bhagawan Sri Krishna very pertinently draws our attention to this particular truth, through a query, “*Oh Arjuna, ashantasya kutah sukham?*” (How can there be happiness for one who has no peace?)

Peace is absolutely necessary. If you are a slave to your senses, you cannot obtain peace. If you are self-controlled, you can obtain peace. If you fill your mind with innumerable desires and cravings, always wanting this and that, then you will always be agitated. The greater the multiplication of desires, the greater is the agitation of the mind. And therefore, one who has conquered desire, he has got the key to peace. Peace is the very centre of our culture. We all are peace oriented people. There is no Upanishad chanting, no Vedic chants or ceremony and no meditation upon the transcendental reality without Shanti Path. There is no Karma Kanda Kriya, no Jnana Kanda, Dhyaana, Upasana or Swadhyaya without chanting the Shanti Path: desiring for peace here, peace within the teacher, peace within the pupil, peace for his studies, peace for all life. They did affirm Peace for everyone, for the earth,

for the five elements, for the celestial spheres, for the supreme abode of Brahman also.

So we have this great tradition of commencing all activities by affirming Peace, Peace and Peace and concluding once again by affirming Shanti, Shanti Shantih. It gives an idea what supreme value they attached to Peace. Peace established in the heart and mind of the human individual makes possible harmonious relationships. In our approach to life, we give it a priority and we insist upon it, we constantly hold it in our mind and give it the highest value. This is what Bharatiya Sanskriti is, a culture filled with peace, with a great heritage founded on peace.

And in our immediate past, the one who lived by Peace, swore by peace, is our Rashtrapita Bapuji Pujya Mahatma Gandhiji. He is the giver of the Swatantra Bharata (Independent India) to us. He has become known as an apostle of peace throughout the world. He was a pacifist par excellence, and he brought this philosophy of peace even into politics. He had the courage of his conviction to say, "This doctrine of peace can also prevail effectively in the international field of relationship between all nations." He said that it is not something confined only to individuals, amongst the members of the family, amongst the members of the locality or different sectors of human society of a country, but even upon the international field peace can be practised, peace ought to be practised. If human beings are to live and grow as human beings and not to be human only in form and animal in their activities, peace is essential. If you leave the ideal of peace, the

whole world will be converted into a jungle of ferocious, fierce beasts of prey. That is actually what is happening. Ignoring this philosophy or not giving it the serious consideration that it fully merits in terms of human welfare and safety, has brought us to this point where we have everything, but we do not have peace, we have everything but we have no happiness.

And therefore, today's thesis brings your mind to focus upon one important thing. If an industrialist wants to put up a factory, he starts by first of all considering what he wants to manufacture, and then he sets about consulting experts about the different aspects of his project; and then little by little, they start implementing the carefully designed plans, and gradually the entire project begins to take shape. Similarly, if a man wants to grow an apple orchard, he carefully begins to plan, "I've got about 250 acres of land, how much water consumption will this entail, how many wells should I have and what type of irrigation should I make." Then, out of it, he slowly starts the orchard, but there are no fruits may be for two or three years. But he keeps on working towards that end, and ultimately the fruit does come, and it must come, and it does. Why? Because he has planned carefully, giving attention to all the details and worked it out in a scientific way. Now, we all want the fruit of peace. How many of us are carefully planning and making our life in such a way that its ultimate outcome will be peace?

So, desiring peace, are we trying to give it our full thought, "In what way should I order my life, my

character, my conduct, if I wish to have peace at home, peace with my wife and children, my parents, my brothers and sisters, peace in my neighbourhood, peace in the place of work where I have to go every day and spend eight hours." Is anyone doing this? If you're not doing it, you better set about thinking about peace in these practical terms. Simply desiring is of no use. A person may desire health, but he does everything that is contrary to health... Just as agriculture, horticulture is the culture which has to be done carefully, so for Peace also you have to work. Our life should be carefully planned, "What are the things that cause restlessness and peacelessness? How can I eliminate them?" You must create a peace oriented pattern of living. Give thought to it upon a very constructive manner, and if you put this into practice, then peace will come.

In this connection, I just give you three things to ponder. One is, whatever comes out of us, will come back to us. So one of the ways to obtain inner peace is to see that we do not disturb the inner peace of others. Nothing that we say and do should put people into agitation. No! If you behave in such a way that you destroy the peace of others, you cannot expect peace for yourself. Secondly, peace is an interior experience, and you should not allow yourself to react in an agitated manner to everything that comes to you, anything that someone says or does. You cannot control and change the world around you. But you are the master of your inner being. You can change yourself in such a way that you do not extremely react.

Thirdly, if there is any one thing in this world which exists in inexhaustible abundance, that is Peace! Peace is never absent. Peace is always present everywhere in inexhaustible abundance. Because Peace is the basis of everything. It is the only reality. Peace is the one and the only reality that IS. Do not be blind to this fact. If you go out in the summer, the one reality that is bright is the dazzling sun in the blue sky. So is peace in the inner life of the individual. Within ourselves is the source of inexhaustible Peace. Try to know the art and science of tapping it by connecting yourself with That.

Hari Om. Peace! Peace be unto all beings in this Universe and peace be unto you all and the joy of the indwelling presence of the divine. Hari Om Tat Sat!

Blessed Immortal Atman! Salutations to you all!

Every nation seems to be filled with restlessness, and the government of every nation seems to be confronted by numerous problems. They are not administering, they are wrestling with problems. And a great deal of manpower, time and resources are thus spent in this negative process. How many of these problems are really created by our own lack of thought and control over ourselves? That is something no one seems to be interested to research. Teams of researchers should go into the background of national problems and find out, "Is this problem really there? Or it has been created by our own lack of foresight and our great fault in not utilising the wisdom that is our birthright and heritage from our great past?" Every nation has inherited something very useful, something very precious. And if one fails to utilise it, then one deprives oneself of a great benefit. Perhaps it is this failure, perhaps it is wanton neglect and wanton rejection of our cultural heritage that is one of the causes for which nations pay a dear price.

We enter into the last decade of this 20th century. A century filled with much progress, much technological advancement and a miraculous transformation of things and places, but without a

corresponding transformation of man's nature. Man has lost his moorings because all his activities are governed by ambition and ego and not by ethical and moral principles and norms, which is a must. Human conduct should result in ennobling and elevating human nature and improving human conditions.

Today we have to take up the question of what exactly Peace is and why it is not experienced by modern man in spite of his possessing many desirable things. All problems, all situations have various solutions put forth by different thinkers and people concerned. But they seem to be temporary and palliative. The situation of problems and solutions has always been dealt with upon the outer plane of man's observation. He tries to see the nature of the problem as it appears and then starts to remedy the form of the problem and not the content. However, the underlying causes have to be searched for and identified. And it is the removal of the prime causes that constitute the ultimate solution to any problem of the human individual. We have a very nice word, 'Nirmoolam', and the corresponding word from Latin is 'eradication' ('radics' and Moolam both mean 'root'). The problem has to be uprooted. Otherwise, just like the Peepal trees that sprout on temple tops, roofs and terraces, however much you may cut it, it will go on sprouting; because the root is still there.

We concluded yesterday's talk by saying Peace is never absent, and it is inexhaustible. We live, move and have our being in immeasurable Peace. Peace is the one truth, the ever present reality. That profound Peace

is the ultimate discovery of that fraternity of heroic souls, who were not satisfied with this universe of temporary appearances. They found that the entire Universe and everything in it is just a carnival, anever-changing show of vanishing names and forms. Is there no permanent reality? Have all these things comeout of nothing? It did not seem logical that something could come out of nothing. And therefore, they pursued this quest. And they began to probe the mystery of the universe, of life and existence. Ultimately, our great ancestors and the spiritual fraternity of mystics all over the world declared the truth, "We have discovered that great Reality beyond human thought and intellect, behind this visible show of changing things, and that great Reality is Ananda, absolute Bliss. Or, it is indescribable, supreme Peace. *Anandam brahmeti vyajanat* (he understood Bliss as Brahman) *Shanto ayam Atma* (this Atman is absolute Peace).

Nothing can exist without this Adhishtana, this support. No forest, no mountain can exist without Mother Earth. Therefore, she is called Dharani. She is the support of all things that exists in this physical universe. Because of Earth, all mountains, rivers, forests, everything exists. Therefore, the Supreme Being as the protector and the preserver of all existence has two goddesses on either side. One is Sridevi - all aspects of prosperity and plenty without which life cannot flourish on earth, and therefore she is 'Sri'. The other is Bhudevi. Unless you have a stage, you cannot perform dramatic performances, dance recitals, musical recitals. The entire miracle of this universal life process is because of Bhudevi, and the Adhishtana

for this human world is Bhudevi. But the Adhishtana of everything, of countless millions of such universes is the supreme, imponderable reality, and that reality is Peace profound.

Then why is man in quest of Peace? How has man successfully deprived himself of this Peace? This is an interesting question. What has been created and by whom – that comes between you and ever present Peace?

Kabir says, “I am made to laugh seeing that fish are going thirsty in the waters.” *Machali ko pyaasa lagaa. Arey, koyi sunega to hasega. Asambhava baat hein ye.* (If anyone hears that a fish is thirsty, he would definitely laugh and say it is impossible.) So seeing this phenomenon of fish being thirsty, Kabir describes the human situation in these poetical words: ‘Strange! Fish going thirsty in waters? Looking at this, I am made to laugh.’

*Jala mein meena pyaasi
Dekha kabira aawata haasi*

This is our human situation.

Peace is not merely quiet. Peace is not merely absence of noise. Truth is a positive, living experience which is so powerful that nothing can touch or disturb the person who is established in that Peace. All disturbances will be like a line drawn upon the surface of water. The ocean is full to the brim, and innumerable rivers come and join it. But the ocean is not perturbed. Whereas, if a sudden rush of water comes into a

small pond or a well, they will become agitated and will overflow.

*Apuryamaanamachalapratishtham,
Samudramapah pravishanti yadvat
Tadvatkama yam pravishanti sarve,
Sa Shantimaapnoti na kamakami*

Lord Krishna says in the Gita, “Just as waters come from all directions and enter the ocean, and this ocean remains calm, in that same way, one whose heart is full because he has realised the foolishness of cluttering up his nature with innumerable desires for momentary things, such a person attains Peace.” Various desires seem to come into him; because when he is hungry, he will have the desire to have food, and when he is experiencing the heat of summer, may be he takes a fan; but if the fan is not available, he is not agitated.

Sa Shantimaapnoti na kamakami – Such a sage attains peace of mind but not the man who is full of desires. So a hint is given. Desire is the enemy of Peace. But desire is part of human nature. Our human nature is what it is, because of the mental faculty --- thinking, feeling and reasoning. This mental faculty constitutes the essence of human nature. And desire is one of the main functions of the mind. Due to the outgoing tendency, it becomes attracted by the outer glitter of the objects created in this Maya Bazaar. And desire goads the mind to go out and act in a manner that the desire is fulfilled. That being the case, man is desire. Desire is the root cause of restlessness.

But then, we have to carefully distinguish between three types of desires. We do not say that desire is the direct cause of lack of Peace. But desire disturbs the balance of the mind. Desire throws the mind into a state of restlessness. And in that state of restlessness, you cannot experience peace. To experience peace, you require a tranquil, serene state of the mental content. However, desires arising out of our physical nature: desire for rest, desire for comfort, desire for drinking to quench thirst, desire for eating to appease hunger, desire for getting rid of a painful condition, desire for heat in the biting cold of winter, desire for coolness in the torrid heat of summer - they are all the necessities of life itself, and you have to pay attention to them. Basically, they are neither good nor bad; they are neither ethical nor unethical. They are there. But then, if they should not disturb the peace of mind, they should not be exaggerated. They should be kept to the limit in which they have been made to be present by nature as such.

Secondly, there are desires generated by our vital nature. Biologically it is said that man is an animal. But this inner psyche is the seat of all desires. The moment a Jivatma is born as a human individual, it is automatically related as a child to mother and father, brothers and sisters, to uncles and aunts and to the grandparents. And as the individual grows, natural spontaneous desires arise relevant to these various human relationships. Of course, man has artificially multiplied them, like having a special diary where we jot down the birthday of each and every one, so all the 365 days you have to keep on sending greeting cards in

addition to the normal greeting periods of Basant Panchami, Dussera, Diwali, New Year and Christmas and what not!

To fulfil those legitimate desires has been given as a part of man's duties, and this particular duty gets the very significant name Kama. Manokamana means desire of the mind. Fulfilment of desires becomes a legitimate function of the human individual, arising from his connection with other individuals; and if one engages to fulfil these desires in a correct way, a way that does not contradict, all is well.

For example, Ratnakar desired to look after his wife and children. So no one had anything to say against this. But the method he employed to look after his family was to station himself at a strategic point in a lonely part of a forest, and when travellers were passing, to pounce upon them and break their head and take away all their possessions and out of that he ran his family. So he became a Paapi (sinner) because of the way in which he tried to fulfil a very legitimate desire. It is the Kartavya Karma (duty) of a Grihasthi (householder) to look after his wife and children. Therefore, desire is accepted as a part of human nature and the fulfilment of the desire is also accepted as a value, and the necessary exertion to discharge one's obligations and duties is also accepted. But the means should be in accordance with ethical conduct. Lord Krishna says, *Dharmaaviruddha bhuteshu kamosmi bharatarshabha*—“In beings, whose life is not in contrary to ethics, I am present as desire”. That means, “I am present as an auspicious desire, good desire,

proper desire". Therefore Mahatma Gandhiji laid such great emphasis upon means. We have made lot of progress, we have created wonders externally. But we have gone off the track because we have not accepted this important dictum that we should do everything only upon moral principles. Without the foundation of ethics and morality, action leads to chaos.

Now we come to the crux of why man has no peace! The third desire, the desire merely for the sake of sense-indulgence and petty pleasures, is the downfall of man. We have bid adieu to peace because we have the wrong notion that we are here to enjoy. Who gave this idea to the human brain? God only knows. Life is a long evolutionary process that is to steadily take the human individual higher and higher until he reaches the pinnacle point of absolute perfection and shines as a radiant being endowed with all that is auspicious, blessed and beautiful. That is our concept of life, no less, no more. Man has got the potential in him to shine with divinity because already he is a part of God. And in that part of his being, there is intense potentiality for everything: *Satyam*, *Shivam* and *Sundaram*. All that is beautiful and blessed and true, and life is given to you to work out that process. How fast or how slow is up to you, but work out you must. Otherwise you are flinging away this wonderful gift of life, and your prime purpose is mistaken to be enjoyment, rushing headlong into the pursuit of pleasure, accepting the hedonistic philosophy that we have come here to eat, drink and be merry. They argue very nicely (because intelligence is there), why has God created all these things if it is not for human beings to

enjoy? If you go into an art gallery, can you take all these things? You have to put your hands behind and enjoy it. Let the thing be there as it is. Who asked you not to enjoy? There are different levels of enjoyment. If you go to the botanical garden, you cannot enjoy by grabbing flowers. You enjoy it as God made it. When you see a beautiful rainbow or a beautiful sunset or sunrise, you enjoy it. You are elevated, but not because you have put it into your pocket. So, why don't you try to change your concept of enjoyment? If a beautiful thing is there, "All right! Let it be where it is, and I shall be happy for its presence in this creation". But man's concept of enjoyment is, "If I get it and taste it, then alone it is enjoyed. God has created it for me and it should not go waste. If other people are enjoying, I am not satisfied. Only if I enjoy it, then God's purpose is fulfilled". This very egoistic, very self-centred concept has made the human individual commit the blunder of thinking that, "I am here in order to enjoy things." So if you take a pleasure oriented approach to life, you have set up a factory of Ashanti (peacelessness). That is the root cause of all peacelessness. Because wherever you go, you turn a pauper. When you think, "I will get enjoyment and happiness out of it, you find that finite things are not capable of giving you happiness.

*Ye hi samsparshaja bhoga dukhayonaya eva te,
Aadhyantavantah Kaunteya na teshu ramate budhah*

Lord Krishna says in the Srimad Bhagavad-Gita, "A wise person never runs after these fleeting sense pleasures. They are the sources of suffering and sorrow. Therefore, don't go after it." But we are very

forgetful when it comes to wisdom. All other things we remember. We know this warning by Lord Krishna, but when we are confronted by sense pleasure and sense objects, the wisdom is not there. Mind forgets it and rushes after them and then....

Our ancient sages said, “Desire that has arisen in the mind of man can never be subdued by the satisfaction of the desire. On the contrary, the more you go on satisfying the desire, the more intense and fierce this fire starts burning within you. And when this fire of desire is burning within you, there can be no Shanti.” This is the third type of desire, neither legitimate due to your duties, nor arising due to the nature of your gross body. But it is the creation of the desire principle in the human being. And this desire principle, when it is merely directed to Bhoga (enjoyment), is the enemy of peace.

Now there is another important aspect of the source of Ashanti. If we consider the practical steps to inner peace, we have to find out the sources of what militates against peace. What robs us of our peace? Most people jump to the conclusion, “Our peace is disturbed and we are deprived of peace by other things, other people and situations”. The whole world is in turmoil. What is it to you? But you put everything into your head and become agitated. And also: “My mother-in-law is the main cause for my Ashanti”; my daughter-in-law, ever since she came into my house, I have lost my peace; why did my son bring this girl?”; “my brother is the main source of Ashanti”; “my neighbour is a terrible curse upon me, playing upon my

life”; “my superior boss is a terrible person. I’m quite all right at home. I have got a very good wife, nice children, but the moment I go to the office, finished. For eight hours a day, I go through hell.” And the boss will say, “Oh! I’ve got terrible staff. I cannot transfer them, I am helpless, and they simply plague me, they torture me.” So, the boss is tormented by the subordinates; the subordinates say that the boss is the cause of their restlessness. We always attribute our restlessness to something outside of us, situations, people and things. How much of this is true? How much of this requires a second look, requires a careful scrutiny?

Our ancients were very frank and very forthright. They said, “Look here! You have come here to this earth as a human individual for attaining something indescribable. It is the highest gain; greater than that, there is no other gain. Focus your attention upon That. And let us tell you, this world is a place of trouble. Don’t expect, don’t hope for anything here.” They have not concealed anything from us. They said, “Look here, you have come here as a result of certain causes you yourself have created. Every cause has an effect. That effect is inevitable and you have to face it and go through it. One dimension of your coming here is by your own actions. You have created causes; you have now to experience the effects. And while you are here, in order to work out this Karma, let us tell you, this is a place filled with poisonous creatures, parasites, germs, viruses and also wild beasts, bedbugs, mosquitoes, flies, and you have no real happiness here. Also natural calamities of the play of elements are beyond human control, we cannot do anything about it. Cyclones, tidal waves, torrential rains or famine, sudden fires,

epidemic wars. This is another kind of torment, and it is out of our control.

More than all these things you create your own torture from inside. That is Adhyatmika. You yourself are the cause of your restlessness. Your ego, your Abhimaan, your anger, your greed, your passion, your overwhelming ambition, jealousy, envy - Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada, Matsarya, Irshya, Trishna, these work havoc from within your own nature. They destroy your peace, they create restlessness; even in your dream they can torment you. These things we can attend to.

First of all, attend to the source of Ashanti in your own nature. Turn the gaze within. See how much of this absence of peace is due to your own foolishness, your lack of self-management or neglect of self culture. This is the field we shall enter tomorrow. To a great extent it is Svajanita - self-created. Upon the other two aspects of human suffering, we have not much control. But upon this, we have full control. And if only we recognise this inner source of restlessness and try to do something about it, in the midst of all cataclysms, in the midst of all other Tapatraya, we can pass through life serenely and with an iron strength and stability. Our peace is undisturbed. In the midst of a storm, like a rock, you can serenely pass through life. That is the main theme of many of our Scriptures also. And a very direct picture of it is given in the second chapter of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita which contains the quintessence of the entire wisdom of the Vedic religion. Because the entire wisdom is given in the Upanishads. All the 18 Puranas are only elaborate commentaries upon the Upanishads, and the Gita contains the quintessence of the Upnishadic wisdom. And in the second chapter of the Gita, the nature of one who is

established in that inner centre has been given to us by Lord Krishna. Mahatma Gandhiji took great delight in listening to this description every day until the very last day. It is the Stitha-Prajna Lakshana in the second chapter of the Srimad Bhagavad-Gita.

Peace be unto all. Peace is your birthright. You can claim it, and you can obtain it, right here and now, not in a post-mortem stage. So how to be established in that great Peace right now, as you are, in whatever situation you are, that will be our consideration tomorrow. When we have discussed the main causative factors of peace, it means we have already given a clear indication of what steps we have to take. That itself is something which can set your mind working in a positive manner. And tomorrow you may come with pad and pen. We will go down right from the very beginning into the practical steps of how to bring about that state of inner peace. Om. Hari Om Tat Sat!

Beloved Immortal Atman! Blessed children of the Divine!

Close to the portal to the Himalayan shrines, Gurudev settled down on the banks of Mother Ganga in 1923 and spent 10 years in deep meditation and Tapasya, and in 1936 he brought into being 'The Divine Life Society'. It is as a representative of that spiritual institution and in the sacred name of Guru Maharaj, that I am here to carry on this Jnana Yajna.

We were considering the theme of Peace, which seems to have become the most urgent need of global mankind. Forces all around us threaten in every way and seek to destroy the peace of the individual, of communities, of entire nations and upon the international scene also, despite earnest efforts of well-meaning people to preserve peace.

And it is strange to think, that only in the human world there is Ashanti, pervasive violence, conflicts, discord, clashes and conflicts. Whereas in the animal kingdom, the lifestyle and the conditions prevailing in their communities continue to be more or less as it was millennia before. What is the reason for this? Why is it so?

Someone said, “Man in the 20th century shines with the distinction of creating wonders as far as the ends are concerned, but is committing great blunders as far as means are concerned.” We ought to perhaps think, that due to this advancement in knowledge and having controlled Nature, made so many inventions, man must now be in a position to manage all his affairs in the most perfect way. There should be peaceful and cordial relationships between great countries, between sections of his own species and he should work in close coordination with others and bring about world welfare, common weal. But man has made a mess of global affairs. And he is not able to know what to do now. There is a very expressive expression in Sanskrit: *Kimkartavya mudhatvam* (being ignorant of what to do).

People are tired of war, people are tired of violence. Everyone wants Peace. And all can provide themselves with comforts and conveniences more than their necessities. Nevertheless, no one seems to be in a position to come up with a solution for getting absolute peace. The reason is not far to seek. It is twofold.

Firstly, man’s abilities, capacities and powers are being misdirected and misused.

Secondly, our ancients were themselves established in great peace. They had evolved a system of living which would succeed in bestowing peace to the individual. They studied deeply human nature, human life, human behaviour and saw very clearly what led to discord and disharmony, clash and conflicts. And they declared the knowledge that leads to peace and joy.

They formulated a certain system of life and gave us the concept of Dharma. They declared with firm conviction: “If you live your life in accordance with Dharma, we assure you that you will find peace. You will be in a position to give peace to others. You will be able to make peace prevail in this human world.” To that end, they gave us the concept of Dharma.

We have not realised the worth and necessity of Dharma. We think it is some old, outmoded concept of bygone prehistoric times. What is its relevance in these modern times? The whole world may change, there may be spectacular transformation of environment and life around us, but the basic unit, ‘man’, is still the same. His nature is what had been discovered long ago. And therefore, the concept of Dharma and the ethical and moral principles and laws are as valid as they were, maybe 10,000 or 20,000 years ago. And they will continue to be valid and relevant and necessary, even after tens of thousands of years. There are certain eternal values, certain unchanging truths about man and his life. Therefore, they gave us a way of life within the context of our Vedic religion which, if followed, would fulfil these principles, and the fruit of it would be Peace: peace to oneself, peace to others through ourselves and peace all over.

This is the area where we have to correct ourselves. It is our power of discrimination, Buddhi, that ought to know and tell us what is the right way and the right direction. And to this end we have to go to the Dharma Shastras. They are the accumulated wisdom of selfless sages, endowed with great love for entire life.

They were “*Sarva bhutahite ratah*” – constantly engaged in the welfare of all beings.

Sarvesham Svasti Bhavatu
Sarvesham Santih Bhavatu
Sarvesham Purnam Bhavatu
Sarvesham Mangalam Bhavatu

(May auspiciousness be unto all!
May peace be unto all!
May fullness be unto all!
May prosperity be unto all!)

“*Sarve bhavantu Sukhinah*
Sarve santu niramaya
Sarve bhadrani pashyantu
Ma kaschid dukhabhag bhavet

“May happiness be unto the whole world!
May all become happy.
Let no one be afflicted by diseases.
May everyone come across auspicious things.
Let no one be subject to pain, miseries and afflictions.

We have to recognise this value and see its relevance today and the indispensable necessity of applying it, if we wish to attain what we are seeking for.

The best guide to attain peace, inner peace is to observe your own life. Be aware and awake, and every day can bring to you many valuable lessons and pointers. You will grow in your knowledge of how to attain inner peace if you observe yourself. Each day will reveal to you what are the things that disturb your peace, what are the things that help you to retain peace

and perhaps enhance the peace that you already have within yourself. You will day by day become richer in your knowledge of the art of retaining inner peace. Upon the basis of the knowledge that you just obtained, formulate a certain philosophy of life. A philosophy of life is a must. Without a philosophy of life, you cannot hope to attain peace or happiness. We are most richly endowed as far as a proper philosophy of life is concerned. We must know our heritage and make it part of our life.

I give you two small examples. Gurudev used to say, "What is your Vedanta? So easily you are upset? When you give discourses, or when you discuss Vedanta, you say, 'Oh! Jagat Mithya'. Everything is a dream. Everything is temporary in time and space. Therefore, nothing is ultimately real. You quote Sankaracharya:

*"Shlokaardhena pravakshyami
Yaduktam granthakothibhi
Brahma Satyam, Jagan Mithya,
Jeevo Brahmaiva napara"*

(I shall tell you within the compass of half a verse the quintessence of the teachings expounded in innumerable scriptures and that is: Brahman alone is real. The world is unreal. Jiva is none other than Brahman.) And yet, for little silly things you become upset. When Jagat is Mithya, how can a Mithya Jagat upset a Vedantin like you? What is your lip Vedanta? Throw it away." Like that, Gurudev used to make fun of people who speak lofty Vedanta, but in small things, they do not live Vedanta. Gurudev used to say:

“Teen kaal mein Jagat Nahin, Daal mein namak nahin—
In all three times there is no world; in my Daal is no salt!” This is not what Vedanta was given to you as your rich cultural heritage. It is to be applied. You must be a practical Vedantin. What does it matter, if there is no salt in the Daal? Enjoy it. This is also a taste.

Supposing someone abuses you, calls you all sorts of names and in front of others also, your blood pressure rises, your entire biology becomes upset. What is this foolishness? Gurudev used to say, “Sound in the air”. Plenty of sound is going on all around you, produced by so many agencies, and this is also some sound in the air. Gurudev used to say, “If someone calls you a donkey, do you immediately sprout two big ears on your head? He is showing the level of his culture, he is lowering himself in the eyes of people. You are not going to be affected”. So Gurudev used to say, “Why don’t you apply this philosophy of life. If sound is coming in the air, why should you be upset? Dismiss it as nothing.” That is the test, whether your philosophy is real or just shallow? Have a philosophy of life!

Still higher, the supreme thing is what they call Ram Baan or Brahmastra (unfailing, divine weapons). If you invoke this, then there is no power on earth, nothing in this world that can ever disturb your inner peace. If someone is experiencing Ashanti and wanting to know what are the practical steps for inner peace, first of all, try to investigate whether that being really exists! They say, “There can be no headache without a head.” And if there is headache, you take it for granted

that there is a head. First of all, if you are experiencing Ashanti, try to find out, ‘to whom is this Ashanti’? It is for me. You have investigated and tried to know about everything in this universe, but you have never taken up a study of “Who am I?” And that was the main subject of study by our ancients. They pursued the study to its ultimate end and discovered that this being, who thinks he or she is going through the gamut of earthly experience, really does not exist. It is a dream of joy and sorrow and pain and pleasure. That being does not exist. Then, am I non-existent? No one says that you do not exist. Certainly, you do exist. As a matter of fact, you alone exist. But there is that shadow, a spurious impostor that has come into your consciousness, shoved you out and taken the central place and is ruling the roost. That impostor does not exist. That impostor is the experience of all so-called earthly experience. And that impostor is not you. Neither are you that silly little being who struts on the stage of earth playing “I. I. I.” That being is only one modification of the mind principle. That is, the ego of the transient human personality has no real valid existence. That is the quintessence of Vedanta. The ego principle ‘I’ has no real existence. Therefore, the entire range of experience—the so-called earthly experience—is really irrelevant. You exist. And your experience is always Paripurna. You are Sat Chit Ananda Atma. You shine eternally at the very centre of your Being. But, you have alienated yourself from that awareness. You have turned away from that consciousness and have entered into a lesser ego consciousness, entered into a false identity awareness. This is the commencement of

your Ashanti. This error is the root cause of all evil of man.

One great Anubhavi Vedanti, Bhole Baba, put it into a most telling verse in Hindi. It is one of the verses of his Vedanta Chhandavali:

*Isa deha ko mein manana
Sabse bada yaha paapa hein
Saba paapa iske putra hein,
Saba paapa kaa yaha baapa hein."*

Considering this body as 'I' is the greatest sin. It is the begetter of all other sins. Thus, this is the real original sin. Moving away from your radiant real nature and becoming involved in a temporary, ever-changing false identity, becoming identified with a body/mind complex which is of short duration, which did not exist previously, will not continue to exist, that is the great problem created by the Jivatma. It is the Jivatma. You as an Atma-Tattva are timeless, because you are a part and parcel of the Paramatma-Tattva, the Universal Soul. You are beginningless and endless. You never were not and never will you cease to be. You are always the same.

Naasato vidyate bhaavo naabhavo vidyate satah

The Sat IS. There is no Abhava for it at any time. And Asat, it never exists. You are the eternal Existence-Consciousness-Bliss principle of Paramatma. You are an Amsha of Sat-Chit-Ananda. You abide resplendently, gloriously in the centre of your being as that Sat-Chit-Ananda principle and that Sat-Chit-Ananda principle has been forgotten; you

have turned away and become involved in this false identity. That is the commencement of your earth experience.

How to correct it? That correcting is the Alpha and Omega of Vedantic Sadhana. And that is the most precious Truth that we have inherited as our cultural treasure. This spiritual process means disassociating yourself from the non-self and establishing your awareness in the centre where you are what you are; in that centre of consciousness where you are the Sat-Chit-Ananda-Atma, you abide firmly, and from that supreme vantage point you look upon what is going on as a calm, unaffected, witnessing consciousness, witnessing it but not affected by it.

Supposing you are on the seventh floor of high-rise building, and there is some rioting going on in the street far down below. Two groups have clashed and come to blows, and they are shooting and knives are flashing, something very terrible and fearful is happening. Supposing, you were on the street, what would have been your condition? But you are far removed from it and you are only a Sakshi-Chaitanya, you are witnessing awareness, knowing what is going on, but not directly involved and therefore not affected by it. This is your actual position within this little thing called your human status. The human personality is a framework in which you shine as *Shuddha Sakshi Chaitanya Kevala* (Non-dual Pure Witness Consciousness). You will be like a person who is sitting in a movie theatre, seeing some scenes going on upon the screen. You are allowing your emotions to have a little

enjoyment. But actually you are unaffected. You are comfortably seated, and all the things that are going on, no matter how very active and dynamic they are, they are not seriously affecting or upsetting you. You are only a witnessing awareness.

This entire earth phenomenon is actually such a cinema show or a carnival, unfolding before your eyes and many a time you have come and seen this and many a time you have gone back. And like you, hundreds or millions of people are witnessing this great show. But basically, you are something out of it. This is the truth. This is the central truth of life. And the credit goes to our ancients that they discovered it, experienced it and then expounded it in a very systematic manner. The reality was lost sight of and that which was only a temporary phenomenon was thought to be the only reality. They corrected this error, when they knew this Truth. And they have given us this great revelation, Anubhuti.

This is what we have got, we the children of Bharatiya, a nation that is a worshipper of Light or wisdom. This is the Ram Baana or the Brahmastra. If we refuse to identify ourselves with this spurious little 'I' personality and identify ourselves with what we really are, then Ashanti will become a thing of the past. You are yourself *Param Shanti Svarupa Atma*. You don't need anything at all. You are in a position to give Shanti to the whole world if it wishes to take it from you. This is the truth.

Now, this is the ultimate solution for being established in permanent inner peace. But until we

come to that state of spiritual consciousness, when we are still in a state of psychological consciousness, we know ourselves only as ‘so-and-so’, As long as you are fast asleep and you are dreaming, you know of no other reality except the dream experience. In the same way, when you are still bound up in this small human transitory personality consciousness, we have to take the temporary to be valid and give you a few pointers of how to reach that supreme state of your real consciousness. Upon that field, what are the practical steps to inner peace?

First and foremost, to know a little more about yourself is absolutely indispensable, “What part of this Ashanti is contributed by external factors and what part is being contributed by me. I am a manufacturer of Ashanti—not only to myself but to others also.” Therefore, first let us decide how much is self generated, *Svajanita Ashanti*. There we can do something; but for external factors that interfere with inner peace there is a limitation. Therefore, the very wise saying:

“Lord! Give me the strength to bear those things which are inevitable and cannot be changed. And give me the courage to change that which can be changed. And give me the wisdom to know the difference.”

And through this wisdom I realise that something is inevitable, and I accept it. That which is inevitable, let me accept it. Is it an abject surrender? No! I know that it is inevitable; therefore I shall not be affected by it. I shall conquer it by refusing to be affected by it. Therefore it is overcoming and attaining victory by

generating so much inner strength from within, and you have potential for infinite strength. Generating that already present inner strength and facing the inevitable bravely, that is the formula given by Lord Krishna. The world does not owe anything to any individual. And therefore Lord Krishna says,

*Maatraasparsaastu kaunteya sheetoshnasukhadukhadaah;
Aagamaapaayino'ntyaaas taamstitikshaswa bharata.*

The contacts of senses with objects, O son of Kunti, which cause heat and cold, pleasure and pain have a beginning and an end ; they are impermanent, bear them bravely, Bharata. This one thing, Titiksha (forbearance), you must develop. Refuse to react. Bear that which is inevitable. As a matter of fact, the state of absolute Ashanti, extreme agitation that Arjuna was in at the commencement of the Gita Jnana Upadesha, is something to which none of our states of agitation can compare. He was in absolute agony. He was being tortured and tormented, his whole mind was burning. And the opening Adesha (command) and Upadesha (teaching) of Bhagawan is,

Asochyaan anvasochastwam—“You are grieving for that which should not be grieved for.” And a little further He says:

Tasmaad aparihaarye'rthe na twam shochitum arhasi.—“Therefore, over the inevitable thou should not grieve.” That which cannot be changed, you have to bravely face; and you must refuse to react, refuse to be affected by it. We have to face life as it comes. Peace is something more precious.

One of the most prolific causes of the restlessness of the mind is too many desires and cravings. The more cravings and desires you have, the greater is the Ashanti. Therefore, simplify your life, and you will find yourself on the road to inner peace.

We have to move amongst people. All people affect us. There are four categories of people. People who are more than us in wealth, status, power, authority, learning, in so many ways; and the subordinate always feels nervous when he is confronting someone much higher. There are people of your own status. It is here that the spirit of envy, jealousy, competition comes and vitiates relationships. There are people less than you: less in age, in status, power, wealth, children, uneducated people and deformed people. And there is the fourth category, whose only occupation is doing evil. Otherwise they do not have an appetite for dinner. There are such people; they are part of life, just as scorpions and snakes and so many other poisonous creatures. Patanjali Maharishi said, "You have to move in a world filled with these kinds of people, and if you go on being agitated by your contacts with them, you lose your peace of mind." So he gave a formula. With those who are higher than you, develop an attitude of serenity. Cultivate a subtle state of equanimity and serenity. With those who are equals, do not have envy and jealousy and power of competition. Have a friendly attitude. If you both are trying for something, and that person succeeds and you fail, rejoice in it. What does it matter? He is my brother. I will not be vexed, I will rejoice! So, have a state of loving friendship. With those who are lesser, have a state of compassionate kind-

ness: for children, poorer people, illiterate people, inconsiderate people, sick people, weak people. And towards evil doers be indifferent, don't unnecessarily get agitated. So Patanjali said, with equanimity towards the higher ones, loving friendship towards your equals, compassion and kindness towards the lesser ones and indifference towards evil doers, you will retain your peace of mind.

Then, you cannot get rid of the ego by flying off into high Vedanta. Therefore, what is the alternative? Trim the ego! Make the ego Satvic. Let it be a humble, simple ego which does not want to assert itself and become big. Then 90% of Ashanti will go away. It is because this ego is arrogant and wants to dominate, that it is always agitated. Make the ego Sattvic, and make it completely humble and simple... The lesser the ego, the greater the peace of mind; the bigger the ego, the greater is Ashanti. It is in direct proportion. This is the principle, so act upon this principle.

Morning, noon and evening, set apart a little time to visualise the entire universe, all the worlds, and wish Peace for all. Wish peace for all from the bottom of your heart, from the very core of your being, wish peace for everyone. Gradually, peace will come to you. You will be established in peace.

*Yogastha kuru karmaani, Sangam tyaktva
dhananjaya.*

What a wonderful advice? Lord Krishna says, "You have to act here, carry on your Karma, but establish a constant inner connection with Me." That is Yoga. Establish a permanent connection with Me, and carry

on your activity. Connect yourself with God, who is the infinite ocean of inexhaustible Peace. As this connection develops, you will begin to experience peace. And do not keep any resentment or grudge in your heart; it will go on working and working like a canker and completely destroy your peace. It is not worthwhile. Even if you have been wronged, unjustly treated, it is inevitable. Human nature will feel hurt. But human nature is also intelligent and can say: "OK, now I am upset! But I can throw it away. I will no longer allow it to pollute my inner being. I will not keep this grudge." Then you will have peace. But, if you nurture and keep on this resentment, you will be your own enemy. Forgive and forget.

And then, practise the presence of God. Every atom of matter, every speck of space, within and without, every cell of your being, He fills with His presence, and He is absolute Peace, absolute Joy! Cultivate diligently this truth, this great divine fact of life. God IS in all His fullness, and in His wondrous peace He ever prevails within and without. If you have God, there is peace. If there is peace, you have God. God and peace are interchangeable terms.

And never entertain that green eyed monster of envy and jealousy within. Envy and jealousy are poison. They are the main enemies of inner peace. Another commonsense adage is: "If you want peace of mind, M.Y.O.B. Mind Your Own Business." We interfere too much, we think too much about others, keep on criticising others, finding fault, always agitating ourselves about what other people are doing.

Therefore, if you decide upon this principle, “I shall mind my own business”, immediately it will start paying dividends in terms of peace of mind.

As far as possible, try to be self-reliant. Don’t depend upon others for everything. Dependence is misery. Only when it is inevitable, you will have to depend upon others, when you are helpless. Self-reliance is the road to peace. Independence is the road to worry.

The habit of worry is one of the great enemies of peace. And worry never solves any problem. Worry makes you less efficient to solve problems. Therefore, worry is an inveterate bad habit of the mind. So, launch upon a systematic self culture to eliminate worry from your life. ‘How to stop worrying and start living’ is a very intelligent book written by Dale Carnegie. Take a look at that book. And through Vedanta, through intelligent self suggestion, get rid of vague phobias. Unnecessarily we are beset with so many fears. We must say, “No! When the situation which I fear comes, then I will face it.” ‘Do not cross the bridge before you come to it.’ Why unnecessarily live in a state of fear? These vague phobias should be got rid of; they are habits of the modern man.

And two important things Patanjali has said, “If you want to get rid of things that agitate your mind and make you Ashanta (restless), cultivate the practice of taking a focal point and fixing your attention upon it. It is called Ekatattva Abhyasa. As an external alternative to it, they cultivate in the West some interesting hobby and give all their attention to it. It may be gardening, it

may be photography, golf, but it should be creative and absorb your attention. Then Ashanti cannot touch you.

And without fail set apart two or three periods every day, and practice deep meditation. Meditation thus practised day after day will bring about a change in your entire psyche; it will make it so strong and so well established in a state of stability and peacefullness, that nothing can agitate you. So for Shanti, daily meditation without fail is a sure, effective and unfailing method.

These are the things I have been prompted to share with you. I am very happy for this occasion and very happy for your presence and patient hearing. I wish that you put it into practice. God bless you all. Peace be unto you, now and always and the awareness that you are yourself of the nature of profound Peace. Hari Om Tat Sat!