

GROWING INTO THE DIVINE

Swami Chidananda



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THE DIVINE**

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Sri Swami Chidananda



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1

BASICS OF INDIAN CULTURE¹

Beloved immortal Atman, radiant children of the Divine!

I pray to the Almighty Lord, who is present within us as the silent witness of all thoughts and feelings and as the silent witness beyond even our intellect. I pray to the Almighty Lord who is all-pervading Presence, who permeates the entire universe and countless millions of such universes as the very essence of all things, who pervades every speck of space and who dwells in every atom of matter. He is Sarvavyapi Tattva, the all-pervading Principle.

Ishavasyamidamsarvam yadkimchajagatyam jagat

All this, whatsoever moves in this universe (and those that move not) is indwelt or pervaded by the Lord. (Isha. Up.1)

I pray to Him that He may shower grace upon you all and grant you good health and long life, so that you may live a life of much Paropakara (doing good of others), much Lokaseva (service of people),

1 Talk given at M. R. Teachers Training College, Vijayanagaram

much Samaj-Kalyan (work for welfare of the society) and that this world may be benefited. By you creatures may be served and beings may become happy, attain peace and their welfare may be assured.

What is the quintessence of Bharatiyata, the life-breath of your country's culture? It is to live in order to benefit the world and that all beings may be happy.

You all know the story of Prahlada, the son of the demon king Hiranyakashipu. He was a child devotee. After much persecution, suffering and torment at last the Lord decides to appear and destroy his tormentor Hiranyakashipu. He comes as Narasimha Avatara out of the pillar and destroys Hiranyakashipu. After that He calls Prahlada: "O my beloved child! I am greatly pleased with your devotion. Due to your devotion for Me you have suffered a great deal. I want to give you a boon. Ask for a boon!"

Do you know the reply of Prahlada? He says: "I don't want anything. O Lord! Up till now by Your grace my heart has been free from all desires. I have no desire except to love You, to adore You, to worship You, to think of You, to chant Your name, to glorify You—except this I have no desire. But now, why do You ask me to desire something? Do You want to catch me once again in Your Maya? O Lord! Please do not put this idea of desiring

anything. When You have given me Your Darshan, when I have You, what else do I want?"

But the Lord presses Prahlada with great affection and says: "You must ask for something, I have come with the keen desire to grant you something."

Finally Prahlada, the child devotee, has to yield, and he says: "If You insist, then the only thing, O Lord, which I ask for is that the sufferings of all creatures may be removed. All may be happy. And wherever there are any creatures with any suffering, with any pain, with any sorrow, let them be relieved, let them be free from all suffering—that is the only thing I wish."

What a great wish from this child's heart!

Kamaye dukhataptanam praninam artinashanam

I wish that the suffering of all beings be completely removed.

This is India. This is Bharatiya Samskriti. This is what you have inherited from your ancient past. You did not inherit Coca Cola and all types of dancing and fashionable hairdressing. We are not to imitate these things which have no meaning and no value at all. If you want to imitate and follow anything, it is these great ideals and principles which you have inherited as the real treasure from the ancient past.

In this nuclear age man through his science and technology is ready to destroy this earth planet. At this time we are remembering Prahlada. We are remembering his sublime prayer to the Lord, 'I only desire that the sorrows and sufferings of all creatures may be removed'.

Do our educational institutions teach this sublime ideal to our children, does our syllabus set to our curriculum contain such sublime ideals, concepts and values? What is the highest value? Not what I get, but what I can give to others. 'What I get' every animal, bird, beast, insect, every creature may get. From morning to evening it is trying to get something for its nourishment and survival. What is the difference between man and animal? If man also is living a life only with the view to accumulate as many things as possible from this perishable world—if he is of the same view and approach, then in what way is he better than an animal?

God has given us the intellect to ponder such things. "Why have I come here? What is the meaning of human life? What is the purpose of my existence here?" It is not to grab and accumulate and to fight and quarrel and one day die and go away empty. After all what can you take when you go? By cheating and dishonesty and lies you accumulate things, do they come with you? It is what you have done to others that comes with you as your real wealth. Beyond death no wealth of

this world can follow you. But your deeds in a seed form, Karma Phala (the fruits of your deeds) will follow beyond death.

As you rub the sandalwood upon a stone, it wears itself out. But as it wears itself out it spreads its fragrance everywhere. In a short composition of his 'Verses addressed to the Mind' ('Manache Shloka' in Marathi) the divine Guru Samartha Ramdas, the great Guru of Chhatrapati Shivaji, says: "O mind! Let your body wear itself out like a piece of sandalwood in doing good to others. And in this process let your fragrance always remain in the memory of the people". That is a worthy life!

So I pray to the Lord, that he may endow you with health and strength, energy and long life in order to fulfil these ideals of Bharatavarsha: Paropakara, Lokahita—living for the good of all, the welfare of all, and the happiness of all.

It is true, no culture is perfect. Our great culture is a mixture of superstitions and sublime things. It is for us to sift out the added superstitions etc. imposed on our true culture. Reject them, and accept and apply in your life the sublime and great aspects of our cultural heritage. Wholesale rejection is irrational; it is an unscientific approach. If you are scientific, you must make a fair scrutiny of something before saying 'yes' or 'no' to it.

The life that is worth living is a life that is lived for others. That life, which is lived for oneself only, is not life; it is mere animal existence. I recall the bold words of Swami Vivekananda: "He lives, who lives for others. The rest are dead, even though living!"

Beloved citizens of Bharatavarsha! May the Lord grant you long life and good health, strength and energy, in order to be an ideal human being, with the desire to help and to benefit others and make them happy—knowing that no one is a stranger, no one is alien. In our country's culture a great discovery was made that all differences are only superficial; within the apparent difference there is universal unity. That universal unity is Divinity. They gave the analogy of a necklace of various types of beads, but all are held together by the same common string that goes through all the beads. There is a *sutra*:

*Eko Devah sarvabhuteshu gudhah
Sarvavyapi sarvabhutantarata
Karmadhyakshah sarvabhutadhipasa
Sakshi cheta kevalo nirgunashcha.*

The one God hidden in all beings, all-pervading, the inner Self of all beings, the ordainer of all deeds, who dwells in all beings, the witness, the knower, the only One, is devoid of qualities. (Svet. Up.-6.11)

He is beyond all qualities which qualify you—*Sattva* (purity; divine virtues), *Rajas* (the principle

of dynamism which generates passion, action and restlessness), *Tamas* (ignorance, darkness). *Sakshi cheta kevalo nirgunascha*—He is Consciousness, He is the Witness. That one Deva, that one divine Principle is common in all the beings. When we realize this unity, then we know that all existence is a single family. The calculation of small minds says 'this is mine and that is not mine'. But for people of a large heart, the entire world is their family. No one is other, no one is a stranger; all belong to me. With that universal love, with that feeling of universal brotherhood one must live a life of Maha-Paropakara (doing good to others in a great way). In that oneness you find joy. See that oneness, and find happiness in that oneness!

Our idea of happiness should not be: 'what can I get' but it should be: "How many people and creatures can I make happy?" This should be our view of happiness. If you are walking and you see a dried up plant, go and get some water and pour it on to the dried roots: "This plant was on fast, thirsty for water, and now it must be feeling happy." What a great joy!

*Atmavat sarvabhuteshu
treating all as one's own Self
Atmaupamyaena sarvatra*

to see everywhere likeness of the Self
(B.G-6.32)

To live for the happiness of others, and in that to find one's own happiness, this is Bharatiya Samskriti. God bless you all with health and long life to fulfil this great culture. After all, what is our concept of a superman? Not a great conqueror like Alexander or Hannibal. Our concept of a superman is one who has attained to that great state of Atmajnana, Brahmajnana and Vishwadrishti (Self-knowledge, knowledge of Brahman and universal view) and whoever intends only in doing good to others. That is the concept of the Bharatavarsha superman!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

2

ADDRESS TO TEACHERS²

Teachers have a privilege, a special function. They occupy a unique place, as they have the scope for moulding the future citizens of this country. For what you impart to the children in their class rooms as teachers, what you impart to the scholars, that will begin to make Samskaras and Vasanas in those young people. And you have therefore within you the possibility of either making or marring their life. You have the possibility of contributing for the future glory and welfare and progress of this great nation. You are not meant as teachers only to teach them some subject, you are meant to place before them an ideal, a certain example to follow. Your personalities, the way in which you conduct yourself as teachers in a classroom before your students is supposed to inspire them towards certain ideals and principles. This will have a greater impact upon them than what you write on the black board or what you read out of the syllabus text books—which will only last until the examinations are over. They only want to pass their examination. But what you are, how you

² Talk given at M. R. Teachers Training College, Vijayanagaram

conduct yourself before them, what they see in you, that is going to make a lasting impact upon them. You have to teach as Acharyas, like the teachers of ancient India who used to mould the personality of the students and impart moral and ethical principles to them.

This is not only a duty but also a privilege, because if you look at it with a creative view and if you are enthusiastic about it, you can have the thrilling adventure of preparing the future of India! I am questioning you: "Are any of you, who are studying in this Teachers' Training College, viewing your studies in this light, looking at your future in the way in which I am putting it before you—that you are entering into a great adventure of trying to prepare the India of tomorrow, the citizens of future Bharat?"

Yours is not merely a profession for earning your livelihood, for getting a monthly salary; not in these terms, but in terms of what you can do to them as one human being to another human being, what you can do to them as one son of Bharatavarsha to other children of Bharatavarsha. If you view your profession in this way, what a great good fortune and blessedness it is to be an Acharya for the children of the land of Ganga and Himalaya, this land of Dharma-Putra Yudhishtira, of Buddha Bhagavan, of Harishchandra! All those great ones shine as great stars in the firmament of human history.

They are shedding their light to inspire people to nobility and grandeur in life which they have attained by means of their virtue, their extraordinary righteousness and the tenacity with which they stuck to their principles even at the cost of great suffering!

Let this idea be in you: You are not undergoing this course in order to just make a living, but you are entering into an area of life which is filled with a vast scope for the noblest kind of service you can render to the nation.

After all what is the wealth of a nation? Not its forests and minerals and hydroelectricity; it is the people! And you have the scope to mould this most precious aspect of the country's wealth in the form of the young generation by imparting inspiration, idealism, great goals, sublime principles, lofty and noble ideals. This you must do.

You must not hide behind a lame excuse: "O Swamiji Maharaj, this is a secular State, we cannot teach any religion". Who asked you to teach religion? Teach idealism! Teach virtue! That is not religion. It is humanism, humanitarianism. Ask them to be noble. Ask them to be selfless. Ask them to be self-sacrificing. Ask them to be dynamic Karma Yogins, Paropakaris. There is no religion.

Teach your subject for forty minutes if your period is for forty-five minutes, and at the end of forty minutes close your book and tell the

scholars: "Your lesson is over, now I want to tell you something". And come carefully prepared to give them some wonderful inspiration, some life transforming ideas and thoughts. Come carefully prepared, even devote half an hour to it in your house, but give it in four or five minutes. Those last five minutes will be the most important part of your entire period, most invaluable and precious part of your entire teaching.

Day after day, if each teacher does this, and the children are exposed to five minutes at the end of each period to something grand, their life will be transformed. And after they leave school, they may forget all the lessons and other things you have taught, but they will never forget you, because you have made their life. You have lifted their life to a higher level and put them into a different plane of living. Till the last breath of their life they will be grateful to you. They will thank you, they will have real respect and regard for you. About such Acharyas the Upanishads say: *Acharya devo bhava* (Let your teacher be God unto you. Tait. Up. 1.11.2). After mother and father it is the teachers who make our lives sublime, give us vision and place before us some grand goal. They are worshipful, and they are verily expressions of God. *Acharya Devo Bhava* !

I pray to the Lord to bless you and grace you with good health and long life, not in order to wither away your energies in earning for petty

sense pleasures, but to use it for noble pursuits. Do not lead a selfish life or a life of sensual pleasures and indulgences like animals, but be real human beings. Be Manava! Live with feeling for all, and live with higher rationality. Ask yourself: "Whence have I come? Where have I to go? What is the meaning of life? What is the goal of life? Who am I?"

Make use of your capacity to think, feel and reason. Think in terms of the whole world being your family. Think in terms of Paropakara (doing good to others) and Lokaseva (service of people) and Samaja Kalyana (social welfare), Sarvabhutahita (welfare of all beings). And try to find out the real meaning of life. Why have you come as a human being to this earth plane? Understand through Vichara and Viveka (enquiry and discrimination) that you are divine:

"I am not this perishable cage of flesh and bones, I am not this fickle, restless, mind filled with Raga, Dvesha (likes and dislikes) Kama, Krodha (desire, anger), Ahamkara (egoism) and Svartha (selfishness). I am not even this little intellect which is limited in its scope. Different and distinct from body, mind and intellect, I am Immortal Soul—without birth and without death. Because Jivatma is a part of Paramatma, It is divine. Therefore, I must think divinely, feel, speak, live divinely. I must feel the spiritual quality, full of light, compassion, purity, truth,

wisdom—thus I must live." This is what your intellect must make you realise and recognise.

I pray to the Lord to bless all of you with good health and long life, with success, happiness and prosperity, so that through your life you may be benefactors of mankind. Then only you are a real Bharatiya and you will be worthy of calling yourself the successor of those ancient Rishis who lived an ideal life of Jnana. We have come as descendants from the line of these great sages, but you have to demonstrate it by your life.

How great is the need of good people in today's world! Everywhere hatred and violence and murder—how great is the need of good people! If you can mould the nature of people, so that they become worthy citizens of our nation of tomorrow, is there a greater function that you can fulfil?

This is brought out very clearly in the 16th chapter of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, which gives you the quintessence of the Upanishadic wisdom. And Swami Sivanandaji has put in his own inimitable way some of these virtues in the 'Song of Eighteen 'Ities'. If you are cultivating these virtues day by day, your life will be driven to a higher level, and you will achieve results in terms of human welfare and good.

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,
Practise 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 Eternity and Infinity,
You will behold unity in diversity,
You cannot attain this in the university.
You can attain this in the Forest Academy!*

Purity is the best practice, through which you can flower into an ideal human being. But then, our educational system is dry of this type of training; it is only subject-oriented, career-oriented and salary—job—oriented. Therefore, the students, having their true welfare in their hearts, must take up self-culture. They must build up character and attain all these great virtues by their own independent efforts. In the classroom and at home and in society they must try to cultivate these great virtues, and what the educational system lacks, they must make up. Therefore it is called self-culture. It is an independent cultivation of one's own personality and character. It is the one of all duties and responsibilities of every student, who is serious about his future career.

May God bless you. Try to become a true and ideal human being and be a blessing to this country presently as well as in the future, by your life and the living of your life in the society.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

3

WHAT IS YOGA?

Yoga is harmonising all aspects of your personality. Yoga is harmonising body and mind, harmonising Prana and mind, Prana and body, and harmonising your physical and your psychological nature with your spiritual nature through meditation. Thus your harmonised body becomes a fit instrument to be utilised for the higher Yoga, by which you harmonise yourself with the Cosmic Being and bring about a living connection with that Supreme Being. Once you are harmonised with the Supreme Being, you move from unreality to Reality. You move from the darkness and slumber of spiritual ignorance into the Divine Wisdom Light. And by rising above the body-consciousness and entering into the state of God-consciousness, which is your true nature, you liberate yourself from the shackles of the bondage, death and fear, and attain Immortality and Liberation. The ultimate goal of Yoga is the state of fearlessness, freedom and Immortality through divine perfection, through spiritual illumination. Physical Yoga is the basis, the entry point through which you enter into the higher reality, unto the highest Experience.

You don't have to do anything which you don't want to do. You must have the backbone and courage of your convictions. Maintain the health given to you by Yoga, and utilise that health to effectively discharge the responsibilities and duties to your family, to your dependents, to your neighbours, to your society, your city and to your country. So the value and the significance of health is a means to fulfill duties and render service. Otherwise health has no meaning. Yoga is for Paropakara, to fulfill this great ideal of Bharat Varsha.

Secondly, Yoga is in order that through such stamina and steadiness obtained by Yoga you exercise self-control. With will power, generated through Yoga, you are able to conquer your senses, your mind, and you are able to keep your desires and cravings under restraint and be moderate in all things that you do. Through the control of the senses and mind, you will be able to purposefully direct the mind towards an ideal life, higher principles and ideals and towards meditation, towards God, towards meditating upon the almighty God, the Supreme Being.

Thus Yoga is utilised for these two great ideals—dedicating one's life for the welfare of people and attaining the Supreme Being. And if the ultimate purpose and objective of Yoga is well grasped and understood, you will succeed in your life. If you are able to manage yourself, control

your senses, be moderate in all things, then Gita promises that Yoga will become the destroyer of all pain, sufferings and sorrow.

*Yuktaharaviharasya yuktacheshtasya karmasu
Yuktaswapnavabodhasya yogo bhavati
duhkhah*

(B.G-6.17)

Yoga becomes the destroyer of pain for him who is moderate in eating and recreation (such as walking, etc.), who is moderate in exertion in actions, who is moderate in sleep and wakefulness.

Also, Yoga can give you the ability to rise to higher awareness, to do the right thing, at the right time, in the right way. Thus all your action will become productive of maximum results in whatever field you are to function.

Yogah karmasu kaushalam (B.G-2.50)

Yoga is skill in action.

There is another definition of Yoga—Yoga is the restraint of the mind stuff. It is a technical definition.

Yogaschittavrittinirodhah

Yoga is the control of thought-waves in the mind. Patanjali Yoga Sutras (1.2) But the social definition is *Yogah Karmasu Kaushalam*. If you don't have proper control over yourself, you become upset. You are subject to moods and tantrums. Your mental stability is lost. You have

no peace, and if you have no peace, you cannot give peace to others. If you have no peace, you cannot have happiness. Therefore Yoga brings to you the necessary strength and ability to be stable in your interior.

Samatvam yoga uchyate (B.G-2.48)

Evenness of mind is called Yoga.

Meditation is a must. The more you are connected with the Divine, the more divinity flows into you and gradually transforms you into a noble specimen of humanity. Gradually you move towards Him, the Divine Consciousness. For that meditation, concentration and control of mind are necessary; for that will power and stability are necessary. Surya Namaskara and Pranayama impart to you control over the senses, the strength to curb the desires, the ability to restrain your restless mind. Daily meditation brings you closer and closer, draws you nearer and nearer to that great Being. That is the sum and substance of religion.

What is religion after all? Religion is man's approach towards God, man moving towards God. Religion is the ascent of the human being towards the Divine.

I pray to the Almighty Lord and to my holy master Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj that through their divine grace and their benedictions you will be able to keep a steady and progressive

exploration into this great field of the science of integral self-culture, which ultimately culminates in divine perfection and benediction.

Lokah samastah sukhino bhavantu

Lokah samastah sukhino bhavantu

Lokah samastah sukhino bhavantu

Om Shanti Shanti Shantih

4

GROWING INTO THE DIVINE³

Blessed children of the Divine Mother! Radiant Immortal Souls!

There is a Law: That which you wish to realise, that you must become. Only then can you enter into it and rise into an experience of it. If the waters of the ocean aspire to rise and sail free as clouds, they have to lose their grossness and transform into vapour.

The entire process of spiritual life is based upon this immutable law. The anatomy and the practice of spiritual life is a progressive transformation of the human into the Divine in all its parts. If this transformation is being gradually but steadily worked out within you—within your consciousness, heart, mind, thoughts and feelings—then everything becomes attuned and your spiritual life progresses. Everything is alright no matter what outward form it takes.

The essential thing is the inner transformation—growing into the likeness of the Divine. Your nature should renounce and transform itself step-by-step from the human

³ Talk given on 26-9-69

nature into the shining divine nature. "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect."

To approach God, one should divest oneself of all that is not of God! So it is a process of shedding and progressing into a state of simplicity. It is said: "Empty thyself". But of what? Of thyself! Empty thyself of all that which involves the 'I'. Then the God-nature shall prevail within you. It shall fill you.

Here is a simple analogy: Going to the operation table, no one is allowed with his normal dress and shoes. He has to wear sterilised dress, mask, gloves and foot-coverings. Similarly, any guest at a formal banquet will have to adhere to the dress-code; and if someone turns up in another dress, he is politely refused entry!

Even so, to enter into the divine realm, we cannot retain anything of a contrary nature. Our being must not contain anything that does not harmonise with Divinity. Living in the full awareness of this fact is the great inner secret of spiritual life and God-realisation. And this can also be seen in nature. The old is discarded and new is created. If you want to grow flowers, you must first remove the thorns, brambles, stones and gravel from the soil, then break up that soil, feed it and only then plant new seeds in it. It is apparent therefore, that one must remove everything which does not harmonise with that into which one wishes to transform oneself.

But the gross aspects of our undivine nature are not so easy to remove. And as we progress, we will find that if one aspect is removed, it persists somewhere else; and then one must start the cleansing process afresh at an inner dimension! The process of cleansing, renouncing and discarding goes on together with the process of filling yourself with different aspects of the divine nature. Both processes are simultaneously kept up. It is not as though you become a completely different being at the very beginning of Sadhana—casting away all that is undivine—with a new character of perfect truth and self-control (Brahmacharya). No, it is not thus. This purifying process goes on simultaneously until the moment of Self-realisation—and there, too, you have to discard something!

God helps the seeker in various ways. He gives us occasions to take a good look at ourselves, to realise what is to be discarded, to bring out something which is standing in the way of our attaining Him, or He brings the light through someone else. God does this in His compassion and love, in order to make His beloved devotee perfectly fit, so that He may reveal Himself to him—even as the old vision was removed from Arjuna and a new vision was given to him so that he could behold the Lord.

In Hindu philosophy, the Divine Mother is both Avidya and Vidya. She is present not only as

darkness, ignorance and non-perception, but She is an emanation of the Divine. As Avidya, She makes us forget our real nature. But as Vidya, She Herself creates in us all the conditions for our transformation. She manifests in us the various aspects of Her Divine nature, thus transforming us into Divinity and bringing us face-to-face with divine experience. She is not only the cosmic enchantress, but also the great liberator. Glory be to the Divine Mother!

I shall conclude with a little verse of wisdom, which gives the moral and ethical aspect of this great spiritual truth on the outer plane of our earthly life:

'They are indeed the foremost of beings, the ideal ones, who enlist themselves in working for the welfare of others without thinking of their own selfish interests.'

'They are the middling type of beings, who engage themselves in doing good to others insofar as it does not affect their own self-interest.'

'They are veritably demons in human form, who for the sake of their self-interest go out and destroy the welfare of others.'

Thus, the highest among the entire race of beings is in the form of persons who, renouncing self-interest, walk the path of virtue. Offering one's own wealth for the common benefit of

universal weal and collective progress of mankind
is the principle upon which God's Plan unfolds.

Hari Om Tat Sat!



As you rub the sandalwood upon a stone, it wears itself out. But as it wears itself out it spreads its fragrance everywhere. In a short composition of his ‘Verses addressed to the Mind’ (‘Manache Shloka’ in Marathi) the divine Guru Samartha Ramdas, the great Guru of Chhatrapati Shivaji, says: “O mind! Let your body wear itself out like a piece of sandalwood in doing good to others. And in this process let your fragrance always remain in the memory of the people”. That is a worthy life!

Swami Chidananda



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