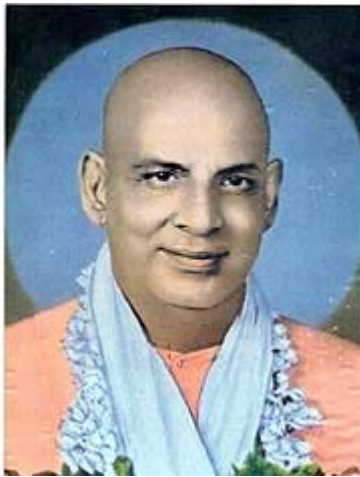


# Silver Bright Mornings

## *Five Inspirational Talks*

*By*

**Sri Swami Chidananda**



**Sri Swami Sivananda**  
**Founder of**  
**The Divine Life Society**



**SERVE, LOVE, GIVE,**  
**PURIFY, MEDITATE,**  
**REALIZE**

**So Says**  
**Sri Swami Sivananda**



**Sri Swami Chidananda**

A collection of inspirational talks given at a year-ending  
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GURUDEV SIVANANDA

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# YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS IS LIKE A RIVER

December 28, 1985

Your consciousness, your awareness of existing as a person, is like a river. The Supreme Being is your be-all and end-all, your wealth of wealths, your greatest, richest treasure beside which there is no other treasure, the fulfillment of all your desires, longings, and aspirations, your total satisfaction and your greatest good. That Supreme Being is the reason for your existence, is your beginning, middle, and end, light of lights, beauty of beauties, sweeter than the sweetest, nearer than the near, dearer than anything we may think of as being dear, to Whom you belong and Who is verily your very own. That Supreme Being, Who is Bliss Absolute, Peace Absolute, Wisdom Consciousness Absolute, is like unto the ocean.

When the river flows as a river it is led, confined and bound between two banks, therefore, necessarily it is limited in space. It has its other limitations, too, of depth and width. Many times it is curved, stopped and dammed, diverted and channelized and lifted and put to work. It can dry up if anything happens to its source. It can be polluted also. Therefore it is qualified. It has limitations. But in spite of all these limitations, the wonderful thing about the river is that its very existence means the steady, ceaseless onward flow towards the ocean. A river is a river because it is a thing that flows towards the ocean. Even as it has a source, it has an apex where it meets and enters into the ocean and finds its fulfillment. It is its entry into the ocean that puts an end to its limitations. No more is it bound by banks on either side, no more is it limited in its depth, no more is it restricted by any other factors. It attains vastness, it attains an unfathomable and immeasurable depth and grandeur. That ceaseless flow now becomes a Being. It leaves its “riveness” and puts an end to its limitations and enters into the vastness and immeasurability of its being. It has no more the necessity of flowing. It just has to BE in all its grandeur, its depth, in its limitless boundlessness.

Your consciousness, therefore, is meant to reach that vast boundless, immeasurable, grand Consciousness: the ocean that is the Reality, that is supreme, luminous, illumined Consciousness, the ocean that is bliss absolute, the ocean that is peace profound. That is life.

That you may not miss your direction and forget the great consummation and fulfillment that awaits your life, that the flow of the stream of your life may not get bound up by any obstruction, dam or confinement nor get lost and dried up in some desert of illusion or delusion, of craving or of self-forgetfulness, but that the stream of your life may steadily pursue its destined course and firmly adhere to its right direction so that every day that passes sees you nearing that great and grand and glorious ocean of Satchidananda, that supreme cosmic source and origin of your being, the ancient men of wisdom, out of their infinite love and compassion for all beings, laid down the need to each day set the direction of the stream of your individual consciousness towards this goal supreme. They wisely set down means and methods so that your life-stream ever may move towards the ocean, towards fulfillment, consummation, and the glorious attainment of the supreme aim and objective of your existence.

These means and methods overall, in a general term, are referred to as “worship”. Worship is turning our vision towards that Supreme Being, the great Reality: God, Brahman, the Tao, Ahura Mazda, Yahweh, the Father in Heaven, Allah, Eka Omkar. It is turning our vision towards that

## YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS IS LIKE A RIVER

Supreme Being in Whose direction the sages would have us face and move, towards that one non-dual Being, the One and Only Great Reality referred to by various terms and given various names. Turning towards that Great Reality and initiating a movement towards It is the main purpose of worship. Suited to the stage of evolution and state of spiritual awakening of different individual souls, the ancients formulated varied techniques, all aimed at this one purpose only; that of turning your thoughts to the eternal and permanent, to the all-perfect, all-full Reality, and of initiating a movement towards that Great Reality. Because individual seeking souls are in different stages of spiritual awakening and evolution, a single method would be inadequate to meet the needs of one and all. But it was necessary that there should be a suitable method for each and every being. Therefore, wisely the ancient sages created this diversity which contained within itself a fundamental unity. All methods have but one purpose. Though the process may outwardly vary, the inner objective is identical: to direct our consciousness towards the Supreme Reality.

Formal worship includes the lighting of candles, waving of incense, offering of flowers, genuflection before God, kneeling and kissing the ground, glorifying Him with psalms and hymns of praise, praying, saying the rosary, repeating His divine Name, reading divine texts that describe and glorify Him and tell you of your relationship to Him, and finally, of entering into the inner silence, gathering up all the divine strands of thought and feeling, purifying them and focusing them upon the Great Reality within through contemplation, interior recollection, and prayer. This initiating of a steady, unbroken stream of God-thought within the depths of your inner being and gathering the sentiments, thoughts and intellect and dwelling only upon that Supreme Being is meditation. Even as there may be many methods according to context and background, even so all the varied processes ultimately are to lead to meditation. They constitute meditation in different forms and in different degrees of intensity, but the objective and the aim is identical. That is to direct your consciousness towards the eternal Reality, which is the goal of your existence, and to initiate a purposeful, loving movement of your consciousness towards that Great Being.

Meditation is this movement fully internalized, this movement taken from the outside into the inside, having no more outer movement. It becomes a process that is supraphysical, that is totally lifted up to the level of the mind and intellect so that it attains a degree of subtlety that goes beyond external ritual, formal ceremonial, and outer manifestation and becomes completely interior; silent, wordless. But essentially it is that same movement which is inwardly present even in the most preliminary of methods which constitute overall the process of worship. When man moves towards his divine source and destiny, he is worshipping that Great Reality. Meditation is the ultimate supreme process where the seeking soul leaves the body aside and does not involve it in any movement or process and goes into the interior, higher region of the mind. When thinking comes within, is intensified and made subtle, even the mind is transcended and meditation becomes the attainment of a state of consciousness where you are aware only of the Divine Reality and you hold onto that subtle state of inner awareness and perception.

You are fortunate that you are gathered here during the last remaining days of the concluding old year to collectively come together day after day, morning after morning, to initiate this movement towards Divine Consciousness, and to experience this movement towards transcending all limitations, of liberating yourselves from all bondage and of entering into a state of illimitable freedom; of Divine Awareness. You are fortunate. It would not be at all out of the way to regard this retreat as a continuing initiation into a state of consciousness that should characterize

## FIVE INSPIRATIONAL TALKS

your interior in all the days to come. You are setting your sights as it were towards the vision of the Supreme Being. You are giving the interior of your mind a new direction. You are giving a different, undivided, truth-filled direction to the stream of your thoughts. Let, therefore, this morning meditation mean to you not merely an item in the program of this retreat for the time being, to conclude upon the first of January. But, on the contrary, let this morning meditation be for you the commencement of the purposeful movement of your consciousness, the commencement of a determined, ceaseless, persevering flow of the river of your consciousness towards that great ocean of Satchidananda. That alone is the one thing worth doing in life. That alone IS real life. Meditation is the central purpose of your existence. Meditation is the true meaning of life in the correct sense of the term. It is the flow of your finite life into infinite, eternal life in the Atman. Thus grasp the right significance and implication of meditation and what it means to you. It is not merely a practice or a picnic or a process, but rather it is the essence of your being. IT IS LIFE ITSELF. When you rightly meditate and when you rightly grasp the implication of meditation, then your entire life is a meditation. When you make your life an earnest, continuous flow towards God-consciousness and higher God-experience, then as you do, life itself becomes a continuous process of meditation. Meditation becomes inseparable from your life. As it is true that when you meditate then alone you live, and otherwise you merely exist, it is equally true that when you rightly live, verily you are meditating. Life and meditation to the spiritually perceptive cannot be separated. To one with right spiritual perception and understanding of life, these two are inseparable.

Let us meditate. Remember that you are a river of consciousness going towards the ocean of infinite Divine Consciousness. This flow through life, when rightly understood and properly grasped, is meditation.

Peace. Peace. Peace be unto all beings in this universe. Peace be unto you all, and the joy of moving towards the Supreme Reality, the joy of moving towards Satchidananda and the joy of ever flowing onward to the ocean of Infinite Divine Bliss. Peace and joy to you, and peace and joy to all in and through you. May that be your life.

God has given you a nice day to meditate and to remember Him, to think about Him, to give thanks to Him, to praise and glorify Him, and to live for Him.

OM OM OM OM OM OM OM

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## CALL TO BLISS

December 29, 1985

Beloved, Immortal Atman! Blessed pilgrim souls upon the ascending path leading to the supreme destination of spiritual illumination, upon the inner radiant path leading to Divine perfection and Self-realization, pilgrims upon this sacred journey that takes you to liberation and everlasting bliss and blessedness. It is a radiant day, dedicated to the Supreme Being, that Light of Lights beyond all darkness, to the infinite and spontaneous grace of the Divine Who has drawn us all together into His presence at this sacred center of Yoga and Vedanta and spiritual living, dedicated to our beloved and worshipful Master Swami Sivananda who came amidst human beings in this 20th century to spiritually awaken all mankind to his supreme divine destiny and to call man back to his eternal spiritual abode from whence he has come into the earth plane in this embodied condition.

As we are drawn into the presence of the Universal Being and into this bond of spiritual fellowship, it was the privilege given to me yesterday to point out that the sum and substance of all spiritual life, the central-most process in all spiritual practice, the quintessence of all Yoga and Vedanta is what constituted the initiation and carrying on perseveringly of the upward movement into the Divine Reality.

What is spiritual life? It is the commencing of the return journey home to our eternal abode. What is spiritual life? It is the transformation of our life into a Godward movement. What is Yoga and spiritual practice? It is the recognition of our eternal inseparable relationship with the Supreme Divine Reality which is the source and sustainer of countless billions of universes that come and go in it like waves and bubbles and ripples which rise and vanish again into the vastness of the ocean. Even so, countless billions of galaxies and universes in eternity keep on emerging and lasting for awhile and dissolving back into that vast inponderable ocean of timeless existence, into that eternal Being Whom we call THAT. Because we do not know what it is, we call it "TAT". Om Tat Sat. It is that ever-existing Consciousness. It is that I AM. Yahweh. Spiritual life is therefore the recollection of our eternal inseparable relationship with that Being which is the origin and end of countless billions of universes throughout eternity. And having recognized this relationship, we see the senselessness and meaninglessness of this momentary little period in the body-bound existence upon planet Earth. We see its pettiness and its absolute worthlessness, yet also recognize its value in that it constitutes a golden chance, an opportunity not to be missed, by which we can once again link ourselves with and enter into conscious experience of that vastness and grandeur, that inponderable glory and greatness that is the Spirit, that is Brahman, that is Atman.

Thus we have a love-hate relationship with this life; a dual, paradoxical relationship. On the one hand, the awakened pilgrim soul realizes the futility, meaninglessness and absolute absurdity of this flash in the pan of momentary earth existence. But simultaneously, if endowed with spiritual discrimination and if lucky to have been blessed by God and the saints and their wisdom teachings, we become aware that this meaningless, empty earthbound existence CAN be filled with meaning if it can be seen as a means to a supreme consummation, to a supreme goal and purpose. Then the meaningless becomes meaningful, the purposeless becomes filled with purpose, the futile becomes fruitful, the petty becomes precious. Then we catch hold of life with both our hands and grasp it and

## FIVE INSPIRATIONAL TALKS

put it to the highest use. We convert it into the process of Yoga, into a flight into the infinite. We convert it into a determined ascent into God-experience. We transform life into an upward soaring, high up to the vast imperium of Cosmic Consciousness. That then becomes to us a great adventure, a wonderful occasion, an opportunity not to be missed of transcending once and for all the limitations and imperfections that constitute this petty, finite earthbound condition of planetary life. That which is worthless becomes worthy of careful attention, wise direction, persevering application, and spiritual cultivation, so that you may reap a golden harvest. You are fortunate to see life thus, not as something that ends in death, but as something that leads to immortality. This is your blessing.

We saw that in this life if we perceive the supreme goal and engage ourselves in such exercises of our faculties and of our physical body, mind and feelings that initiate this process, it will lead to our original pristine, glorious state of abidance in the supreme Satchidananda. It restores our fullest experience and realization of our eternal abidance in that state of infinite bliss and peace. That becomes real life. It becomes the fulfillment of our being, and the true application of life, which is the mission granted to each individual pilgrim soul.

We therefore saw that at the heart-center of all spiritual life, practices and aspiration, no matter from what tradition it springs, whether from the Vedic religion or Zoroastrian or Judaic or Christian or Islamic or Sikhism or any other faith, at its heart-center, spiritual life means movement towards the Divine, terminating in Divine experience, spiritual illumination and liberation. Seen thus, all the different techniques and practices have but this one objective: to direct our consciousness towards the Divine, to focus our attention, to lift up our thoughts, to channelize our emotions and feelings, and to apply our reason in that one direction towards God-experience, of Brahmic realization, and to know that we are living in God and that God lives in us as our own Self. In as much as that during the week in this spiritual retreat we are all here together with this one purpose of gathering ourselves and focusing our entire being upon God in the direction of the great ideal of God-realization, then this entire sadhana camp constitutes an ongoing initiation of our consciousness into the purposeful process of moving towards the Divine. Thus, I drew your attention to the fact that this is a very significant retreat since it comes at the dawn of a new year and at the conclusion of this current year. Therefore it might well be an initiation indicating the way in which we should direct our consciousness when the new year dawns. How in the new year our life-stream should proceed, ever intent upon that one goal of God-realization, and how through the year we should look at it as a fresh opportunity given to us to renew this upward ascent of spirit into illumination and liberation and to renew the purposeful flowing of the stream of our consciousness towards the ocean of Satchidananda. Let us understand and grasp the significance of this spiritual retreat from this angle and ingather all our faculties at this moment and direct our entire interior towards the Supreme Presence within, towards that Supreme Reality.

Compose yourselves and assume your meditation posture. Keep your body straight and motionless, but totally relaxed and restful. OM OM OM.

Today's message from Master's last teaching before he ascended from the body on the 14th of July 1963 is from the work he was engaged in which was published after his mahasamadhi, ELIXIR DIVINE (p. 16. para. 15):



## CALL TO BLISS

*“Renounce what is earthly if you wish to attain what is eternal. There is no greater treasure than contentment. There is no greater virtue than truthfulness. There is no greater bliss than the bliss of the soul. There is no better friend than Atman, your own inner Self. Man is a bridge between the two worlds: the visible and the invisible. Who is a Bhagavata? The devotee of the Lord, for a Bhagavata is one who has the vision of God. What is the external nature? External nature is the handiwork of God, the Art Divine. Scientists unite the world with their inventions, politicians separate it with their prejudices. Detach gradually from earthly delights and dwell in the constant bliss within.”*

This comprises the essence of what I was trying to explain yesterday. That the great call of the UPANISHADS to the life spiritual is not as a spoilsport or a killjoy, but on the contrary, it is a call to be wise. It is a call to throw away petty things and to opt for the highest and the best and the greatest. It is a call to stop being foolish and shortsighted, and instead to have vision and be wise. Be prepared to brush aside petty, momentary pleasant sensations so that you may go straight to the heights of that incomparable supreme bliss. It is a positive call to a powerful experience. Nor is it a negative request for you to refrain from doing something. *“Detach gradually from earthly delights and dwell in the constant bliss within.”* It is a call to bliss.

*“A sage’s look is a spiritual fire that burns away impurities within. Be patient with others but be impatient with yourself. Tolerate imperfections in others but do not tolerate imperfections in yourself. God reveals Himself in different ways in different stages of spiritual evolution. This earthly bondage has its foundation and basis in your own mind. The elimination of the little ego is the sole condition for Self-realization. Renunciation of ego is the real Self. Ego is the ignorant idea that “I am This” and it has to be replaced with “I am Bliss.”*

You see, breakfast, lunch, afternoon coffee-break and dinner may all be different meals, but there is one feast where the menu is the same: the feast of “Anandham Brahma”. So enjoy the taste of Anandham for breakfast, Anandham for lunch, Anandham for tea and Anandham for dinner. Always taste Anandham. And for this, no cooking is necessary!

OM OM OM OM OM OM OM

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## **THE PRAYER OF ST. FRANCIS: A BLUEPRINT FOR LIFE**

December 29, 1985 (p.m.)

Blessed Lord of love, grace and compassion, Father of all mankind, Ocean of peace. Make me an instrument of Thy peace. Where there is hatred, let me bring love; Where there is anger and injury, let me bring pardon; Where there is doubt, let me bring faith; where there is despair, let me bring hope; Where there is conflict, let me bring unity; Where there is discord, let me bring harmony; Where there is darkness, let me bring light; Where there is sadness, let me bring joy. Oh Divine Master, I do not so much seek to be understood by others, but rather to understand others. I do not seek so much to be consoled, but rather to console others. I do not seek so much to be loved, but rather to love others. For it is in giving that one truly receives, for it is in consoling others that one receives consolation, for it is in pardoning others that one is pardoned, for it is in dying to this little self that one attains to everlasting life. Amen.

Beloved children of the Divine, Radiant Divinities, sadhaks and spiritual seekers, devotees of the Lord, you are gathered together here, drawn by His divine all-loving will for your own highest welfare, drawn into His presence through His spontaneous, motiveless grace upon this third day of our year-ending and year-commencing spiritual retreat which straddles the old year soon to be rung out and the new year soon to be rung in, drawn into His presence and into this spiritual fellowship here in this satsang.

Let us consider how our most beloved, esteemed and venerable St. Francis of Assisi is providing for us through his simple prayer the entire framework within which to engage ourselves in earnest and sincere spiritual practices. His prayer provides the ideal framework of the appropriate and indispensable field in which to engage ourselves in serious spiritual sadhana, worship, adoration, concentration, meditation, Yoga, Vedanta and prayer. This inner spiritual life requires a field and a framework which is supportive to it, which is favorable and helpful to it. A framework which perhaps is adverse and antagonistic would stand as a bar and if not as a bar as an obstacle and if not as an obstacle as a hampering, delaying factor in the smooth progress of your sadhana and Yoga. As we pursue our quest and engage in sadhana, perform Yoga and follow and practice Vedanta, we have to live. The quality of our life and the living of it has a direct relevance to the progress and success of the pursuit of our spiritual quest. Your spiritual sadhana, your worship, your contemplation, your adoration, your prayers and your meditation all seek to transform your consciousness into a likeness of the divine ideal. In order to transform your consciousness into holiness, into Godliness, into Divinity, it is but rational and logical common sense that your daily life be in the same context in which your spiritual life is lived and pursued. It is necessary and stands to reason that your daily life should also contain in all its movements and details such similar factors and tendencies and activities that serve to work for this same inner transformation. It also should be oriented to be helpful to bring about the same upliftment and purification, the same holiness, Godliness, and Divinity even as you move among your fellow beings in your daily vocation, within the field of your own domestic center, within your neighborhood; as you move among fellow beings in society, in social activities and among your own colleagues and co-workers in the professional field where you work to support yourself and make your livelihood. These activities in your professional field, social circle, domestic sphere and in your neighborhood should be of the same quality as your sadhana, your Yoga and spiritual practices in order to bring about the gradual

upward ascent of spirit and to affect the gradual sanctification of your consciousness, making it holy, Godly and Divine. This same quality should shine forth as friendliness, compassion, kindness, goodwill, sympathy and understanding, as well as the desire to serve others, to relieve sorrow and suffering, to bring joy to others, to try to console and understand, to love and help others. The putting forth of such sublime, noble and spiritual qualities is referred to in the 16th chapter of the SRIMAD BHAGAVADGITA. The exercise and active expression and living manifestation of these purifying, uplifting, transforming qualities will only be possible through self-denial, through the readiness to renounce selfishness and self-centeredness and the readiness to accept a certain amount of discomfort and inconvenience. There must be a certain amount of renunciation of your own views and desires, and in your own small way to say, "Not mine, dear Lord, Thy will be done." One has to forego self-satisfaction if you wish to exercise the subtle virtues of forgiveness, sympathy, understanding, unselfishness, and helpfulness. One must serve others and give of time and energy in order to bring solace, happiness, consolation, hope and encouragement to those who are in need. And these are many and are to be found everywhere. Therefore, renunciation of self becomes the one great sadhana which is indispensable in moving towards Divinity.

The simple prayer of St. Francis of Assisi provides for us a mold in which to cast our own life's conduct and character. It provides a blueprint upon which to pattern our living in our thoughts, speech and actions within our day to day relationships with our fellow beings and with all life around us. Therefore the prayer of St. Francis is a precious document for us, an indispensable, invaluable frame of reference by which to judge our own lives, and referring to which we can do the necessary to bring about the needed alterations and modifications for the upliftment and purification of our own daily life. For everything in this world of man which we wish to have has a price upon it. The greater the value and worth of that which we wish to have, naturally the greater the price which you should be willing to pay to make it your own. When the thing which you wish to have is THE GREATEST, what you have to do does not need to be described. You can very well understand yourself. Suffice it to say that no price should be considered too much to pay for that supreme attainment. Jesus referred to it as the "pearl of surpassing price." Once you know its worth and value, you will do what the man in the parable did; he went home and sold everything that he had, his house, car, TV, radio, property, stocks and bonds, business (and maybe even his wife's jewelry) because he wanted to possess that which is priceless. So he thought no sacrifice was too great a price to pay. He sold everything and quickly bought the "pearl of surpassing price".

You are not asked to do such a drastic thing, although in classical spiritual history that was what was demanded. When the rich young man who was living a very moral life and fulfilling all the commandments and doing charity wanted the highest supreme goal of liberation and salvation and wished to follow Jesus and asked His teaching, Jesus said, "Go. It is good that you have led a good life and done charity, but now one thing remains. You are possessed by too many things that you possess. Therefore go sell all that you have and distribute it among the poor and then come and follow me". So this is the classical demand of the spiritual ideal. Jesus says, "Become like me. I have no home. I have no property. I have no place to lie down and sleep at night. One day here and one day there, so I have no table where I can sit and eat. Where God sends food, there I eat. The foxes have holes, the birds have nests, but the Son of Man has not even a stone upon which to lay his head and rest". Jesus invites the rich young man to "become like me". So His was an extreme and drastic demand. Much time has passed and things have changed until today. The spiritual masters of

this century have come to understand the problems of man in the context of the changed situation which prevails today. So they say, “All right, we do not ask for a drastic change in your life, but a certain amount of self-denial, sacrifice, and a willingness to set aside your own personal will and submit to the dictates of the Higher Will becomes indispensable and inevitable”.

St. Francis of Assisi has given us that simple formula to fulfill which at least we must willingly and joyfully do the necessary self-sacrifice. The denial of ourselves in the context of each one’s personal life is necessary in order to be able to truly respond to the call spiritual, in order to transform our day to day life into an ideal field and framework for the unhampered progression of our spiritual aspirations and spiritual practices and for the smooth progress of sadhana and Vedanta. St. Francis has put the entire human race into a deep debt of gratitude by providing this formula, this ideal blueprint of how our outer life upon the secular field among our fellow human beings and the rest of God’s creation should be, so that it may become a supportive factor in the overall life of our God-quest. It becomes a complimentary factor in our movement towards the Divine, which is our real life. It commences with a simple code of conduct and gradually develops into an ethical standard of life, and ultimately emerges as the spiritual ideal of seeking nothing, but of giving everything, and of dying to live. “They who will court life, they will lose it. They who will die to themselves, they will attain life”. This is a cryptic saying of the Master Jesus, but it reveals a great truth.

Thus we have in the simple prayer of St. Francis a rare insight into the relevance of the outer life to one’s inner spiritual unfoldment. It is a precious document, the golden key to success in sadhana and the fruitful attainment of one’s spiritual aims, objectives and goal. Let us understand its real significance, worth, and value to us. We cannot separate and isolate our sadhana from what we are and what we are engaged in doing. They are linked together. Hence the importance of this most vital pattern for our life.

Peace be unto you all, and the joy of the Lord dwelling as the light of lights beyond all darkness in the chambers of your heart. He is your eternal companion. Rejoice in Him. HARI OM TAT SAT. God bless you.

OM OM OM OM OM OM OM

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## **DON'T HIDE YOUR LIGHT UNDER A BUSHEL**

December 30, 1985

A wonderful good morning to you all on this beautiful Silver Bright Morning! We wish you a really bright and very, very happy, healthy New Year. We are moving towards it. May the Lord bless you.

Radiant Divinities in the form of beloved seekers after God, Radiant Divinities in the form of beloved sadhaks participating in this precious gift of God, in this precious invitation of God to draw near to Him, to gather around Him, and to abide in Him, a gift in the form of this year-end spiritual fellowship; a retreat rightly organized by the Yoga Sadhana Mandir, having as its central purpose to offer the scope for a period of sustained Yoga sadhana and satsang. It is a retreat especially arranged so that collective Yoga sadhana may be performed in the company of devotees and fellow sadhaks, spiritual aspirants aspiring for a higher life, aspiring for Divine experience, aspiring for spiritual enlightenment and aspiring ultimately for liberation. This spiritual retreat is therefore a gift of God, a gift from beloved and worshipful Holy Master, beloved Gurudev Swami Sivananda who is the inspiration and the invisible helping force behind the YSM. It is also a gift from the Yoga Sadhana Mandir to all sincere brethren of Gurudev's spiritual family and to others too. It is a Christmas/New Year gift from the YSM. I am happy to be a part of this gift. Maybe I am the cherry on top of the ice-cream, or the raisin within the cookie? I am happy to play my role. I am also thankful, for without ice-cream there can be no cherry on top, and without a cookie, there can be no raisin in it! It is because of your participation and presence that our contribution and service is possible. Because of your eagerness, spiritual hunger and aspiration, this is a successful retreat. Therefore, a family of spiritual seekers associating themselves with a certain spiritual set-up like the Yoga Sadhana Mandir are important and indispensable for the effective functioning and successful fulfillment of the objective for which it stands. It is the support and applause of the audience that makes the orator put forth his very best. It is the appreciation and support of the audience which makes the virtuoso give of his very top talent. So it is the support and help, the love and cooperation and participation of a family of spiritual seekers that makes a center of spirituality shine with great brightness and function with much benefit to all.

Tomorrow will be the final day of this year. May you enter into it with a meditative state of inner being. Thus we seal the old year in a meditative state and open unsealed and enter into the New Year in a similar meditative state, proclaiming and affirming thereby that "meditation will be the main essence of my life". When you are meditating, you are being true to yourself. When you are not meditating, you cease to be yourself. Meditation is the active expression of your essential being. You are Satchidananda Atman. Meditation is raising your consciousness into the state of Satchidananda Awareness. When you do not maintain the Satchidananda Consciousness within, you forget yourself, and your consciousness takes the form of something or other of this external universe. It takes the form of some person, some thing, some experience, some event, some occurrence, some situation, or some sense object. It is always in a conditioned state, in a state of something which by its very nature is not truly real, and which by its very nature is a momentary appearance in eternity, a passing appearance in time. It is a flash, an unstable, ever-changing appearance at that, ever subject to change and to mutation. Therefore any thing, any person, any condition, any situation, any experience, any sense object which modifies your mind and makes

you assume its condition and form pulls down the mind into a finite lower state of being, conditioned in time and space. It forcefully brings down the mind into a state of name and form modification, into a state of “ragadvesha”. Because when you think of anything in this universe, that thought is occupied either by attraction or by aversion, love or hate, yes or no, by reception or rejection. Because mind already has relationships to everything in this world through experience, through samskaras, through vasanas, through latent specific tendencies and impressions, saying “yes” or “no” to things. It is not in its natural unqualified, unmodified state. It is always in an unnatural, modified state, taken out of its natural condition and spontaneity and into this externalized, objectively modified condition of the psyche. You are no more in a state of meditation, but are drawn away, taken away from and deprived of the meditative state.

In this state of modification of your inner being, meditation is lost. Your true Self, Satchidananda Consciousness, is forgotten. Therefore you enter into pain, suffering, distress, discontentment, dissatisfaction, and into a state of insufficiency, of lack and want. Naturally this engenders desire, which further throws the mind into a state of restlessness. It is a vicious circle. Objectification of the mind by its thinking of any subject in this created universe brings it down into a state of limitation, into a state of finite condition, dominated by the sense of time, space and change, and fills it with various feelings, all directly related to the object into which it is modified. In that state of unnaturalness, mind becomes the field for the play of a variety of human psychological conditions which are alien to you. You have no condition. You have no psychological state. You are Pure Consciousness. You are Satchidananda. Bliss is your natural state, profound peace and fullness. A state where you lack nothing, where you want nothing, where you need nothing, because it is a state of absolute fullness. That being your natural state, there is no modification, no conditioning, no restlessness. Meditation alone recaptures and restores to you your natural state. Meditation alone brings your consciousness back into that unmodified, unqualified, natural state which is the essence of Pure Being. That is why duality does not enter into that state. There is neither good nor bad, right nor wrong, here nor there, this nor that, attraction nor aversion, like nor dislike. There are none of the opposing dualities. There is only a state of perfect equilibrium, balance, equipoise; a perfect state of peace that is joy.

Meditation is therefore your natural condition and it is only right and proper to make this year culminate in a state of meditation. Let the New Year dawn in a state of meditation by affirming that in this year, “I shall ever abide in a state of meditation. I shall always be Self-aware. I shall always inwardly abide in my center where there is peace and joy and perfection, where there is “I” beyond time and space, where there is only the pure “I” without birth or death, in the “I” which is ever rooted in God and ever abides in the eternal, which ever has its being in the Universal Consciousness, in Cosmic Spirit”. God gave you that light within which is meant to shine and to radiate light.

Peggy Rude presented Swami with a light and a bottle of lamp oil as a Christmas gift. If the lamp oil remains in its bottle only and the lamp remains in its box, the present would be no present. It is as good as not having been given. But when we exercise a little intelligence and use our grey matter, we will find out how it works. We will open the lamp and the oil and pour the oil into the lamp. Then it becomes a present truly given and the light shines. Now it has fulfilled its mission. It shines before the altar of the Divine Child, at the feet of the Master. It shines before all of you in this holy and sacred prayer room in this spiritual gathering.

## DON'T HIDE YOUR LIGHT UNDER A BUSHEL

So should your radiant Atmic nature ever shine within you and through you. It is meant to shine and to cast its radiance in all directions. Illuminate your inner being and bring brightness out all around you so that you move as a center of light, in a circle of light, and you bring light into the lives of those with whom Karma brings you into contact. That is why that great light abides in you, not to be forgotten, neglected, and shoved into a corner and ignored. That would be the greatest ingratitude and lack of appreciation for what God has showered upon you. That would be great shortsightedness and blindness. It would be a pity if we fail to realize the worth of what has been put into us as our very being, the worth of our own true Self, and instead go about here and there after petty pleasures, desires and sense experiences, little consolations and satisfactions.

Thomas à Kempis has a very significant chapter during the course of his admonitions in his *THE IMITATION OF CHRIST*. He says by renunciation of all earthly consolation and comfort we seek consolation of our confused psyches like children seeking the feeding bottle. Once upon a time they would seek their mother, but nowadays mother is not available for their comfort and solace, rather it is in a formula in a feeding bottle. So when the child feels forlorn, isolated and neglected, it seeks comfort in the bottle. That is what modern human society is doing. It seeks comfort in things and not in divine, heavenly manna. It tries to milk the cow of the material world only to find that the cow has run dry, and so it has invented a robot mother and it seeks solace and comfort from its own creation. Just as a physician gives a placebo to a hypochondriac patient who always thinks that he has some illness or another, so the doctor prescribes something to make the patient feel alright. What is it? Sugar and powdered milk rolled into a pill! It is a wonderful remedy, a cure-all. So we keep our box of these pills and pop one into our mouth in order to feel wonderful. Thomas à Kempis says this is folly. This way will lead us nowhere. This way will even deprive us of the greatest solace, joy, happiness and comfort that we can get from the Most High. "My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, but this my peace shall abide with you for all time". The comfort, solace, consolation and the joy of the Supreme is the only real joy, comfort and solace as we go through the stormy seas of this earthly world existence. But discarding it, ignoring it, man seeks for solace, comfort, happiness and satisfaction in poor, petty, insufficient things which are themselves inadequate by their very finite nature. So man fails to obtain what he is seeking.

Meditation corrects this error and restores our center of comfort and of joy supreme. The center of eternal satisfaction is yours. It is within your own being. This should be made to manifest itself in all its glory. In a very significant admonition, the Master Jesus says this is what you have to do. People do not light a candle and hide it under a bushel, but rather they keep it on a high place so that it may cast its radiance in all directions of the compass so that people may see it and be guided by it when they are walking along the way in the darkness. Then they will know a sense of direction. It can be a guiding light to countless beings. Therefore, its rightful place is where it can be seen and can cast its radiance, so it can be of use and benefit to others. That is the fulfillment of the purpose of the light. You are that light. Meditation is the awakening into full radiance of that subdued light which burns dim when it is not attended.

But why did Jesus use the term "bushel"? Bushel is a container in which grain was measured. It was a household article used everywhere. No house was without a bushel. Because in those times there was no industrial revolution, no mechanization. Technology had not started. By and large the people were either nomadic or agrarian, shepherds or farmers. They reared cattle and sheep or they tilled the soil. They sowed and reaped. Life was close to nature. If they had to spin and

weave, they did it at home. So a bushel was a must. If you wished to sell or purchase grain, a bushel basket was necessary. But why should a bushel be used to cover a lamp? There were other better vessels. A bushel was necessary to measure grain and if you turned it over a lighted lamp it would gather soot on the bottom and make it smelly and dirty, so no one would think of using a bushel. A bucket was even more indispensable for water. The bucket was necessary not only to draw water, but also to store water. They had jars and pitchers; huge ones into which a man could jump and be concealed (like those in which the thief of Baghdad and Ali Baba concealed themselves). What I mean to say is that there were many better vessels handy to put over a lamp. Why then a bushel, which was meant for better things? Jesus did not use unnecessary words. He spoke in symbols, parables, analogies. “Leave your net, even the fish you have caught in the net. I will make you a better fisherman; a fisherman of men”, He tells one of His disciples-to-be. So when Jesus used the word “bushel”, He meant to convey something.

The lamp stands for your higher nature: the Divinity which you are. You are meant to shine. You are meant to be radiant. This radiance is kept bright and ever-glowing only through daily meditation. The Master says we should not cover this lamp and hide this radiance. It was not meant to be treated thus. On the contrary, it was meant to be raised aloft. It was meant to be revealed so that all may be benefited by its rays. Therefore do not hide it.

A bushel stands for this physical body whose greatest affliction is the never-ending hunger that keeps you constantly on the non-stop treadmill of this life’s compulsory secular activity. This physical body effectively and completely covers over the light shining within, the radiance of your divine nature. Totally identified with the body and involved in this physical sheath, consciousness is brought down to a level where it loses its pristine grandeur and radiance. So you must overcome this identity with the body. You have to disassociate yourself from the gross physical personality consciousness and raise your consciousness to a higher state through meditation.

A bushel also stands for trade; for barter, for buying and selling. It stands for this earthbound activity in the midst of “things”, which are the important commodity. It stands for the marketplace, for money, for accumulation, for greed. We have sold out to this mess of potage, to this economic-oriented life of dollars, rupees, pounds and yen, the stock market; “mammon”, in short. The guru of Swami Vivekananda, Sri Ramakrishna Bhagawan, summed it up in a single word: “kanchana maya” (gold). So the bushel also stands for this aspect of life of buying and selling. That is the mode of the mind.

Hunger and food involved in this physical body consciousness is one thing which the bushel signifies and the other significance of the bushel is upon the mental level of man’s desire for worldly goods and wealth. Our ever being involved and occupied and centered in the business of obtaining, accumulating, possessing and enjoying the goods of this earth, not knowing that they are a series of ciphers, and that without a digit these non-digits have no value. It is only when a digit is put to the left of them that these non-digits assume value. Zero becomes 10 or 100, but it is by the mere fact of a single digit being put in its proximity that it attains value. Three non-digits acquire the value of 1000, and they have the power to make 10,000, 1000,000 or a million. Why? All because of the addition of a digit. Master Jesus tried to bring this idea home. He said all these things shall then be added unto you. Worry not. Seek that Supreme Digit, that one value, and then all these things will automatically be added unto you. Why do you doubt? I tell you that is the greatest of the great.



## DON'T HIDE YOUR LIGHT UNDER A BUSHEL

Attain that, for if you do not attain that, you will be burdened with a whole heap of ciphers, of non-digits.

There was a shipwreck and many people drowned. Lifeboats were lowered and children and women were rowed away. There was a merchant who was very greedy. He was traveling with a consignment of gold. His heart was wrenched when the captain bellowed, "Abandon ship!", for his heart was in the gold. What could he do? He could not lift all the gold in his box because it was too heavy. So he grabbed what he could. "Leave everything. Put on your lifejackets and jump into the sea!" That was the captain's order, his helpful advice. But the man clung to the gold. However, it was so heavy that despite the lifejacket, the man began to swallow salt water. Then the idea came to him, "Either me or the gold". So he had a terrible inner struggle, worse than his struggle with the sea. The idea of letting go of the gold was so terrible, so unacceptable that he tried his best to hold on to it and to keep afloat until at last he became so exhausted and numb that his limbs refused to move. When he wanted to let go of the gold, he could not. So ultimately, the gold took him to the bottom of the sea. This is a parable. Maybe it is a true story, too, but it is a story with a truth in it.

The second meaning of the bushel is worldly wealth. Grain is either consumed or converted into money. It represents earthly goods and wealth. This effectively hides the light. The identity with the physical food sheath, the body, hides the light. The total attachment to and complete preoccupation with worldly goods fills the mind with craving, desire and longing for things. It becomes a covering of the radiance of your essential Divinity. It hides it and deprives you of the greatest thrilling experience of Self-Realization to which nothing can be compared. Therefore, very clearly, the Master gives this lesson. It is foolish. It is not done. What do you mean? Don't do it! Uncover the light. Let it shine. Put it in a prominent place. Let it cast its radiance. That is your mission on earth. Do not hide it under the bushel of this physical body consciousness, do not hide it under the bushel of your mental, desire-ridden consciousness. Brush aside these coverings and reveal the light within and shine and shine and shine! Then it is that you live. Then it is that you are a true child of God and fulfill the truth of your being. Your life becomes genuine and not spurious, not just an imitation. That is the life that is to be lived. It is to such a life that our beloved Master gave the clarion call: "Immortal Atman! Thou art Divine. Divine should be your life. Shine with this Divinity. With all your thoughts, feelings, words and deeds, filled with the radiance of your true divine being, thus live. Attain Divine Consciousness". It was a call to awaken to Divinity, to let the light shine, right in your life.

That is what Master presented to 20th Century mankind. You can respond to Master's call only by really being radiant immortal Atman. Refuse to allow any aberration of forgetfulness and diversion to interfere with your Self-awareness. Resolutely brush aside all contrary, veiling things. Ever ascending, affirm and manifest that inner light. And that light can shine bright and wax strong only through daily meditation.

Let therefore your entry into this New Year be with this firm resolve: "That I shall not hide this lamp under a bushel. On the contrary, I shall remove all covering and let the light shine forth. I shall shine radiantly as the Divinity that I am. This I am determined to do. So shall be my life in this new year: a life full of radiance, bright with the light of my divine nature shining." Thus may you meditate today upon this theme and this intention with determination and firm resolve. Maintain

this consciousness. “This shall be my life. This shall be my endeavor. This shall be my sadhana.”  
God bless you.

OM OM OM OM OM OM OM

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## THE MIRROR PERSON IS NOT YOU

December 31, 1985

Meditation is a transforming state of the interior, the “antakarana”. It is a transforming activity of the active mind in order to take it beyond activity and to leave all activity behind and to shift our consciousness from its confined ego-center into its source, into its original, eternal natural center.

If you stand before a mirror, you see yourself inside the mirror. Now you have all your attention fixed upon you within the mirror. You are not aware of the you standing outside of and in front of the mirror. It is very strange. It goes by unnoticed, but this happens when any person stands before a mirror in order to look into the mirror. At the time of looking at oneself in the mirror, oneself is forgotten. One’s reality is forgotten! One is no more there, yet one is elsewhere where he really isn’t! You are inside the mirror, but you are really not there. If you pass your hand behind the mirror, you will find you are not there. This is the wonder. The consciousness leaves its actual center and becomes transferred into the mirror. The mirror person is the real person, but the mirror person is not the real person. That will be apparent if you consider that in the mirror person everything is wrong. Your real right hand is the left hand of the mirror person and your left hand is the right hand of the mirror person. If you have got a birthmark or a mole on the right side of your nose or chin, the mirror person will have it on the left side. So you can find that the mirror person is all wrong, full of error, full of mistakes. In one word, everything is upside-down, topsy-turvy, inside-out.

That mirror person is therefore an illusion and a delusion. But this illusory/delusory, topsy-turvy person is so powerful that as one stands and gazes one is oblivious of oneself and is intent only upon the mirror person. The actual, factual you, the substantial you is, for the time being forgotten, because the attention and the consciousness has been shifted. It is transferred to the mirror person and the mirror person dominates the field of attention and the field of consciousness.

Your ego-center consciousness is your metaphysical mirror person, and the mirror is the “antakarana”, your mind. The actual factual person is forgotten. It is that person who is being reflected in the mirror. Why? Because the consciousness has been diverted and shifted from its real inner, eternal natural center to this temporary appearance, the ego-center, and this will persist as long as the mirror continues. If you want to get rid of that illusory mirror person, either you have to move away from the mirror or take a stick and break the mirror. Either way the illusory person is no more there.

Meditation is the process of nullifying the mirror. Yogic scientists have discovered that the mind does not exist apart from its activity as thought process. No thought, no mind. Thought activity, mind. Thought activity is equal to mind. No thought is equal to no mind.

Once three friends were going for a walk on a clear, sunny day. Somewhere another person had released a big balloon and it had gone straight up, up, up, high into the vast blue skies where it was a tiny, almost invisible speck. Only when the sunlight was reflected upon it at a particular angle did it appear in a flash, for a moment, and as the angle of the sun changed, it disappeared from view. One of the friends perceived this far distant, tiny speck. He said, "Look at it! Look at it! It looks like an orbiting satellite." "Where? Where?" "There! There!" So they all stop in their tracks and look up to where their friend is pointing. But now the friend himself, his attention having been diverted, has lost it from sight so he also is trying to once again pick it up. After a moment or two, again he sees it. "There it is!" The other two try to locate the spot where their friend is pointing, far, far up in the sky. When they are thus trying to search out and locate the nearly invisible tiny speck, at that moment they are not on this earth. They are not aware of themselves; neither age, nor sex, nor body, nor time, nor space. All awareness is finished, lost, because the mind is at a standstill. The mind has gone out through the eye and is completely concentrated and focused inside the eye. It is trying to find that object. There is no thought. If one thought comes, they cannot see the object. It is a mindless, thoughtless state. Time stops, and space does not exist. There is no consciousness of where they are, because they are not there until the object is suddenly seen again. "Oh, yes, there it is." Only then are they aware of the I. Otherwise even the I is not there. So in that state, when there is a total focusing of the attention elsewhere, far out, the mind comes to a complete standstill. There is no "vritti". There is no duality. There is neither this nor that, here nor there, now nor then. Everything ceases and mind is devoid of content. It is only when the speck is again perceived that suddenly content comes into the mind and then awareness comes: "I see".

In the same way, when the attention is totally focused on the object of meditation within, you come into a mindless state. Thought activity ceases. Meditation is an attempt to prolong and to continue in this state. And what is that object? The object is that which is a symbol or that which represents your natural eternal center of Being, Consciousness and Bliss, from which you have uprooted and shifted your consciousness and transferred it to the ego-center. Thus personality is created. You become the illusory/delusory here and now you. But in its pristine state, there is neither here nor there, now nor then. There is just Being, and that Being is Bliss. That Being is consciousness of bliss, therefore it is an unbroken stream of bliss experience. Meditation is therefore a process aimed at putting an end to all mental activity, or of taking the consciousness beyond mind activity into a state of pure Awareness. Either way, to rise into that state mind is a support and help. Therefore you have to deal with the mind first, making it fit to be capable of lifting up your consciousness. A gross mind is not fit. An agitated, distracted mind is not fit. A tamasic and rajasic mind is not fit. An impure mind weighed down with many cravings and desires is not fit; not fit in a technical sense, and not in an uncomplimentary or critical sense. When you pay a coin for a purchase that you have made and the shopkeeper returns the coin saying, "I am sorry. This is no good. It is a dud", he is not accusing you of being dishonest. Neither is he blaming the government. There is no negative implication or intent in the shopkeeper's gesture or words. He merely says he cannot keep it for it is not of any use to him. It cannot complete the bargain; no transaction can be made. Therefore the coin has to be replaced. The only statement is the fact that this coin will not work because it is not the right thing. So the shopkeeper returns the coin. In the same way, when you

say “mind is not fit”, it is a statement of fact, just to indicate that you have to work to make it fit. It carries no sense of criticism nor of negative derogation, nor any unfavorable implication or comment. It merely says that for this purpose the mind has to change its condition. For this purpose, in its present condition, it will not work. If someone wants to put diesel oil in a petrol car by mistake thinking it to be a diesel engine and someone says, “No, no, please. It won’t work. You need petrol”, it is not an unfavorable aspersion cast upon diesel oil. Diesel oil is perfectly ok in a diesel car.

It is only a highly subtle, refined mindstuff that can engage in the specialized process of taking the consciousness out of its ego-center, lifting it up and placing it back into its natural eternal center of Satchidananda Consciousness. As it is mind itself which has to do it, so it requires a mind refined through the patient persevering practice of all the principles and rules of Yoga: Yama, Niyama, ethical standards, Yogic principles, moderation, self-control, sattvic qualities and virtues such as forgiveness, tolerance, indifference to attractions, overcoming the pull of objects and having an inner balance devoid of attraction or repulsions, an inner serenity and contentment. These sattvic qualities begin to qualify the mind and fill your interior, and it assumes that state of sattva, or purity, of refinement and subtleness where it is a fit instrument to engage in the process of meditation. Thus when meditation is carried on, it transforms the inner content of your consciousness from human to Divine Consciousness, from gross physical and psychological consciousness to pure, spiritual consciousness.

From then onwards, meditation is of the spirit by the spirit. The individual no longer meditates. The Self meditates upon the Over-Self. The “So and So” personality is once and for all made to sit on the sidelines. It is no more in the center. It is made to retire. It is pensioned away and the luminous spiritual consciousness of the seeking soul flows towards the vast, infinite Universal Consciousness of Absolute Being. Then that perennial current of communication between the individual and the Universal becomes the inner sadhana at all times, everywhere, in the midst of all activity. Irrespective of what the mind is engaged in doing, irrespective of where the body is, this unbroken flow of consciousness from individual towards the Universal continues. It becomes the inner content and state of your consciousness. When that is reached, all other sadhana naturally, automatically and effortlessly falls away and recedes into the background and this continuous state of communion becomes the constant inner condition.

Meditation is therefore like the philosopher’s stone converting base metal into gold. Meditation converts and transforms your human consciousness into Divine Consciousness. This is the purpose and the objective of meditation. This is the inner “swarupa”, the nature of spiritual meditation. It is not mental gymnastics. It is not forcing the mind to do something which it is reluctant to do. In the beginning, certain mental gymnastics help in order to break the old habit patterns of the mind. You make it go through the paces of a new activity meant to completely break away from the old habit pattern of external, outgoing tendencies, of the constant thought of objects and the constant shifting from one object to another. All these tendencies have to be overcome. Therefore certain mental gymnastics or concentration exercises become necessary. They are to bring the mind away from its old confirmed, habitual thought patterns. So they have their place and importance, but only as a means to an end. Ultimately, meditation must become natural and effortless. When aspiration takes over it does not leave any option for the mind. It does not ask the mind, “Do you like to concentrate or do you not like to concentrate? Do you like to meditate or are you displeased and is meditation distasteful to you?” It does not leave you any option. It does not

question. For when spiritual aspiration takes over, you are consumed with the keen urge to meditate. When such aspiration dominates, meditation becomes a natural condition of the interior. To reach this state of concentration, refinement and purification of the mind is required through the “sattva-cation” of the mind to make it subtle, refined and filled with spiritual attitudes and feelings. Meditation thus initiated with right preparation becomes a bridge to close the gap between finite and infinite, individual and universal, human and Divine, yourself and your divine origin and source. Thus should you understand and know this all-important process. Thus you must meditate.

Peace, Peace, Peace be unto all beings in this Universe. Peace be unto you from the joy of the Lord, from the joy of the Divine Who is seated in your hearts as your own Self.

Good morning and God bless you. Before breakfast, a little bit of juice from the fruit of immortality, “ELIXIR DIVINE”.

*“Repeating the name of God once with devotion is better than repeating it several times with a mind far away from God”.* There is a humorous, very understanding, mild and kindly little saying in India, “Oh, you are doing japa. The beads are going round and round, and while the beads are going round and round, mind also is going round and round”. So better to make the mind do the japa rather than the beads going round and round. That is no good. Beads may go round and round, but the mind must be fixed. *“Repeating the name of God once with devotion is better than repeating it several times with the mind far away from God”.*

*“When the sun disappears from one part of the world, it appears in another part of the world. The sun exists always, even when we do not see it. Similarly, the Atman does not die, even when it seems to have disappeared from the body after the body’s physical death.”*

This third one I keep on telling to myself: *“An ignorant person tries to put others right, but a wise man tries to put himself right first”.* There was a brilliant young Vedantin monk, younger than Swami Vivekananda in age. He did not go much to the East Coast because he had gone from India to Tokyo to attend some international conference and from there he crossed the Pacific and went to San Francisco. He stayed only in the San Francisco area less than a year. There are some old people who still remember him. He was a brilliant, scintillating man. In one of his books he asked the publisher to print a poster which read: “Wanted! Wanted! Reformers! Reformers not of others, but of themselves!” (So He said, “Physician, heal thyself”) We want people in the world who are ready to reform themselves. A wise man tries to put himself right. If you are right, then everything gets righted.

*“Spread forth the wings of aspiration and rise up from earth to heaven in consciousness. Just as rainwater prepares the soil for the germination of seeds sown, even so does dispassion prepare the soil of the mind for the germination of seeds of wisdom sown through study and satsang.”*

*“Even negative, unspiritual thoughts cannot enter into the heart whose doors are guarded by thoughts of God”.* When there is a constant undercurrent of God-thought already there, contrary thoughts cannot enter.

*“Truly sorrow, like hunger, is caused by spiritual starvation and it will be relieved only by spiritual food”.*

*“To get rid of external conflicts both outside and in the surface mind, we should go into the inner solitude. As sleep is necessary for the well-being of the body, so solitude, even at home, is necessary for the well-being of the soul”.* Even in your house you must have a period of aloneness.

*“Fortunate are those who are blessed with a single blessedness. He who has control over tongue is a greater hero than the hero on the battlefield”.* This means that the conquest of tongue is a greater conquest. *“Tongue”* here means the dual control over speech as well as over the sense of taste. Control of speech means many things, not only speaking, but also control over speech in the form of refraining from falsehood, from harsh words, from self praise, from unkind words, from gossip and from unnecessary words. If you observe something unfavorable to others, keep quiet. Don't spread it. That is called *“scandal-mongering”*, back-biting, gossip. Also refrain from wasteful talking. These are all common frailties of human nature. Control of tongue means control over all these aspects of avoidable speech, over falsehood, bad temper and harsh words that hurt or harm others. It means control of speech in all its unspiritual or wasteful aspects. It also means control of the sense of taste.

*“The throne of your heart, the Kingdom of your throne, is occupied by the invading rulers of lust, hatred and passion. They have usurped the throne of your heart and displaced you. Push them out and invite in righteousness and the friendly monarchs of love, purity and peace”.*

*“Wisdom never dawns upon that mind which is enslaved by desire and expectation and which is at the mercy of cravings and discontent. A mind destitute of contentment cannot open itself for the dawn of wisdom”.*

*“The gross physical sheath craves for gratification of desires. The awakened spirit within imposes discipline. The gross physical sheath is extrovert and noisy. The awakened spirit is introvert and silent. The gross physical sheath is subject to moods, but the spirit is always serene and peaceful”.*

You have been given a pre-breakfast drink of Gurudev's ELIXIR DIVINE. God bless you.

OM OM OM OM OM OM OM

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## UNIVERSAL PRAYER

*O adorable Lord of mercy and love,  
Salutations and prostrations unto Thee;  
Thou art omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient;  
Thou art Satchidananda;  
Thou art the Indweller of all beings.  
Grant us an understanding heart,  
Equal vision, balanced mind,  
Faith, devotion and wisdom;  
Grant us inner spiritual strength to resist temptations  
And to control the mind;  
Free us from egoism, lust, greed, anger and hatred;  
Fill our hearts with divine virtues.  
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 upon our lips,  
Let us abide in Thee for ever and ever.*

—Sivananda