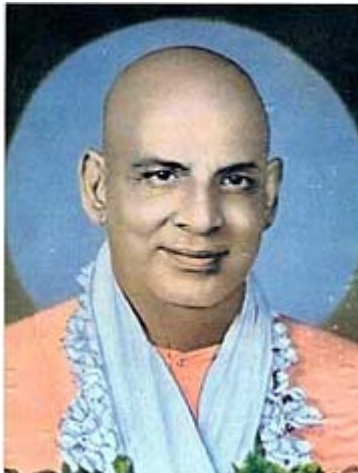


SPECIAL INSIGHTS INTO SADHANA

No. 2

By

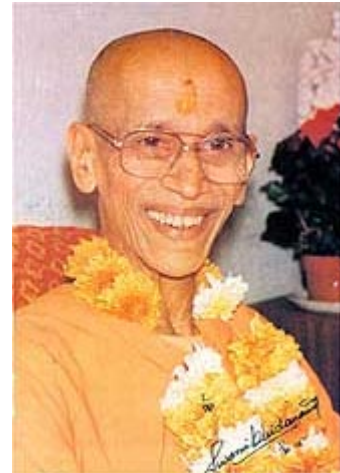
SRI SWAMI CHIDANANDA



Sri Swami Sivananda
Founder of
The Divine Life Society



**SERVE, LOVE, GIVE,
PURIFY, MEDITATE,
REALIZE**
So Says
Sri Swami Sivananda



Sri Swami Chidananda

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

This special series of eight booklets is being published between September 1996 and September 1997 in honour of the 80th Birthday Anniversary of H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, the President of the Divine Life Society.

Each booklet contains several of his early morning meditation talks given on special spiritual occasions in the sacred Samadhi Hall of the holy founder of the Divine Life Society and Sivananda Ashram, H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. The series of eight booklets covers the entire year of special occasions and festivals celebrated in the Ashram.

The talks contain penetrating insights into the meaning and purpose of *sadhana* as Swamiji takes advantage of these occasions to point out the fundamentals required for success in the spiritual quest such as devotion to the goal, discrimination, obedience to the Guru, faith in God and oneself, and a divinely lived life.

The spiritual advice and encouragement contained in these booklets will be an inspiration and help to earnest spiritual seekers throughout the world.

THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

PREFACE

The whole year for the Hindu is a continuous observance of some sacred day of worship or other. The year is completely built around a great many days of sacred worship of various expressions of the one non-dual Divine Reality.

Each month is significant for the presence of some important day of divine worship. So, from beginning to end, life becomes God-oriented; it becomes devotion filled. Life becomes based upon worship.

The holiness and sanctity of life and actions of the followers of the Vedic religion is insured by this great wisdom-based approach to life. All the twelve months become a composite period of adoring the Divine Reality around which the entire life of the individual revolves.

Swami Chidananda

“We must constantly awaken ourselves every day, every moment, every step. A thousand times we will go back into slumber; a thousand times we have to slap ourselves into wakefulness. Then alone something can be achieved. This is the call of the Bhagavadgita, the Avadhuta Gita and the Master Jesus. This is the central call and teachings of Gurudev Swami Sivananda.”

—*Swami Chidananda*

CONTENTS

PUBLISHERS NOTE.	iii
PREFACE.	iii
THE GITA YOGA.	1
THEIR FIERY CALL TO US.	3
THE CALL OF THE GREAT ONES.	6
THE CALL OF DATTATREYA	8

THE GITA YOGA

Worshipful homage unto the Divine Presence. He who is manifest as all that exists, who is infinite, having innumerable names and forms for our constant edification, for our constant uplift and reminder of His all-pervading omnipresence. The perception of this omnipresence is real sight; not to perceive this omnipresence is true lack of sight. It is a vision that goes beyond the visible and perceives the invisible.

That is the spiritual vision that the Srimad Bhagavad Gita wants us to receive from its wisdom teachings, to adopt for our view of all things, and to keep it as a basis for our approach to all things—this inner vision of penetrating beyond the visible and perceiving the invisible. “I am the hidden essence of all things. I am the Eternal hidden within the non-eternal.”

Man’s vision has two defects. Man’s vision is directed upon names and forms, and he fails to perceive that which the names and forms hide. His vision is always directed outward and, therefore, he fails to perceive that which is inside, that which is more immediate, nearer.

Turn the gaze within. Thus admonishes the Gita wisdom teachings in the sixth chapter of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita. “Your vision is outside, O Man, therefore you do not perceive Me, who am shining in the chambers of your heart. Turn the gaze within. Then you will become instantly aware of Me.” Thus the Lord says.

And, likewise, in so many words, Yamadharmaraja tells the boy seeker, aspirant, *jijnasu* and *mumukshu*, Nachiketas, that you must have *avritta-chakshuh* (the eyes averted from sensual objects). You should have a desire to see that which is inside, not that which is outside. Then you will attain immortality.

The Gita has many verses in it that are verbatim repetitions of the verses of the Kathopanishad. Again and again, they both speak of discipline, of turning the gaze within, controlling the senses and desiring to see that which is within—*avritta-chakshuh pratyag-atmanam aikshat* (with eyes averted from sensual objects, he sees the Atman within). He desires to have that which shines within, not that which is without, for that which shines within is a light greater than all lights put together. It is the Light of lights beyond all darkness. It is that supreme Light which is more effulgent and brighter than any light that we know—the sun, moon, stars, fire, lightning. *Na tatra suryo bhati na chandra-tarakam nema vidyuto bhanti kuto ’yam agnih. Tameva bhantam anubhati sarvam tasya bhasa sarvamidam vibhati* (The sun does not shine there, nor do the moon and the stars, nor do lightnings shine and much less this fire. When He shines, everything shines after Him; by His light, all these shine).

It indwells your heart. Therefore, turn the gaze within. That is the light of the Divine. So that is the most important place for you to turn your attention to—your spiritual heart within. *Isvarah sarvabhutanam hriddese ’rjuna tishthati* (God dwells in the heart of all beings, O Arjuna). It is the region of the inner spiritual heart which is the most important place in the whole universe. We have forgotten it because our gaze is on diverse things.

Therefore, if you want to turn the gaze away from diverse things, to turn it within and become aware of the radiance, the region of your spiritual heart, then you must practise sitting quiet, alone, where there are no things. That is why spiritual aspirants will sit in a corner and face the wall. Then they see nothing except what they want to see, perhaps either the form of their *ishta* or the symbol of OM.

If you sit facing the wall, turning your back to the world, then, at one stroke, many things that distract have no scope to bother you. That is why seekers go to a lonely place where there are not many things. Then it becomes less difficult to perceive or become aware of the One. Therefore, sit for some time alone, withdraw the vision from outer things and fix it upon the Supreme Reality. This is *abhyasa*, this is practice, this is Gita Yoga.

What about those times when you cannot go and sit in a corner and face the wall, when you have to turn towards the world and see everything, behold everything? No problem. The Gita says that whatever you behold, that also is that which you are seeking. It is that which is the ultimate Reality. But the only thing is: perceive Its hidden presence.

“All things are indwelt by Me. I pervade all things. Having enveloped this entire universe and all things in it, I am still in My supreme transcendence. I am above all things, but I am very much in all things. I am very much all around you as all things. I alone appear as the many. I am in all things, and I alone exist in the midst of the seeming many. I am the one that exists like a thread running through the beads of a necklace. The beads are many, variegated, different, but the thread is one, the same, continuous, non-different, *akhanda*. I am the *sutratma* (the immanent deity of the totality of the subtle bodies). Know Me as such, see Me as such and become established in My vision.”

Samam sarveshu bhuteshu tishthantam paramesvaram vinasyatsu avinasyantam yah pasyati sa pasyati (He sees, who sees the supreme Lord existing equally in all things, the unperishing within the perishing). This is the outer Yoga of the Gita—the Yoga of the so-called battlefield—that which beholds the One as the common factor in the many.

In a hundred different things made of cotton, the common factor is cotton only. In a hundred different gold ornaments, the common factor is gold and gold only. In a hundred pots and bowls in a potter’s shop, the common factor is clay only. Even so, in a million different things, the common factor is the God-principle only, is the Divine only, is the Atman only, *Idam sarvam vadayam atma* (All these are the Self, O dear). Thus the great sage, the towering personality, Yajnavalkya, tells his wife, Maitreyi, “Oh ye, listen, know, all this is no other than the great Reality, the Cosmic Being, the Supreme Spirit, *idam sarvam*. All this here is nothing but the Atman.

This is the Gita Yoga. This is the Gita vision. This is the Gita *abhyasa*, practice. This is the one thing needful if you want to constantly keep an unbroken undercurrent of God-remembrance, God-thought, God-perception—seeing the One amidst the many, seeing God in and through all things in this world. Thus the meditative state is able to continue even into the active state.

During this period, as we are approaching the Srimad Bhagavad Gita Jayanti, may we exercise these various types of Yogic activities, these processes. May we try to perceive the One

within the many, the Divine that indwells Its own creation. Let the Gita, the Gita view, the Gita approach, be constantly meditated upon, reflected upon; and seek to cultivate this Gita vision and Gita *abhyasa*. Make it the basis for your life. Awaken from within you the Gita vision. Make a diligent study of it.

May the God within you grace you to perceive His presence within and to live in His presence, so that the sweet aroma of His presence makes your life fragrant even as the fire burning at the tip of the incense stick draws forth the fragrance hidden inside, wafts it all around and fills the surroundings with fragrance. Let the fire of this knowledge, the ever-burning fire of this awareness, draw forth from within you the fragrance of your divine Reality.

And may this fragrance of divinity drawn forth from within you waft around you and make everything fragrant. Let it manifest itself from within you through your speech, through your thoughts, through your actions, and may you be able, wherever you go, at all times, to take with you this divine fragrance and fill your immediate environment with it. That is divine life! May the indwelling Divine bless you!

THEIR FIERY CALL TO US

Worshipful homage unto the Divine in whose presence we are gathered together here in this sacred Samadhi Hall! Loving adorations to the spiritual presence of Gurudev, who out of his infinite love and motiveless *guru kripa* has brought into being this spiritual centre! It is an ideal set-up for the spiritual unfoldment and progress of the fortunate seeking souls who have come into this earth plane to evolve and attain blessedness by pursuing the divine life, which is a life of higher idealism and a life directed towards the ultimate supreme goal of *aparoksha'nubhuti*, transcendental, direct experience absolute, or *atma-jnana*, Self-realisation, or *bhagavat sakshatkara*, God-experience. May the Lord and the Guru inspire all of you to avail yourselves of this ideal centre with all its requisite facilities and make use of them for attaining supreme blessedness.

As long as the *jivatma* allows the power of *maya* to distract it towards lesser things, to scatter the mind over the many, the outer appearances, then so long does this blessedness remain unutilised. As long as this blessedness is not recognised, then despite this blessedness the *jivatma* continues to be in darkness, continues to go the diverse ways of the *vishayas* (sense-objects) and continues to get caught in its own net of desires. Brought to the gate of freedom and liberation, yet one continues to remain in bondage, not because anything is lacking, but because understanding is lacking, keenness and eagerness are lacking; one is heedless. There is *pramada* (heedlessness) in one's set-up, *alasya* (lethargy) in one's set-up and *vishaya bhoga vritti* (a tendency to enjoy sense-objects) in one's set-up. Thus, endowed with all things that are necessary for progress—that are necessary for illumination, liberation and blessedness—one continues to remain in a self-created trap of delusion.

Therefore comes the need of daily *sadhana*. Every day there is the need of liberating oneself from this self-created trap, of shaking oneself free from indifference and lethargy, of determining to do battle with oneself. Every day there is the need to answer the call of Lord Krishna: "*kshudram hridayadaurbalyam tyaktvo 'ttishtha parantapa* (Cast off this mean weakness of heart. Stand up, O

scorcher of foes). *Jahi satrum mahabaho kamarupam durasadam* (Slay thou, O Arjuna, the enemy in the form of desire which is hard to conquer).” Every day there is the need to answer the call of the Upanishads: “*uttishthata jagrata prapya varan nibodhata* (Arise, awake, having reached the wise become enlightened).”

This call is still relevant. As long as the *jivatma* continues to remain in a state of self-forgetfulness, of heedlessness, of deliberate indifference to dynamic daily *sadhana*, this call is always relevant. And not only is this call always relevant, it is always present.

“Arise and follow Me!” More than 1950 years ago this call was sounded. Yet even today the call has relevance because one does not arise and one does not follow the way that is pointed out to him. One still continues to follow the mind, to follow the senses, to follow the old ways of thinking, feeling and non-reasoning, *avichara* and *aviveka*. Therefore, thrice blessed are we and great is our good fortune that God has called us into the path of *nivritti* or renunciation. Thrice blessed are we to have adopted the life spiritual. And thrice blessed are we to have been brought into a setting where everything is present to establish ourselves in God, to be physically engaged in works connected with God and to psychologically become established in a state of constant God-thought, God-awareness.

But there is the necessity to constantly strive to make our entire being God-oriented and God-centred, to constantly strive to direct our heart, mind and soul in the direction of God. That is the great need. The call of the Gita is to ever move in that direction: “*Tatah padam tat parimargitavyam, yasmin gata na nivartanti bhuyah* (Then that goal should be sought for, whither having gone none returns).” That path has to be pursued, moving along which one does not later come back into this world of pain and death. “*Yadgatva na nivartante taddhama paramam mama* (Having gone thither, they return not; this is My supreme-abode).”

We have just completed the holy Srimad Bhagavadgita Jayanti. The day after tomorrow we shall worship Lord Dattatreya, Who tells us again and again that this world of vanishing names and forms should not be allowed to delude us into forgetting the true purpose for which we have come here. Dattatreya, through His divine life, through his ideal, one-pointed adherence to the path spiritual, becomes the supreme Guru. And He has much to tell us through the Avadhuta Gita.

Vedanta-sara-sarvasvam jnanam vijnanam eva cha; aham atma nirakarah sarva-vyapi svabhavatah (This is the sum and essence of all Vedanta, this is Wisdom and Knowledge, “I am the Atman that is formless, all-pervading by nature”). *Ahameva ’vyayo ’nantah suddha-vijnana-vigraha; sukham dukkham na janami katham kasyapi vartate* (I alone am imperishable, infinite, the form of pure Consciousness; I do not know pleasure or pain or how they can affect anyone). *Na manasam karma subhasubham me, na kayikam karma subhasubham me, na vachikam karma subhasubham me* (To me there is no action of mind, good or bad; no action of body, good or bad; no action of speech, good or bad). *Janma mrityur na te chittam bandhamokshau subha ’subham, katham rodishi re vatsa, namarupau nate na me* (You have no birth, no death, no mind; you have no bondage, no liberation, nothing good, nothing bad; why do you weep, O child? You have no name and form, nor have I any).

Dattatreya tells us that we are not just human beings merely concerned with this human world. We are Divinity directly related to the Cosmic Divine. The very quintessence of all the Vedas and Vedanta is: “I am that Spirit Divine of the nature of pure knowledge, consciousness. I am neither name nor form. I am *nirakara atma*, all-pervading by my very nature. Why? What is my nature? My nature is that I am part of the Cosmic Soul. I am part of the Universal Being. That is my real nature. Therefore, I am divine, I am immortal.”

This has to be asserted. This has to be affirmed. This has to be practised. This has to be lived. One must become rooted. This consciousness must become *sahaja* (natural), spontaneous to us. To that end one should strive every day, day after day. Then alone spiritual life is present.

Spiritual life is not just for morning and evening. It is for every step we take, every breath that we inhale and exhale. Spiritual life should saturate our entire being. It is for all the twenty-four hours of the day and night. Then alone it is possible. We may forget all other things, no harm will come to us. But if we forget our spiritual practice, that we are living a spiritual life, then great harm will befall our being. We shall be deprived of the highest welfare, supreme welfare. All other things we can afford to forget, but this we cannot afford to forget.

That is the message of the Gita. That is the message of Dattatreya. That is the message of the Divine Life Society. That is again the message of Divine Master Jesus. “Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven.” Jesus did not give a very lax, a very soft, sugar-coated message. He gave a fiery message. He gave an extremely difficult message. He said: “I have come with a sword. I have come to break all that is earthly and mundane. Take heed. Do not take Me for granted.” This is how the Divine Master Jesus came. That is His real implication. He is a terrible Guru, not the way He has been painted by the imagination of the artists. There was no photography in His times. He came as an awakener, one with a fiery message, urging everyone: “Let the dead bury their dead. Sell all that you have and follow Me. Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven.”

An uncompromising idealism was the very essence of the fiery message of the Master, the prophet of Nazareth. He showed the way of the divine life, not a soft way but the hard way. He showed the way of self-denial, self-control, of constant meditation. Pray ceaselessly. If you stop, you will drift with the current. You have to constantly keep rowing. You cannot afford to rest on your oars. That was the message of Lord Jesus.

You cannot take things for granted. Do not think that everything will just happen. What will happen will only be your *karmic* pattern. In spiritual life, nothing just happens. It is a question of doing. It is a question of exertion. It is a question of *purushartha* (effort). It is a question of *abhyasa* (practice). Nothing just happens. You cannot wait. It is what you *do* that gives results. It is not what others say of you or what you think of yourself that matters in spiritual life, but it is what you *do*.

Others will say about you that which is convenient to them in such a way that they can derive maximum benefit out of you. That is the normal world of human relationships. Therefore, if you build your opinion of yourself on what others say of you, you will be nowhere, you will be ruined. And you also cannot base your opinion of yourself on what you think about yourself. Your thinking is thinking in *maya*. Your thinking is a thinking that is pervaded one hundred per cent by

ego. Ego is the only thing that pervades human thought unless one rises above normal thinking by taking the help of the global inheritance of wisdom teachings from the scriptures that we have as our heritage. It is very difficult to think, basing our thoughts upon the admonitions and teachings of the great ones, but that alone is going to help us, not thinking guided by our own self.

Our own self is always misguiding us, always. And even as it is misguiding us, it will keep us thinking that we are very clever, that we are very wonderful. That is the work of the mind. That is the function of the ego. It is the pivot of our delusions, and as long as we cannot overcome it, we are stymied.

That was Lord Krishna's task, to make Arjuna stop imagining that he was thinking very wisely, very knowledgeably, very correctly. As long as Arjuna was thinking like that, he was in a state of confusion. Krishna tried to make him stop thinking in this manner and instead to think based upon wisdom, based upon higher discriminating knowledge. Then alone Arjuna was able to battle with himself, overcome himself by himself and attain a state of firm conviction. Then alone he was able to liberate himself from himself.

Thus, as we move towards the close of the year, bring to bear all your powers of understanding and discrimination, in a spirit of extreme humility, in a spirit of extreme wakefulness and make your life dynamically divine, make your life progressively spiritual. We must constantly awaken ourselves every day, every moment, every step. A thousand times we will go back into slumber; a thousand times we have to slap ourselves into wakefulness. Then alone something can be achieved. This is the call of the Bhagavad Gita. This is the call of the Avadhuta Gita. This is the call of the teachings of Master Jesus. And this is the central call of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji: "Do real *sadhana*, my dear children. Do real *sadhana*."

Every day one has to renew one's spiritual life. Then alone life will continue to remain spiritual. Every day one should exert to banish the darkness from within oneself and make it shine with the light of an awakened discrimination, spiritual enquiry and awareness. That is the great task. Apply yourself to that task and become blessed. Go again and again to the Bhagavad Gita. Go again and again to the Avadhuta Gita. Go again and again to the New Testament. Go again and again to the Voice of the Himalayas. Render yourself a great fire of renunciation, aspiration, devotion and dedication to *sadhana*. Let that fire burn away all dross and make you shine radiantly with an awakened and dynamic divinity. Apply yourself to this task with one-pointedness, not allowing yourself to be diverted in any other direction. This is the thing needful. God bless you!

THE CALL OF THE GREAT ONES

Worshipful homage unto the Universal Spirit, the eternal Cosmic Being, Who has sent each individual soul here into this earth plane for evolving, for an ascent unto Divinity, for steadily progressing towards that ultimate fulfilment of God's plan for each individual part of His, which is fullest illumination and enlightenment, the knowing of oneself to be part of God, the journey back unto fullness, freedom, perfection, absolute Divinity! Worshipful homage unto that Being Who has sent us forth here, and now has decided that our outward journey has been sufficient and that now we must start our inward journey, back towards our source and origin.

Loving adorations to beloved Gurudev and those like him who have been sent by the Supreme Being, by the Cosmic Eternal Spirit, to help each one of us in this inner journey of the spirit back towards its source and origin! They are the messengers of God. They are the prophets who call us back. They are the illumined masters. They are the enlightened world teachers. They are the sages established in God-consciousness who come amidst mankind and search our wandering souls whose time has now come to take to the inner path that leads to Self-realisation. Searching them out, they inspire, they awaken, they help, they guide. Therefore they are the supreme benefactors of mankind.

Most fortunate and blessed are we who have been called into this inner journey that completes our destiny. Thrice blessed are those who realise this, recognise this inner, mystical, spiritual truth, who, recognising the exact implication of this spiritual vocation, this call of the Eternal, whole-heartedly plunge into this spiritual journey and commence the inner ascent towards Divinity.

That is the call of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita: “*tasmadyogi bhava’rjuna* (Therefore become a Yogi, O Arjuna). Come, awake, arise with firm resolution and seek the Immortal, move towards the Eternal. Strive for Self-realisation.” Thus, that soul who recognises the implications of being upon the earth place as a human individual is fortunate. He is not labouring under a handicap. On the contrary he is at a vantage point. He takes advantage of this great opportunity and concentrates all his energy, all his attention upon this great vocation and becomes thrice blessed.

Thus is the call of Dattatreya, the great Guru. “You are the ever-liberated one. You have no *karmic* bondage. Neither do you have any bondage of physical *karma*, nor bondage of verbal *karma*, nor bondage of mental *karma*. Free of all bondage, you are the ever-liberated, free Spirit, the Cosmic Being. Why do you not recognise this fact? Why do you still wander about, groping, falling, stumbling? Why do you weep and wail? Come, rejoice and enter into this adventure of life. Joyously undertake this pilgrimage to the pinnacle of perfection.”

Jesus too calls: “Most fortunate and blessed are ye. Come, come, seek the Eternal. Give it first priority. That is the highest value. It is the pearl of surpassing price, to have which it is worthwhile throwing aside and giving up everything else.”

If a farmer, a labourer even, discovers that there is hidden gold in the field he is labouring in, then he goes home and sells away everything that he has and purchases that small plot of land. People may think that this person is foolish: “What is he doing? Paying such an exorbitant price for this bit of land is madness!” But he knows that the price that he is paying is nothing, because this plot of land contains hidden gold, a hundredfold more valuable than the price he is now paying. He knows.

Thus it is with the awakened individual soul. He knows that everything that has been given up for the spiritual ideal is nothing. Nothing has been given up. For the spiritual ideal is more valuable than all the gold and silver and diamonds, and the wealth of the world put together. It is the treasure of treasures, the wealth of wealths, the pearl of surpassing price, *atulya*, unparalleled. He knows, and therefore he takes this step with rejoicing. He says: “My renunciation is no renunciation. It is a great acquisition, a great gain.”

Thus with knowledge and wisdom, with understanding and recognition, with clear vision and insight, the great step is taken, and it is rejoicing all the way. For every moment, each step and every breath, it is the fulfilment of God's divine plan for the fortunate individual soul. Thus, one must rightly understand, appraise, evaluate and recognise the life spiritual, the ideal divine and the goal supreme. That is wisdom. That is real blessedness.

Then one brings to bear all enthusiasm and all energy to this quest, because one knows the worth of what one is doing. And that is a great thing. Thus is the sharing of this day in the name of beloved and worshipful Swami Sivanandaji, in whose presence we are drawn together so that we may open each day with clarity and not confusion, with keen enthusiasm and interest and not half-heartedness, not lukewarmness, that we may be blessed and that we may walk in the light. May our lives be lived in the light of this recognition and wisdom. God bless you all, most fortunate souls, that you may thus live with understanding and move towards divine perfection, which is our calling and our divine destiny!

THE CALL OF DATTATREYA

Worshipful homage unto Dattatreya, the *trimurti avatara*, the divine son of the austere and illumined Sri Atri Maharshi and *sati sadhvi, mahapativrata, rishi patni* Sri Anasuya. May the benedictions of this divine couple be upon all married couples, in all countries, throughout the world.

The divine trinity, Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesvara were born as the unique divine child Dattatreya. Actually Dattatreya was born as triplets, three children, and yet there were not born, they were immaculate conceptions. Later on they gave a boon that they would be born as children of Sage Atri and Anasuya in a natural and normal way, and then they disappeared. Anasuya became the mother of these three children, but later on two of them withdrew into their abodes. Somatreya, the manifestation of Brahma, the creator, and Durasatreya, the manifestation of Rudra, the dissolver, both merged into Dattatreya, the manifestation of Lord Vishnu, and then they returned to their abodes leaving behind their unique symbols. Brahma left the *kamandalu* and *maala*, Lord Siva left the *trishula* and *damaru* and the *sankha* and *chakra* were retained by Lord Vishnu. So Dattatreya is the manifestation of all the trinity, *brahma vishnu sivatmaka svarupa*.

And this unique manifestation was the direct result of the irresistible devotion of a chaste *dharmapatni*, Sati Anasuya, the wife of the great sage Atri Maharshi. Her chastity was well known throughout the three worlds, the celestial worlds, the heavenly worlds and this earth plane. She was known to be the symbol of the highest purity as a housewife. And it was the power of her chastity that rendered the three *murtis* into little infants. Later on it was the same power of chastity and her chaste love for these infants that made them grant the boon that she desired.

May the blessings of *sati sadhvi* Anasuya be upon all women throughout this world today. May they be filled with the lofty, supreme power of life-sanctifying chastity and may the power of the *tapasya* of Atri Maharshi bless all *sad-grihasthas* and make them shine with *sadhachara*, shine with power of purity, self-control and fidelity to their life-partner. This is the one thing needful in the world of today.

For it is the character, the nature of the parents, their purity of conduct and character, that decides the nature, *svabhava*, and the normal fibre of the child that is born to them. For the child is not biologically or physically different and apart from the father and mother. They are one. It is the parents themselves manifesting in the form of a new generation. Therefore, what the parents are, what their inner state or condition is, their psyche is, becomes the nature of the child. It is that which decides its behaviour.

Therefore, if the world of tomorrow is to be peopled by citizens of sterling moral character, of self-control, moderation, purity, high idealism, chastity, good conduct and lofty character, then it is indispensably necessary that the source from which they spring should be of the same lofty nature. If one generation is fired with lofty idealism and is of sterling moral worth, then the succeeding generation will also tend to be likewise, to be of great moral worth.

Therefore, there is a close connection between a married couple and their offspring. From the offspring you can judge what the parents might have been. From the parents you can judge what the offspring is going to be, quite apart from the fact that each *jivatma*, individual soul, comes with its own previous *karma-janita* (born of *karma*) *samskaras* and *vasanas*. The austere, self-controlled sage of sterling character and conduct, Atri Maharshi and the shining exemplar of absolute chastity and fidelity, Sati Anasuya, thus became worthy of being parents to no less than God Himself, the divine trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesvara themselves. By the power of her chastity and his penance, they proved eminently deserving and worthy of being parents of Divinity.

May the divine grace of Dattatreya be upon you all. He was a supreme Yogi. Like Dakshinamurti, He was the *adi guru*, the primal World Teacher. Contemplate His life. Meditate upon Him. Feel His divine presence. Evoke in your mind the sacred memory of Sati Anasuya and Atri Maharshi, the power of chastity, and divine grace in the form of Divinity taking birth at the earnest supplication and prayer of a heart filled with devotion. The earnest prayer of a heart filled with devotion never goes unanswered or unfulfilled. This is what the advent, the *avatara* of Dattatreya represents or proves.

Try ever to be steeped in the lofty teachings of Guru Dattatreya. His one admonition and His one teaching was God-consciousness. Until you realise God, attain God-consciousness and become established in God-consciousness, ever strive to keep yourself by continued, unbroken effort in a state of awareness of your divinity, at least upon the intellectual level. May there not even be one moment when there is any doubt about your divinity in your mind or intellect. May your intellect be firmly based, with absolute conviction, upon this truth: "I am divine. I am immortal soul, birthless and deathless, beyond time and space, without name and form. I am Atman, formless. I have no limitations. The body does not limit me. The mind does not confine me. I am the limitless, all-pervading Divine-consciousness. This is my true identity. This is my real nature."

By constant affirmation of your divinity, develop within yourself, within your interior, a state of feeling and thinking, a state of intellectual conviction of your supreme divine nature. This is the one teaching of Jagat Guru, Adi Guru Dattatreya. Never fall into the error, the slumber of Self-forgetfulness or ignorance. Ever strive to keep yourself in a state of ever-wakeful awareness of your divinity. And as His benediction and *prasad*, this is the one thing we should strive to receive from Him today. Because, he is an immortal Who is ever present. He is a nitya avatara, a *pratyaksha*

devata, a living, immortal manifestation of Divinity upon the earth plane. And His direct admonition is: “Be aware, be aware, Be rooted in the consciousness of your essential nature, of your divinity.”

And beloved and worshipful Guru Maharaj Swami Sivanandaji ever hammered this fact into the minds of all his disciples and all *sadhakas* and seekers who came to him for spiritual instruction. “You are not this body. You are not this mind. You are immortal soul. Know thyself and be free.” That was Gurudev. That was Gurudev’s central message, his central call to modern mankind. “Awake! You are not this perishable clay, this cage of flesh and bones. You are not this restless mind filled with ego, non-discrimination, ignorance and selfishness. You are not this little, finite intellect prone to a hundred errors, subject to confusion and also capable of misleading you through *avichara* and *aviveka*. Body, mind, intellect and their functions are all characterised by limitations and imperfections.

“Blessed Immortal Atman, be aware that thou art beyond these three finite instruments, *upadhis*, that you have acquired through human birth on this planet earth. They cannot touch or alter the truth of your real identity. Enquire, ‘Who am I?’ Know thyself and be free. Thou art not this body, not this mind. Thou art immortal soul.” Thus beloved and worshipful Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji echoed the great teachings of Dattatreya to twentieth century mankind. He is to us what Dattatreya was during His times, in days of yore.

May the blessings of Gurudev, the blessings of Dattatreya and the benedictions of Sati Anasuya and Sage Atri Maharshi enrich your spiritual life and elevate you to lofty heights of divine consciousness and awareness!