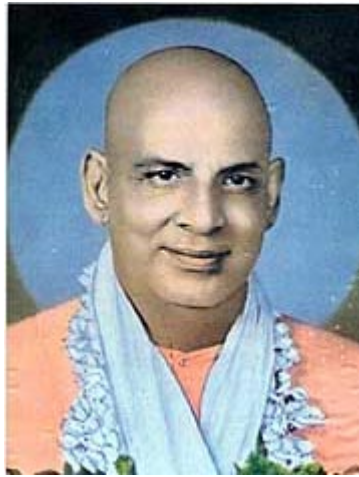


THUS SPAKE SIVANANDA

By

SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA



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



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

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THUS SPAKE SIVANANDA

I have come here to remind you that the goal of life, the be-all or the *summum bonum* of existence, is Self-realisation or attainment of God-consciousness. I have come here not to teach you, but to stir or awaken you all in the path of spirituality. You have forgotten your real Svarupa on account of the force of Avidya, Maya, Moha and Raga. You are tossed about hither and thither and caught up in the Samsaric wheel of birth and death on account of your egoism, Vasanas, Trishnas and passions of various kinds. I have come here to remind you that the real happiness is within and not without. I have come to remind you that in essence you are the all-pervading, pure Consciousness and you are not the perishable body composed of the five elements. I have come to remind you of the great Mahavakya of the Upanishads, *Tat Tvam Asi*, which connotes the identity of the Jivatman with the Paramatman, the individual soul with the Supreme Soul.

God is Satchidananda. God is Truth. God is Light of lights. God is all-pervading Intelligence or Consciousness. God is all-pervading Power which governs this universe and keeps it in perfect order. He is the Inner Ruler of this body and mind. He is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent.

He exists in the past, present and future. He is unchanging amidst the changing phenomena. He is permanent amidst the impermanent, and imperishable amidst the perishable things of this world. He is Nitya, Sasvata, Avinasi, Avyaya and Akshara. He has created this world through the three Gunas—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas—for His own Lila. He has Maya under His control.

He is Svatantra or independent. He has Sat-kama and Sat-sankalpa. He dispenses the fruits of actions of the Jivas. He is all-merciful. He quenches the thirst of the Jivas in the form of ice and succulent fruits. It is through His power you see, hear and talk. Whatever you hear is God. God works through your hands and eats through your mouths. On account of sheer ignorance and Abhimana you have totally forgotten Him.

Nitya Sukha and Parama Santi can be had only in God. That is the reason why sensible, intelligent aspirants attempt to have God-realisation. God-realisation can bring an end to the ever-revolving wheel of births and deaths and bestow supreme happiness on mankind. This world is really a long, long dream. It is indeed a jugglery of Maya. The five senses delude you at every moment. Open your eyes, O Prem! Learn to discriminate. Understand His mysteries. Feel His presence everywhere as well as His nearness. Believe me, He dwells in the chambers of your own heart. He is the silent Sakshi of your mind. He is the Sutradhara or the holder of the string of your Prana. He is the womb for this world and the Vedas. He is the prompter of Sankalpa. Search Him inside your heart and obtain His Grace. Then alone you have lived your life well. Then alone you are a man. Then alone you are truly wise. Quick, quick. There is not a moment to waste, not a minute to delay. Now is the time or never will it come.

Practice of the Presence of God always is the easiest, nearest and surest way of reaching God-consciousness. Feel His presence always and everywhere. Feel His indwelling presence in everything, in flowers, trees, dogs, horses, human beings, stones, rivers, stars, sun, moon, fire, five elements, etc. Feel that you think, feel, cogitate, connate, know, wish, talk, write, walk through Him. Feel His presence in all movements. Feel your oneness with the flowers, stones, trees,

animals, in short, with everything. You are sad and depressed, because you have failed or forgotten to feel His presence. He neither talks nor smiles, but His presence is sufficient for me. This gives me strength and inspiration. I am always in joy, in bliss, in knowledge and in immortality in His presence. This kind of Sadhana eventually leads to resting in Nirguna, formless Brahman. All forms vanish.

When you feel His presence always, everywhere and in everything, ideas of good and bad and sex totally disappear. Every food becomes Sattvic. When you are amongst children, feel that you are one with them. When you are amidst ladies, be one with them. When you are seated on a block of stone, be one with the stone. This is cosmic identification. All is good, all is sacred, because Siva dwells in all. This practice will give the bliss of oneness, the Ananda of all-ness.

Aspirants very often complain that they do not enter into “deep silent meditation” in spite of their efforts. The obvious answer is they lack in their eagerness and intense longing for His presence. Their mental rays are dissipated. You can realise God-consciousness in this very moment. You must have the intense longing for attaining God-consciousness. You must have the firm self-determination: “I will realise today”.

Remember you are the physician for yourself. You are your own saviour. Nobody can save you from this ocean of Samsara. Even Isvara cannot do anything in this matter. Everything runs on well-established laws. Don't become a fatalist. Rely on your own self.

Don't say: “Karma, Karma. My Karma has brought me like this”. Exert. Do Purushartha. Do Tapas. Concentrate. Purify. Meditate. Don't become a fatalist. Don't yield to inertia. Don't bleat like a lamb. Roar OM OM OM like a lion of Vedanta. See how Markandeya who was destined to die at his sixteenth year became a Chiranjivi, an immortal boy of sixteen years, on account of his Tapas. Also note how Savitri brought back to life by her Tapas her dead husband, how Benjamin Franklin and the late Sir T. Muthuswami Aiyer of the Madras High Court elevated themselves. Remember, friends, that man is master of his destiny. Visvamitra Rishi, who was a Kshatriya Raja, became a Brahmarshi like Vasishtha and even created a third world for Trisanku by his power of Tapas. Rogue Ratnakar became the sage Valmiki through Tapas. Rogues Jagai and Madai of Bengal became highly developed saints. They became the disciples of Lord Gouranga-Nityananda. What others have done, you can also do. There is no doubt of this. You can also do wonders and miracles if you apply yourself to spiritual Sadhana, Tapas and meditation.

Rely on your own Self, your own inner spiritual strength. Stand on your own feet. Do not depend on money, friends or any one. When the friends are put to the test, they will desert you. Lord Buddha never trusted even his disciples. When he was seriously ailing, he himself jumped like a frog to drink water from the river. Be not bound to anybody, any place or thing. Do not desire to possess. Possessions bring pain. Become absolutely free by identifying with the inner Self, thy Inner Ruler, Immortal. Challenge the whole world now.

There is no virtue greater than Self-reliance. The possession of this important quality is a *sine qua non* for all aspirants who search after Truth. Gurus, Acharyas and teachers will only show the spiritual path, remove doubts and give some inspiration. You are your own redeemer. You are your own saviour. Remember this point well. You will have to tread the spiritual path yourself. You

will have to place each step yourself in the spiritual path. A hungry and thirsty man will have to eat and drink for himself.

O man! Do not be discouraged when sorrows, difficulties and tribulations manifest in the daily battle of life. Do not murmur. Do not grumble. Learn to be wise. Mysterious are His ways. Understand Him. The pain you get is His blessing in disguise. Pain is the best teacher in this world.

Pain corrects, educates and disciplines the soul. It infuses mercy in the heart. It develops power of endurance and patience. It develops will-power. It makes the proud man humble. It purifies the heart. Just as the iron is shaped in the anvil by beating, so also, man's character is moulded by blows, knocks and pain. Just as impure gold turns out to be pure by melting it in the crucible several times, so also, man becomes pure by being burnt in the furnace of pain.

It is chill penury that turns the mind of a man towards God. Knocks and blows of a severe type wean the mind of a man from sensual objects and turn it in the path of spirituality. Pain and poverty, evil and misery mould the character of a man more than pleasure and wealth. Poverty has got its own advantages. Censure and blows are better teachers than praise and honour. Pain is a better teacher than pleasure. Poverty is a better teacher than wealth.

If you can develop the power of endurance, if you can train yourself to rejoice in suffering, if you think that everything is done by God for one's own betterment and uplift, if you welcome pain as a messenger of God to make you remember Him and to infuse in you more mercy and power of endurance, you will enjoy real bliss even amidst suffering. Pain will not be pain. Suffering will not be suffering. There will be no necessity for selfish worldly struggle for accumulating wealth. Greed and turmoil will vanish. You will rest in peace. You will rejoice within. This is not the philosophy of the Stoics. This is not the teaching of the pessimists. This is wonderful optimism that goads you on to realise the deep, abiding, eternal joy and unruffled peace of the Self within.

If you wish to enter into the Great Peace of God, all the worldly desires must die, all the senses should be brought under your perfect control and the mind should be stilled. Santi or peace is in that man who has given up mine-ness and I-ness, who has given up Trishnas, desires, longings for objects. That man alone will have peace. Peace is not in a Dak bungalow. Peace can be enjoyed only by him who has got Vairagya who has understood the magnitude of human sufferings here, who knows the real value of this earth, composed of the five elements, colours and sounds, who has understood the worthlessness of the perishable objects and passing power and positions in this world and who has no desire for them. The world is nothing for a man of Vichara. He who has found out the real worth of this world, who yearns for Liberation, who has understood that beyond the names and forms there is one eternal, everlasting Atman or Brahman, and who practises self-discipline, alone can have peace. Such a man is the King of kings, Atma-Samrat, not he who is simply carried away by a little colour, by a little touch, a little nervous titillation.

This world is a play of colours and sounds. This sense-universe is a play of nerves. It is a false show kept up by the jugglery of Maya, mind and senses. You enjoy the sensual pleasures for a period of twenty years when the senses are young and strong. What is this short evanescent period of twenty years in eternity? What is this despicable, jarring, monotonous, sensual life when compared with the eternal and peaceful life in the immortal Self within?

Sensual pleasure is tantalising. There is enchantment so long as man does not possess the desired object. The moment he is in possession of the object, the charm vanishes. He finds that he is in an entanglement. The rich but childless man thinks he will be more happy by getting a son; he worries himself day and night to get a son, goes on pilgrimage to Rameshwaram and Kaasi and performs various religious ceremonies. But when he gets a child, he feels miserable. The child suffers from epileptic fits and his money is given away to doctors. Even then there is no cure. This is Mayaic jugglery. The whole world is fraught with temptation.

Nobody has been benefited in this world by this Maya. People invariably weep in the end. Ask any grown-up householder whether he has got an iota of happiness in this world.

Pleasure is not in the objects; it is in the imagination or inclination of the mind. Mango is not sweet, but imagination makes it sweet. Woman is not beautiful, but imagination renders her so. An ugly woman appears very beautiful to her husband, because his imagination is beautiful. There is a grain of pleasure in objects, but the pain that is mixed with it is of the size of a big mountain.

Birth is suffering; disease is suffering; death is suffering; sorrow, grief, pain, lamentations are suffering; union with unpleasant objects is suffering; separation from the beloved objects is suffering; unsatisfied desires are suffering. O man! Is there any real pleasure or happiness in this world? Why do you cling to these mundane objects? Why do you stroll about here and there like a street-dog in search of happiness in this earth-plane? Search within. Look within and introspect and rest in the Supreme Abode of peace and immortality now. Never delay a second even. Plod on. March forward. Realise now and be free.

In this scientific era—the age of the so-called modern civilisation—greed, passion, selfishness are increasing day by day, nay, hour by hour. One nation wants to devour another nation. Man has lost his manliness. The son drags his father to the courts for the division of property. The wife divorces her husband and marries another if the latter happens to be more rich, more beautiful and younger. The younger brother poisons his elder brother to take possession of the estate. You see cruelty, dishonesty, injustice and atrocity everywhere. No one keeps his promise. The father has no faith in the son. The wife has no faith in the husband.

There is no end for craving in the life of a worldly man. That is the reason why a worldly man is ever restless despite his wealth and comforts. There is always dissatisfaction with his lot. He is ever discontented. Before one craving is satisfied, another craving is ready to occupy his mind, and this craving agitates the mind and makes a constant demand for gratification. He forgets his real divine nature and plunges himself in the ocean of Samsara or worldliness.

O worldly-minded persons! Wake up from the sleep of dark ignorance! Open your eyes now. Stand up and acquire Knowledge of the Self. Approach the Brahmanishtha Guru. Attain Absolute Independence or Kaivalya. Merge yourself in the state of Satchidananda.

Go wherever you may, to Gulmarg or Pahalgam in Kashmir, to Darjeeling or Simla, to Vienna or the Alps. It is all the same. You will not find any real rest. The charming scenery may soothe the retina for a second. Raga, Dvesha, jealousy, passion and greed are everywhere. You will find the same earth, the same sky, the same air and the same water. And you carry with you the same

mind. Imagination and change of place have deceived not a few. Remember! The Lord is within you. He is seated in the heart of all beings. Whatever you see, hear, touch or feel is God. Therefore, hate not anybody, cheat not anybody, harm not anybody. Love all and be one with all. Man! Be contented. Live wisely. Meditate on the Inner Self, the Atman. Here you will find everlasting peace and bliss!

O man! Even a broken needle will not follow you when you die. Your actions only—good and bad—will follow you. Why, then, do you waste your time and energy in hoarding up wealth? Give up this constant selfish struggle of life in this world.

Your face is beautiful, but your heart is as hard as flint. You have not cultivated mercy. You are greedy, cunning, passionate, cruel and jealous. Make it soft as butter by doing constant selfless service, by giving charity to the poor and the forlorn, and by practice of regular meditation, effected by renunciation of all desires for the objects of the world.

Friends! Is there not a higher mission in life than eating, sleeping, drinking and talking? Is there not any higher form of eternal bliss than these and similar transitory and illusory pleasures? Is there not a more dignified life than this sensual life here? How uncertain is life! How insecure is our existence in this earth-plane with various kinds of fears? How painful is this mundane existence! Should you not attempt diligently now to reach a place where there is eternal sunshine, absolute security, perfect peace and where there is neither disease nor fear?

An ignorant worldly man says: “I have to do my duties. I have to educate my four sons and three daughters. I have to please my boss. I have got heavy duties in the office. I have to remit money to my widowed sister. I have a large family. I have six brothers and five sisters. Where is the time for me to do Sandhya Vandana and Japa and study religious books? There is no time for breathing even. I have no leisure. Even on holidays I have to work. Even on Sundays I have to worry myself with work. I bring office papers to my house and work at night till the small hours of the morning. I do not want Yoga. This office work and the maintenance of my family is itself a great duty or Yoga.”

Do you call this duty? It is mere slavery. It is the work of a Coolie. It is mere bondage. The man is in fear at every moment. Even in dreams he meets his office-mates and the boss and posts figures in the ledger. This is not a right sense of duty. He takes tea, eats food, and sits at the table for writing, sleeps and procreates. His whole life passes away like this. This is not duty. This is gross delusion. This is foolishness. This is selfishness.

There is something dearer than wealth, there is something dearer than wife, there is something dearer than the son, there is something dearer than your life itself. That dearer something is thy own Self, Inner Ruler, Immortal.

Who is wife? Who is son? Who are you? Who am I? Wherefrom have we come? Think deeply on these. Leave off this world, which is a dream, and seek the one, eternal, undivided essence of Brahman.

Will your son or daughter or friend or relative help you when you are about to die? Will they accompany you to share your miseries? Have you got one sincere, unselfish friend in all this world? All are selfish! There is no pure love. But that Lord, your real Friend of friends, Father of fathers, who dwells in your heart, will never forsake you, though you may forget Him. Adore Him in silence, that God of gods, that Divinity of divinities, the Highest of the high!

Selfishness retards spiritual progress. If anyone can destroy his selfishness, half of his spiritual Sadhana is over. No Samadhi or meditation is possible without eradication of this undesirable negative quality.

In the whirlpool of fleeting sensual pleasures, you have forgotten the purpose of life and its goal. In your pursuit after the phantom-shows of worldly vanities, you have annihilated the spiritual instincts and longings of the soul. What a sad state! Mysterious is Maya! Mysterious is Moha!

You do not know even a single Sloka of the Gita or the Upanishads. You do not know how to sit on Padmasana. You do not know the efficacy of Mantra, Kirtana. You do not know anything about self-analysis, mind-control, self-restraint, concentration and introspection. You have lived in vain! You have wasted this precious life. Hotels, restaurants, cinema houses are your abodes of immortality or Vaikuntha Dhama. Really you are leading a miserable life. If you can talk something on dry politics, you think you are a great hero!

Time is fleeting. The night is wasted in sleep and pleasure. The day is wasted in idle talk, amassing money and maintenance of the family. Days, months and years are rolling away. Hairs have become grey. Teeth have fallen. You are attached to perishable objects through Moha. Tell me, friends, how long will you be a slave to the fleeting things of the world? How long are you going to repeat the same sensual enjoyments? How long do you wish to worship mammon and woman? When will you find time to meditate on the Lord and to do virtuous deeds? Think and reflect.

Kings and lords will pass away. This world will pass away with all its occupants. The sun, moon and stars will pass away. All joys and sorrows will pass away. Wife, children, wealth, property will pass away. The five elements, the earth and heaven will pass away. Only Brahman, the Pure Satchidananda, will shine eternally.

O man! Wealth, vehicles, sons, women, dominions, property are worthless! They are all perishable. Seek the lotus feet of the Lord and attain immortality, eternal bliss and supreme peace!

It is due to the veil of ignorance that you have forgotten your real essential nature, the Sat-Chit-Ananda state. It is not at all necessary for you to renounce the world and run to some Himalayan cave to regain your lost divinity. Here is an easy Sadhana by which you can definitely attain God-consciousness, even while living in the world amidst multifarious activities.

You need not necessarily have a separate meditation room or fix some time for meditation. Close your eyes for a minute or two once in every two hours and think of God and His various divine qualities such as mercy, love, joy, knowledge, purity, perfection and so forth during work and mentally repeat *Hari Om* or *Sri Ram* or *Ram Ram* or any other Mantra according to your taste.

This should be done even during night whenever you happen to get up from bed to micturate or on any other account. Though you are not in the habit of getting up from sleep, you should do this practice at least occasionally when you slightly change your posture during sleep. This sort of habit will come only by repeated practice.

Feel all along that the body is a moving temple of God, your office or business house is a big temple or Brindavan, and all activities such as walking, eating, breathing, seeing, hearing, reading, etc., are offerings unto the Lord. Work is worship. Work is meditation, when done in the right spirit.

Work for work's sake without any motive, without the idea of agency and without expectation of fruits. Feel that you are an instrument in the hands of God and that He works through your organs. Feel also that this world is a manifestation of the Lord or Visva Brindavan and your children, wife, father, mother and other relations are the images or children of the Lord.

See God in every face and in every object. If you develop this changed angle of vision and Divine Bhava by protracted and constant practice, all actions will become Puja or worship of the Lord. This is quite sufficient. You will have God-realisation soon. This is a dynamic Yoga. This is an easy Sadhana.

Realise right now your identity and intimate relationship with all beings, with ants and dogs, elephants and tigers, Muslims and Hindus, Jews and Christians. There is only a degree of difference in manifestation or expression. All forms belong to God or Saguna Brahman. When you look at a tree or shrub, a Sikh or a Muslim, endeavour to behold behind the veil of form, the real hidden Consciousness. If you do this for some time, you will feel inexpressible joy. All hatred will cease. You will develop cosmic love or unity of consciousness.

There is no virtue higher than love, there is no treasure higher than love, there is no knowledge higher than love, there is no Dharma higher than love, there is no religion higher than love, because love is Truth, love is God. This world has come out of love, this world exists in love and this world ultimately dissolves in love. God is an embodiment of love. In every inch of His creation you can verily understand His love.

To love man is to love God alone. Man is the true image of God. He is His Amsa.

It is easy to talk of universal love. But when you come to the practical field, you obviously show signs of failure. If anybody talks ill of you and uses harsh words, at once you are thrown out of balance. You get irritated and show an angry face and pay him in the same coin. Where is universal love?

You do not like to part with your possessions when you see people in distress. A man who is struggling to develop cosmic love and realise Him through love, cannot keep anything for himself more than he actually needs for keeping the life going. He will sacrifice even this little to serve a needy one and undergo privation and suffering willingly with much pleasure. He will rejoice that God has given him a rare opportunity to serve Him.

He who tries to develop universal love should try to possess various Sattvic virtues such as Kshama, patience, perseverance, tolerance, generosity, straightforwardness, mercy, truthfulness, Ahimsa, Brahmacharya, Nirabhimanata, etc. He should serve humanity untiringly with a disinterested, selfless spirit for many years. He has to kill his little self ruthlessly. He must bear calmly insults and injuries. Then only there is the prospect of cultivating cosmic love.

Love is the fulfilling of the Law. The aim of charity, social service, altruism, humanitarianism, socialism, etc., is to develop this universal love and expand one's heart ad *infinitum*.

Unity is eternal life. Diversity is death. Unity brings concord, harmony, supreme peace. Diversity brings discord, disharmony and restlessness. Unity is Divine Life or life in Spirit. Diversity is Asuric life or life in matter.

There is only one language, the language of the heart. There is only one Dharma, Sanatana Dharma. There is only one law, the Law of Cause and Effect. There is only one religion, the religion of love or the religion of Vedanta. There is only one sun, one moon, one Akasa, one Brahman, one Purushottama and one Chaitanya. Feel the oneness everywhere. Realise the Satchidananda Atman, the common thread of consciousness that links all these names and forms. All diversities, all differences, all qualities, which are Mayaic or mental creations, will now totally vanish.

Bask in the sunshine of divine love! Anoint yourself with the oil of selfless service! Wear the raiment of purity! Eat the bread of the Name of the Lord! Drink the divine ambrosia of meditation on God! Perfume yourself with the scent of charity and abundant giving! Dive into the Divine Source and draw inexhaustible strength therefrom! This Divine Source is Bhuma, full of bliss, peace and joy! It is perfect harmony and pure delight! Thrice blessed you are all! Be ever happy! Move on merrily! May God bless you all!