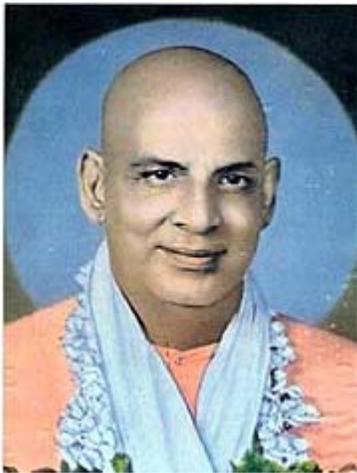


# MESSAGE OF SWAMI CHIDANANDA TO MANKIND

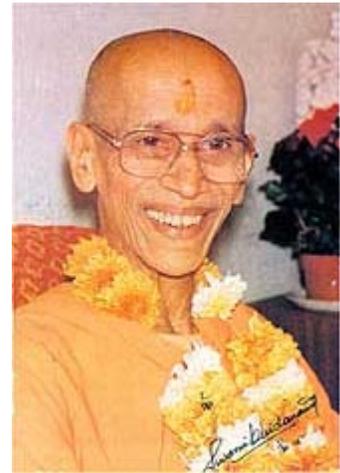


**Sri Swami Sivananda**  
Founder of  
The Divine Life Society



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

**So Says  
Sri Swami Sivananda**



**Sri Swami Chidananda**

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## **TAKE TIME**

Take Time to THINK...  
It is the source of power.

Take Time to PLAY...  
It is the secret of perpetual youth.

Take Time to READ...  
It is the fountain of wisdom

Take Time to PRAY...  
It is the greatest power on earth.

Take Time to LOVE and BE LOVED...  
It is a God-given privilege.

Take Time to BE FRIENDLY...  
It is the road to happiness.

Take Time to LAUGH...  
It is the music of the soul.

Take Time to GIVE...  
It is too short a day to be selfish.

Take Time to WORK...  
It is the price of success.

Take Time to DO CHARITY...  
It is the key to heaven.

## OTHERS

Lord, help me live from day to day  
In such a self-forgetful way,  
That even when I kneel to pray,  
My prayer shall be for "Others."

Help me in all the work I do  
To ever be sincere and true,  
And know, that all I do for You  
Must needs be done for "Others."

And when my work on earth is done,  
And my new work in Heavens begun  
May I forget the crown I've won,  
While thinking still of "Others."

"Others," Lord, yes, "Others!"  
Let this my motto be.  
Help me to live for others  
That I may live for Thee.

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## ON THIS DAY

Mend a quarrel. Search out a forgotten friend. Dismiss suspicion, and replace it with trust. Write a love letter. Share some treasure. Give a soft answer. Encourage youth. Manifest your loyalty in a word or deed.

Keep a promise. Find the time. Forego a grudge. Forgive an enemy. Listen. Apologise if you were wrong. Try to understand. Flout envy. Examine your demands on others. Think first of someone else. Appreciate, be kind, be gentle. Laugh a little more.

Deserve confidence. Take up arms against malice. Decry complacency. Express your gratitude. Worship your God. Gladden the heart of a child. Take pleasure in the beauty and wonder of the earth. Speak your love. Speak it again. Speak it still again. Speak it still once again.

## BIRTHDAY MESSAGE TO YOU!

Radiant Immortal Atman!

Om Tat Sat! Homage unto the Divine. It is an immense happiness to me to address these few words to you today. May they be engraved in your heart and be enshrined in your thoughts.

Live with understanding and wisdom. Understand the meaning and purpose of life. Understand your real nature and why you are here. Here on earth you are but a passing traveller. Your Real Abode is that realm from whence you came. Here all things are temporary. All things pass. Therefore seek the eternal. Your Real Nature is not earthly. It is spiritual and deathless. To realise your Reality, your eternal identity is the purpose of life. While you strive diligently for this inner Experience cultivate Ideal Relationship with this world around you. To all beings relate yourself with nobility, sympathy, kindness, love, selflessness and the desire to serve all. **Serve humanity and seek Divinity.** Compassion to all is the key to blessedness. Humility is the highest virtue. Truthfulness is the greatest treasure. Self-control is the supreme wealth to possess. Egoism is the worst blemish.

Be an ideal individual. Become a spiritually illumined soul. Thus crown your life with Wisdom, Peace and Blessedness. You will then become a blessing to all mankind. I wish you Joy and Peace.

24-9-72

—Swami Chidananda

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# TRUE PURPOSE OF LIFE

Blessed Immortal Atman!

There is a permanent Reality behind this entire universe that lies before you. There is a vital living Truth behind the names and forms that constitute the world we have come to know. That great Reality, that living Truth is of the nature of the Bliss and Blessedness. It is a state of untrammelled Freedom, limitless Peace, boundless Wisdom and indescribable Bliss. It is a joy which nothing upon the surface of the earth can even remotely equal. And this Bliss, Freedom, Peace, Wisdom and Joy is your eternal state. That is your real abode. That is your ultimate destiny. Your life has as its purpose the attainment of that state. This life is given to you in order to realise that Reality. It is this realisation that ultimately gives you the power of totally transcending all the sorrows and miseries and limitations which this earth-life imposes upon you. In one word, the goal of your life is the realisation of the Supreme Reality.

You may call It by what name you will, call It the Self, the realisation of the Self; call It God, then the realisation of God. Call It Consciousness, then it is the realisation of Cosmic Consciousness. But it is this achievement alone, which is the central purpose of your life. This is the fact which, despite all the sordidness, all the wretchedness and misery of human life upon this earth, is its one redeeming feature. The fact is that life is a glorious means of attaining the Supreme State in which real and unalloyed Happiness can be experienced.

Both the ancient and the modern Indian sages are idealists but their idealism is practical. It is combined with a very sane and sensible realism. On the quest for Bliss and Peace, the outer life has to be reconciled with the striving for perfection. The physical and intellectual aspects of the being which operate upon this relative plane have to be reconciled with the great urge of the truly spiritual being. This reconciliation is one of the tasks of the spiritual life.

With this reconciliation in view, two things must be understood. One is that the body and the mind and all the intellectual faculties of the being have been given to us as instruments, whereas in ordinary life man is at the beck and call of the physical body and the senses. He does not know himself to be apart from them. And the other is that man also finds himself totally entangled in the desires and cravings of the mind. But to consider yourself the servant of the senses and slave to the cravings and desires of the mind is a woeful misconception. And also to regard them as instruments given solely for indulging in an endless round of sense-pleasures and objective enjoyments is a deplorable perversion. These instruments have been given in order to bring you closer to the attainment of the great goal. The mind, the body and the intellect should be recognised as such, treated as such, and nobly utilised to this end. In the great teachings of the sages we find that man as a social being and a member of the community is advised to live a life of honest labour. This labour may take the additional form of selfless service to all:

Experience shows that every great benefit conferred upon others by the exercise of man's faculties comes from this highest form of labour. In his practical affairs, man should continue to care for and look after his family, his immediate relations and his friends. In his personal affairs, he should take due and proper care of his own body and mind. Thus living a life of usefulness and service unto others, you maintain your integrity. In doing thus, you are not taken out of the spiritual

life. When it is based on the principles of Truth and honesty, your exertion for means of maintaining a livelihood is in no way an obstacle or a bar to your advancement in the inner life of spiritual unfoldment.

As right action must be followed in the external life, so right thinking must prevail in the mental life. Thoughts that trail after the pull of the senses are wrong. Thoughts that follow the principles of righteousness are right. Therefore, think thoughts of goodness. Think thoughts of purity. Think thoughts of selflessness. Forget about “What shall I get? What shall I obtain? What pleasure and enjoyments shall I find to fill my life?” Think instead, “Out of me, what good could come to all people? In what way could I add to the happiness of others? In what way could I lessen the sorrow of others? How could the intellect be used to obtain the true knowledge of this universe? What is real? What is unreal? What is permanent and what is transitory? What is the ultimate goal and what belongs to the temporary life?” Thus let the intellect ever discriminate between the truly good and the merely pleasant, between the real and the unreal, between the permanent and the passing. To get an insight into this world, into the nature of things here and into your own nature is proper use of your intellect. Thus you may find out how thoughts operate, how desires operate, how senses try to deceive you, how thoughts and senses may be controlled. Awaken discrimination and let it serve as the guide. Most important of all, let the spiritual life lead you towards the attainment of the goal.

Behind all action should be perfectly pure motive. Both the thoughts and the motives should always be noble, sublime and pure. The person respecting the standard of absolute purity partakes of pure speech, and action. The impure thought or motive, characterised by greed, lust or anger, instantaneously discredits the action. Greed is a fire which blazes more and more fiercely if it is fed. A contented person is always alert and recognises the greedy thought which he thereupon stamps out of his mind.

Life is very precious. Say, “I have come here to realise the Supreme State of Blessedness and to experience the highest Bliss. I have been given this unique opportunity of a human birth and human life in order to attain that Ultimate Goal.”

The chance is now given. Who knows if the keen state of aspiration and receptivity to the highest principles will continue? Therefore, now is the time to make the supreme effort to realise the true purpose of life. Now is the time to make earnest effort to attain the highest Blessedness and the wondrous Bliss of realisation.

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## **TRUE HAPPINESS: RECOGNITION OF ONENESS OF ALL LIFE**

The ancient Vedas have from time immemorial sought to bring home to mankind the lofty message of the unity of existence, the oneness of all life. We have the declaration in the Vedas: 'Duality is the cause of all sorrow'. That is, from duality springs fear, great fear; and Truth is non-dual, One without a second, from which springs happiness. And all that is, the entire universe that we see, is nothing other than the Universal Reality. That alone appears as the entire Universe. That alone is. All is, verily, the Absolute Reality, the Supreme Truth. This two when put together bring the message to us that in Truth there is no duality, and if we live in Truth we shall feel oneness spontaneously, from the very fact of our being based upon the consciousness of Truth which is Oneness.

The true basis of human unity where all beings are at one is the factor that is the essential being within us. Superficial factors express diversity; there is a difference. In form all are different. Diversity, more than unity, seems to be the law of creation. In everything, everywhere upon the face of the earth, we find diversity. No two leaves are alike but even though a tree is full of diversity, and is full of diverse branches, twisting twigs, leaves, flowers, fruits etc., it is rooted in unity. The root is one; the tree springs from oneness. So, if you trace all diversities to their source, the apparent diversity is found to be based upon unity, based upon oneness, having a singleness of source. There could no more be an apt analogy to bring home to us the truth of the oneness of mankind than that of the tree with its diverse branches, shoots and twigs being founded upon the one, viz., the root. Therefore, you find in the 15th chapter of the Srimad Bhagavadgita that this universe is described as a great inverted tree of countless, variegated names and forms, having its roots above, in the One, the Supreme, the Changeless. The Lord says: "It has its roots above and diverse branches ramify in all directions." But they do not one whit affect or alter the essential oneness that is at its Source; so also the true basis of human unity.

Humanity is found to be so diverse with varying languages, cultures, customs, manners etc., that if we try to bring about a sort of superficial unity by forcing upon diverse mankind a single way of life, a single language, a single type of living, a single type of education, we will not succeed, because we will not touch the innermost core of the being in man. There is something much deeper than the appearance. The essential being of man has to be touched if the sense of unity is to be roused within him. Uniformity is not unity; it will always be only in appearance. Real unity is in the heart, in the feeling and being. The innermost being of man provides the ultimate rock-bottom basis of unity.

There is something in all beings, which does not alter at all and which is the one common symbol of existence. It is the ultimate essence of the individual, his spiritual nature, his spiritual identity. This spiritual nature is of the very nature of oneness, of unity. Bodies may differ, languages may differ, cultures may differ, but all beings do exist, all beings are. Everyone feels, "I am." This consciousness of being, of existence, is the principle which is a universal common factor underlying all apparent diversity.

The Gita has brought out this truth very beautifully. As a necklace of variegated beads of diverse colours and shapes has, as the one common factor, the thread which holds all these beads

together and passes through the centre of each one of the beads, there is this thread of the universal common factor which is the same, which is the one, in all the apparently many different lives. To give to humanity this awareness, this consciousness,—that of the recognition of the existence of this divinity within all life,—is the basis for all human unity and even cosmic unity. We recognise that things exist because God is in them, for He is the principle of existence within. He is the Cosmic Existence. This changeless eternal existence is God. And this principle of existence is God and this principle of existence is common to everything, to all life.

It is, therefore, in the recognition of the essential divinity of man that we have our surest basis of human unity. Recognise this and go beyond names and forms. Do not see changing appearance on the surface. Be always aware: “I am one with all that lives, in my essential Self. I am one with all that lives, in my essential being as pure light, pure being. Existence is one. Life is one.”

Such is the wisdom of those who have this awareness and perception, and their whole life becomes a blessedness to others as well. They would not do unto others that which they would not like be done unto themselves. “That which brings me joy and happiness, that I know will give joy and happiness unto others,” is their policy. Therefore, this basic education has to be given to all. If this awareness is not there, how can the feeling of oneness come? “May we all sit together, live together, think together. May we all think and aspire in the same way”, is an ancient Vedic prayer.

Manu, the law-giver of India, says: “This body has been given to you, O mortal, for the well-being of others, for the service of others, for doing good unto others.” The awareness of this supreme purpose of life has to be a source of happiness and helpfulness to others. This education, the right education of the soul to grow into the awareness of these principles, would be the factor to ensure lasting human unity, true human unity.

Human unity cannot be based on principles like: We both are one and we can now fight the third man. There are unions and unions, there are so many kinds of unions. People join together in order to fight another group. That is not unity. It is self-doom, because the very basis of that unity is hatred, for harming some other group. Even if for a time it gives an illusion of unity, it has not the true essence of unity in it. It is destructive unity. Unity should be constructive. Unity is partial, if it does not embrace within its scope the entire universe, the entire humanity, because the same Divine spark dwells in all beings, and we are all brothers and sisters, children of one cosmic family. Only when you know that the happiness of all is the great duty of life, when the ideal of giving happiness to others is accepted and recognised by you to be the great law of this universe, then alone do you live truly. Then the relationship of oneness and the happiness of all is coordinate. Not to feel this oneness will undo the happiness of all, undo the goodness of all. The entire universe throbs with one cosmic life-principle. The perception of this deep, beautiful truth underlying life can be given only to the growing soul before it is warped by the fact of selfish and competitive living that is the pattern of life on earth. If people were to speak in terms not of ‘my good’ or ‘your good’, but of ‘our good’, then the question of right education of the generation in the making, the generation which will lead the world of tomorrow, would have been at least partially solved. This question should receive great attention and much consideration of all responsible people, who are at the helm of affairs. My sincere prayer is: May this essential spirit of oneness of man, this oneness of all life, be recognised, accepted and expressed in all our life, in all our behaviour towards one another. Then, indeed, the

ideal of oneness will be a glorious and happy fact. May God bless mankind! May God inspire all people to feel His Presence indwelling all names and forms! May God bless you!

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## SAINTS—GUIDES OF MANKIND

Unity of mankind, if it is to be real and enduring, should be based upon the common factors of all beings, viz., Satchidananda Atman. Unity on no other basis will be fruitful. Supposing all young men decided that those people who have a black beard should form a new party, imagine how futile this unity would be, for soon their hairs would turn gray! But, the common consciousness that enlightens all souls is one. This is the Truth, which is Eternal, which can never change. Therefore, unity based on this consciousness alone can be real and lasting.

The awakening of this consciousness being the purpose of religions, religion was chosen by Sri Gurudev as the proper basis for unification of mankind. By religions is not meant the institutional religions, because that again has created many dissensions, riots and wars. In the institutional religion, the real ideal of the religion is forgotten, the spirit of religion is lost and only a poor external structure remains, from which the great religion, exemplified in the life of the prophets, is lost.

What is the spirit of real religion? Be pure. Be humble. Do selfless service. Let the welfare of 'the other man' be your first concern. If you want to make life happy and comfortable for yourself, try to make life comfortable and happy for others. If you want to get honour, give honour. Do not give pain or dishonour to others. Regard others as your own self. This is the pure spirit of religion.

Even though different saints may outwardly belong to various religions and various countries they give us but a single, fundamental pattern of life. They may achieve their destination or realise their ideal through worship of the different manifestations of the one eternal Reality, through the worship of different deities and praying to them by different names; but the pattern of life which they put before us to follow is fundamentally one and the same all over the world ever since the day of the creation. What is that pattern? The way of saints is based upon faith in God. That way is based upon purity of life. Take the life of any saint from any land, from amongst any race, we find that the way they have shown us by their own personal examples and ideal lives is one and the same.

All saints were men of simple nature, devoid of all crookedness, devoid of all cunningness. They never knew how to disbelieve man, and they trusted all beings. This was one of the most salient traits in their character. They were guileless. They did not have the so-called shrewdness and cleverness which the worldly man has, which he thinks essential for him to get along. But to get along where? To get along as quickly as possible to perdition or his own ruin! But this so-called shrewdness which the deluded man thinks is very necessary for him to get along, the saints were lacking, and they were not the losers for it. They became worshipful. They were immortalised because they were guileless. Their nature was pure and simple, crystal clear, and this is the nature of children. Saints were like children.

Secondly that universal quality which characterises 999 out of 1000 of all mankind is egoism. Man feels, “I am something.” And he does not like to be disregarded. Saints were humble. They were meek in spirit. They were lowly in spirit. “Blessed are the lowly in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.” The “lowly” is not from the point of money. A saint may have everything, but in spirit he feels that he is a speck of dust at the feet of the Lord. “Lord is everything. I am nothing. Thou art everything, my Lord.” This is the attitude of all holy men, and this total absence of egoism and the resultant humility—this is also universal characteristic of all saints. Even as egoism is the universal characteristic of the ordinary man in his unregenerate days, the man who is in the grip of delusion, Maya, even so, the universal characteristic of all saints has been perfect humility. Blessed are the meek. And the spirit of the same verse was re-echoed by one of the greatest saints India has produced. He was Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, a being who was immersed in the ecstasy of divine love. He says that one should consider oneself lower than a blade of grass. But one who has not learned this great secret, viz., that ego is the great bar to true refinement and progress of man, does not feel himself to be something.

The lives of saints were full of trials and tribulations. They were persecuted. They had to bear too much hardship. The Lord put them in the furnace of suffering and persecution. Even as gold is put in the crucible to be purified of all dross and to shine as pure metal, even so saints are put to much tribulation and suffering. But through all these they manifested three important qualities. One was they accepted all trials and tribulations as the blessings of God and bore them. Endurance, fortitude, and forbearance,—these were always and will ever be the characteristics of saints; rather the more they endured, the more God tried them, and the greater their faith became. “No, I shall never lose faith. You may send me the worst sufferings, but I will not lose faith in Thee, O Lord.” That was the wondrous spirit they had. They never lost faith in the Lord. So whatever happens to you never lose faith, and you will be rewarded with eternal life and infinite Bliss.

Contentment was another great universal characteristic of all saints. They lived a life in God and they always considered God to be the only real treasure, the greatest wealth, the only object worth having in life. They never had any other desire. They were totally desireless. They were completely satisfied with God alone, and this desirelessness made them full with perfect contentment. To them God was not a distant entity. Every moment of their life they turned to Him. Whenever they were in need of help, whenever they were in need of solace, strength, guidance or light, immediately they turned to the Lord, even as a child turns to the mother. They melted all differences between themselves and God. They felt God to be their own. We also express this intimacy with God every day through hymns but we do not feel it intensely enough. In troubles we trust our money or other external aids of the world rather than the Indweller. We lack the sense of God’s presence. Saints, though living in the external world, were always in close contact with the Lord. Therefore they are regarded as Godmen. Even if someone tried to cut a saint’s throat, he embraced him. That was the saintly reaction. Saints were filled with the spirit of this divine quality. In short, they fulfilled the spirit of the Amritashtaka, the last eight verses of the 12th chapter of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, wherein Lord Krishna describes the characteristics of a lover of God, one who is dear to the Lord. All saints fulfilled the description of the ideal devotee or saint given by no less a person than Lord Krishna Himself through the Bhagavad Gita.

We must always remember saints. Even for a short moment if we think about the saints, at once our hearts get purified. Our nature gets purified. We are filled with inspiration and we feel

elevated because in their life there is a peculiar power. They were completely empty and the Divine Spirit filled them. Due to their humility they had emptied themselves. So the spirit of God entered them. They carry a great force, and by merely remembering them we get inner strength and many of our problems are solved.

To constantly remember them is to constantly make unceasing efforts towards the goal of life, because, by their lives they show us, “We have achieved this. Therefore, you can also achieve this by following our example.” Therefore we must read the lives of saints every day, even if it be for five minutes, and as already stated we should try to emulate their example. If we remove all bias from our hearts and, with open hearts, if we try to delve into the nature of saints, these gems which made up their personality will come before us. We should engrave these in our hearts and the only effective manner in which we can worship these great souls would be by a devout and earnest emulation of their lofty personalities and effort to carry out their teachings with sincerity and in a true spirit of receptivity. This emulation will be the greatest tribute we can pay to these saints. We should try to follow in their footsteps. To make ourselves adherents of the pattern of Divine Life which they have worked out, to make ourselves faithful reproductions of these great ideal lives would be the most effective manner in which we can offer our tribute and honour to the saints.

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## MIND-CONTROL

The first thing we have to understand about the nature of the mind is that it is a creature of habit. Mind is a thing which always tends to follow whatever shape is given to it by habitual thought. Any thought that is held with greater and greater repetition tends to become part of the natural state of the mind, and this law can never be forgotten by the earnest seeker who is attempting to gain perfect control over the mind. I shall try to explain in greater detail and in greater clarity the implications of this peculiar characteristic of the mind. If a student, trying to qualify himself for the medical profession, studies for six years continuously in a medical college, then his entire mind becomes predisposed always to think in the groove of diseases, medicines and therapeutic treatment. Automatically his subconscious mind will be filled with thoughts of medicines and thoughts of patients and all these thoughts will again and again revert to the centre. They will be less capable of thinking about other things and more predisposed to think about things of medical profession. After a continuous period of saturation of the mind with thoughts connected with crime, with civil disputes, with application of law, with courts, with judges, what happens? Always the mind gets a certain habitual predisposition which naturally tends to hold only thoughts on these subjects; thinking of grief, thinking of crimes, will become its predisposition. Same is the case with the engineering or any other profession. An engineer’s mind is devoted to mathematics, and a whole shape is given to his life, and his mind becomes engineering-minded. Even if he thinks about things other than engineering, they will not be very effective. If a doctor is also a seeker, if he sits to meditate the types of thoughts that come and distract him will always be connected with hospitals, patients etc. If a businessman tries to concentrate on Yoga, profit and loss, the market trends etc., are the things that will always come and disturb him.

Now, this gives us a certain clue as to how we can get control over the mind and succeed in concentration. What is that clue? You must, even during your active outward life when you are

living and moving and doing your ordinary work, always try to fill the mind with the thoughts of the same object upon which you are trying to meditate. Supposing you are a Bhakta. The method which a Bhakta will employ to gain control over his mind and progress in concentration upon his ideal,—Lord Rama, Lord Krishna, Lord Siva, Devi or Jesus Christ or Allah,—is that the Abhyasa should not be confined to the hour of meditation. Suppose you sit in the morning and in the evening for meditation. Throughout the day you should maintain an undercurrent of the thought of the object of meditation. The Bhakta constantly thinks of Rama or Krishna or whoever is his Ishta. You should never forget Him at any moment of the day. It is not only during the period of prayer that the thoughts of your Ideal should be maintained, but the thought of your centre of meditation should always be kept up even during your Vyavahara. The current of meditation should never be absent from your mind. Even during your active life the current should be maintained. It may not be as active and deep as during meditation. Nevertheless, it should be kept up, it should be continuous.

You know the story of Theseus. He went into a maze, where there was a monster. He had to kill the monster and come back. The maze was such that one who went into it could not come out. His friend gives him a ball of thread and says: “Go into the heart of the maze, where there is the monster, and as you go in, go on releasing the thread. If you do not have any link with the entrance, then it is absolutely impossible to get out of it.” So this device was given to him, and he followed the advice, and he was able to come back after killing the monster. Even so the thread of concentration should be kept up. Once you do concentration in the morning, keep up the current. At noon you again sit for concentration, and the link again continues. During sleep also the subconscious mind carries on the process of meditation. This will be found when during dream the current of meditation comes and alters the course of your dream. Suppose you are getting nightmares before you enter into Yoga, and when nightmare comes you try to think of God. The same nightmare may again come in a lesser form. Suddenly inside your dream the consciousness will come to you: “God is constantly with me. How can anything come to me?” This courage is experienced even in dream state. That experience which used to terrify you will be powerless and it will pass off. So this gives us a hidden revelation that the current of Smarana or remembrance is not lost even during dream and sleep states, and sometimes it manifests in a tangible form. And this continuing of the current of meditation throughout the waking, dream and deep sleep states keeps up a link of meditation and a certain portion of the mind goes on doing its ordinary work. This technique has been perfected in all the four Yogas and they have given different devices in order to do this.

According to Vedantic practitioners, this method is called ‘Brahmabhyasa’. In ‘Brahmabhyasa’, you meditate upon the formless Brahman when you sit in an Asana for the purpose, and also throughout your work you keep up the thought that you are Brahman. This is also called Brahmachintan, and the little difference between the actual meditation and the keeping up of the subtle current of meditation is that whereas meditation is intense and deep and is accompanied by a total withdrawal of the senses from sense-objects so that the senses do not function externally, and you are absorbed, this Chintan is not accompanied by a total withdrawal of the senses. Senses perceive the external world. Senses are outgoing and you are moving amidst the external objects, but the inner current is there. They also call it Atmachintan. This is a very effective method, because it invokes the same law of the habit of the mind, that of tending to be of that nature which it holds to constantly in waking hours. When we constantly try to keep up remembrance of our meditative Ideal, what happens? The same phenomenon is worked out, as in the medical student, lawyer or the engineer. If you sit for meditation, what thought comes? What does the mind tend to think? Same

things that it was having constantly during the daytime. What was it thinking? It was thinking of the Lord, the object of meditation. So this process should be developed as a technique by the practitioners of meditation. A Bhakta tries to remember the Lord at all times,—Smarana, as it is called. He does Manasic Japa (mental Japa) of the Deity. If he is a Bhakta of Lord Siva, whether he is moving about, listening to anything, doing physical work or mental work, this current of ‘Om Namah Sivaya, Om Namah Sivaya’ goes on inside. And if you are a devotee of Rama, the Name of ‘Sri Ram’ goes on in the mind. These are the methods by which the mind is made to absolutely dwell upon the same object upon which it has to meditate during the Yoga practice. And this habit is a great asset to the practitioner of Yoga, to the meditator who is trying to advance in concentration and meditation. And another device which he makes use of to keep the constant remembrance, in addition to Japa, is that he tries to superimpose God on everything. He makes the whole mind filled with the thought of Ram or God, by feeling that whatever he sees, tastes or hears is God. Above, below, to the right, to the left, everything is Ram. In everything see God. All objects in this world, both moving and static, are Ram. So he tries to superimpose Ram and Ram alone in everything, and therefore everything in this world becomes Ramamaya, and Tulasidas has very beautifully given in a couplet: “Knowing that the entire world is nothing but pervaded by Sita Ram, again and again I prostrate myself before you with folded hands.” In air, water, ether, in breath, in everything he sees the Lord. This is the lesson given in the eleventh chapter of the Gita. God is transcendent and He is also immanent. The immanence of the Lord was brought out to Arjuna. The Lord shows him His Cosmic Form. Arjuna sees the Almighty Spirit alone everywhere. There is nothing other than the Lord. It is called the vision of the Cosmic Form, and this is a marvellous technique of making the mind completely coloured with the supreme ideal. The mind itself slowly tends to take that form, and so if this practice is persisted in, wherever his senses move, they never move from the Lord. Where do the senses go? They go to the Lord. If he sees any object, there he sees the Lord. If the eyes take him out, he sees only the Lord. If he hears something, he hears only the voice of the Lord. Wherever the senses move, they move towards the Lord. So, for him there is no distraction caused by the senses. Even the senses try to keep him in touch with God. This is a marvellous method for completely eliminating all distractions. For, the man beholds the Lord and Lord alone, and his external life is also covered by the chain of Chintan. The Sikhs also make use of Nama and Smaran.

The mental and emotional attitude of the Karma Yogi himself makes it possible for him to achieve the object,—constantly feeling the presence of God. The basic emotional attitude which forms part of a Karma Yogi has this technique spontaneously, for how is one to see God; but if you try to see God alone, what happens? The Karma Yogi by constant remembrance of the Lord, the Bhakta by repeating the Lord’s Names, the Jnana Yogi by constant thought of the all-pervading Brahman and the Raja Yogi by keeping his mind always established in Pratyahara, change the thought-habit of the mind. The concentration of a Raja Yogi goes without difficulty. The habitual state of Pratyahara is firmly established by him. He is a master of this technique of not allowing the mind to go towards external objects. And when he is perfectly established in Pratyahara, he takes up concentration. Thus, by becoming established in Pratyahara, the Raja Yogi’s mind is not completely given away to external objects, even when he is working, because his vision is changed. The external objects to him are like shadows. Pratyahara for the Raja Yogi, Smarana and mental repetition for a Bhakta and the attitude of worshipfulness too, and Brahmachintan for a Vedantin—these are the processes by which the very thought-habit of the mind is changed. A new thought-habit is created in the mind, and instead of the worldly thought-habit, the man acquires the Godly thought-habit. And when this habit is acquired, even in meditation the entry of thoughts

inimical to meditation gradually lose their hold upon the aspirant; they begin to fade out and soon a state of concentration is achieved, where what all thoughts come during the practice of concentration are all thoughts which are of the same nature as the object of concentration and meditation. Therefore, they do not come as disturbing factors. They may, of course, lessen the intensity of concentration, but immediately concentration again proceeds. There is no break of the current of concentration. It is never broken, though it may be faint for sometime, and this practice should be constantly carried on, whether you are Vedantin, a Karma Yogin or a Raja Yogin.

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## SADHANA

Sadhana is the purpose for which we have come to this plane. It is this earth-plane alone upon which Sadhana for Self-realisation can be done and so this is called Sadhana-Bhumi. Not so in the other planes; the lower ones in hell are for working out one's bad Karmas, wrong actions, paying the penalty for sins, and the higher planes, the heavens, are for enjoying the happy fruits of merits. But going to either of these, man has to come back once again to where he was before he went there. But on the earth-plane he can so live that he may pass on to an abode of eternal existence from which he need not once again return to this plane of pain, suffering, birth and death.

So Sadhana is indispensable. Self-realisation comes through Sadhana. What is Sadhana? Sadhana means right living—living a God-oriented life, living a life where you start manifesting and expressing That which you are. You are ever-pure and spotless. Well express that ever-pure, spotless nature in your thoughts, words, in the pattern of your desires and inner motives in your daily life. Practise that, live that, radiate that—that is Sadhana. You are the Truth, the supreme Reality. Express this Truth. Root out falsehood from your heart. Become an embodiment of Truth. Be what you are. Let not your life be a contradiction of what you are. This is the essential Sadhana. It is the direct path to live a divine life, to be divine in thought, word and deed.

The supreme Sadhana is a life lived divinely where every act, thought and word is permeated with the divine quality. Through a divinely lived life, expressing your innermost divinity in all aspects of your life, attain this divine experience and rejoice. Declare thus with supreme joy: “Chidananda, Chidananda, Om, I am Existence, Consciousness, Bliss, in all conditions.” Strive for this and claim your birthright. No effort is too much. With joy and hope, patiently work towards this goal. Even when you are working, do not leave this inner consciousness, and awareness. Assert it at every moment in all things. Be victorious over circumstances. Be the conqueror of your mind, the subduer of your desires and a master of your destiny, for you are the Master.

Again I say, you must work for it. You must climb up if you want to reach the peak, and when once you are on the pinnacle, all labour seems as mere child's play. Until then, you must be able to laboriously climb up, step by step. Hold on to the Awareness and feel that you are already on the peak, but don't stop climbing. Climb up and up, step by step. This is the secret of Sadhana.

May you develop noble character and walk the path of the good and pure, the path of Truth, purity and goodness, and move towards that glorious goal which awaits you. This is your birthright, which you can claim and experience in this very body. Do not postpone it. Be up and doing. The

prayers of this servant, will always be with you, that you may arise victorious and attain full success in this life. May you abound with the glory of God-realisation.

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## HOW TO OVERCOME OBSTACLES IN SADHANA

You must cultivate the flowers of Divine virtues in the garden of your heart. It is from virtue that one rises to holiness, from holiness to godliness and from godliness to God-experience. From impurity one rises to purity, from purity to sanctity and from sanctity into sublime spiritual experience.

The great Sankaracharya who established the pure monistic philosophy—Kevala Advaita—in India, in describing the ascent of the individual soul into the experience of the Absolute, said that in this practical path of Sadhana, three barriers have to be overcome. We are in a state of grossness because our consciousness is bound up in this form in which we dwell, the body which we are occupying, residing in. This embodied state has brought about the state of grossness. Why? Because due to an inexplicable mysterious factor, we who reside in this body-house have become totally identified with it in our consciousness and this identification has made us feel that we are, ourselves, this body and this body is ourselves.

No matter how much we may mouth the words: “I am not this body,” yet the very next instant after so saying, our actual life and behaviour betray simply “I am this body.” So, in effect, we demonstrate body-consciousness though in words we may affirm or assert the contrary. Experiment with this for yourself. Observe yourself and you will see that even though your tongue may assert, your mind may think and your intellect may reason and convince itself, “I am not this body, I am the Atman,” actually the intellect may be engaged in a process of discrimination. You may feel you have almost risen into a state of Atmic consciousness, while it is so engaged. But at that moment if someone suddenly comes and says: “You fool! You are wasting your time in sitting there; why don’t you go and work?”, then your temper will immediately flare up and you will be in a state of anger. Vedanta will vanish and the intellect will suddenly abandon itself to the anger that has arisen in the mind due to a long force of habit. When this man looks at you and fixes his gaze upon your body and calls you a fool, you will immediately conclude he is calling you a fool. He addresses a name and a form, pointing to the body and says: “So-and-so, you are a fool!” And So-and-so, the immortal Atman, Satchidananda, beyond mind and body and beyond all the pairs of opposites, immediately gets up and prepares to fight. Your mind is in turmoil. It is agitated and is thinking: “How can I repay this fellow?” Anger flares up and the mind is thrown into agitation, and you want to go and punch the man in the nose. You have completely and totally forgotten: “I am the peaceful and ever-blissful Satchidananda Atman, beyond body, mind, intellect, name and form; I am all-full, complete, one without a second; so who can call me anything; there is no second other than me; there is only Satchidananda—Bliss, Bliss, Bliss I am.”

Now, this sudden wave of anger which changes our beauty into ugliness, non-violence into violence, the truth of your higher nature into the falsity of your lower nature and contradicts all the three fundamental values of Divine Life,—truth, purity, and compassion,—and transforms you from Satchidananda Atman into something totally different, is impurity (Mala). It is an essential

impurity. Anger, greed, passion, selfishness, arrogance, delusion, deluded attachment to the body, name and form, its passions, envy and jealousy, all of these constitute the impurities of human nature and every now and then they spring in and overpower the mind. They fill the mind and your Satchidananda consciousness is obscured. It is forgotten and pettiness, dishonesty, intolerance, pride and the thought of “how dare one address me like this?” come into the mind.

These are all called impurities, and are the basic blemishes of the human personality. They have to be eliminated if you are to rise into a higher state of consciousness. These blemishes constantly plague the human individual and so long as these are fully active in our nature, how can the ever-pure Atman manifest itself in our consciousness?

So Sankaracharya said that one barrier is the impurities of such vicious qualities which are the total negation of the Atman, the Divine principle. These impurities constantly put the mind into a state of agitation and activity. They never allow the mind to be calm and serene. As long as these gross impurities draw the mind outward to unspiritual action every moment, how can the mind be inward drawn, calm, serene, one-pointed and concentrated? How can you meditate? How can you sustain one unbroken current of thought of the Supreme Reality?

Due to impurities, mind is filled with lower qualities like Rajas, Tamas and it is always in a state of restlessness, outgoing movement and agitation. This is the second barrier, called (Vikshepa). This has to be overcome.

Still deeper in your mind is the third factor. You totally and completely forgot about the essential Divine nature, and you were only an angry person wanting to retaliate. The thing which totally makes you forget the Reality of your Higher Divine Nature and comes as an impenetrable veil, which is drawn between the Atmic consciousness and your body-bound, mind-bound consciousness, the consciousness that is identified with the wave of anger, causes you not only to be identified with the name and form but also with the mind and its modes. It is this mysterious veil which holds you in a state of ignorance of the higher nature. It is there all the time in the very depths of your being and is called Avarana. It is a veil over the inner depths of your consciousness.

These three,—Mala, Vikshepa and Avarana—have to be overcome. The lower impurities or blemishes of the human nature, the imperfections constitute Mala. The constant restless nature of the mind, its constant agitation and activity is known as Vikshepa which prevents the mind from being one-pointed and introverted. Avarana is non-awareness or non-perception in the form of nescience, basic ignorance, spiritual ignorance, the veil which hides you. This veil is made up of the identification of the body-mind-consciousness. The veil of ignorance is present inside the mind in the form of this identification of body and mind. All the three in their gross and subtle forms have to be overcome.

Now, grossness is the identification with the body. Inside this is Tamas and inside Tamas is Rajas and the innermost veil is of Sattva. Why do you call this Sattva? Because it is awareness. There is knowledge. So there is not total non-awareness—or lack of knowledge as in deep sleep where you do not know anything. Here you know. There is awareness, but only the awareness of “I am Mr. So-and-so. I have just been insulted.” You know something but the only thing is that you know it totally wrong, you have it all wrong. There is Jnana but it is called Ajnana as it is

topsy-turvy knowledge, knowledge inverted. It is really feeling yourself to be something which you are not. So, there is awareness and knowledge but characterised by ignorance. Because it is a state of awareness and it is a state of knowledge, it is the outcome of Sattva. Sattva is the principle that supports this awareness. All awareness is Sattva. This awareness is characterised by ignorance, and therefore it is called Ajnana. This should be replaced by the knowledge of the Reality.

So, Tamas, Rajas, Sattva, impurities, restless tendencies and the veil of non-perception or forgetfulness of your true nature,—these barriers have to be gradually overcome, stage by stage in a methodical manner. And then suddenly you see, there will dawn the light, the illumination of Atmic Knowledge, transcending these three barriers. You will come face to face with your true nature, and you will have transcendental experience. The removal of the basic impurities or blemishes can be done by overcoming them by their opposites. What do you do when you want to remove darkness? You do not bring mops or brooms to sweep it or sacks to collect it. You would not do anything of that kind. If the darkness has to go the positive opposite quality,—light—should be brought in.

The moment the positive opposite quality comes in, the negative quality vanishes because the negative quality has no basis. A negative quality is not an independent entity by itself. Mark this very, very carefully. Negative qualities do not exist as independent entities. They have really no force. They only imply the absence of positive qualities. He is a great liar means he has no truth in him. There are no such things as lies but there is absence of truth in this person and so he is called a liar. He says: “All right, I will try to become truthful” and the moment truth comes, the fact that he is a liar is no longer valid.

Hatred is not a positive quality. There is no such thing as hatred, some dark thing wanting to jump upon you. It means that there is no love, no kindness. So it only indicates a condition of the absence of love and in one who cultivates love and compassion there is no more hatred. The moment love comes in hatred vanishes because the positive is real and the negative is not real. When the positive quality is cultivated, the negative ceases to be.

So, remember, cultivating virtues is a fundamental part of self-culture leading to spiritual culture and Divine experience. This is the laying of the foundation as it were. If you want to cultivate a garden from a wild piece of land which you have purchased, you do not go on sowing seeds right from the very beginning. You know what Jesus has said in the Bible. If you simply sow seeds in the midst of the thorns and brambles what will happen is that when the seeds begin to sprout and grow they will all be choked and killed because the ground has not been proper one. So you must first prepare the ground. The first thing you will have to do is to root out all the weeds, the brambles, the undergrowth and unnecessary things. You will have to remove all stones and pebbles and purify the soil. So removal of these which are not wanted, these which are contrary to the condition which you want, is an essential part of the preparation. You must work at getting rid of the trash, eliminating all that is undivine, unspiritual, the brute and bestial nature, such as greed, hatred, anger, jealousy, selfishness, arrogance, haughtiness and attachment. All these things must be removed and then you are to plant the flowers of virtues in the garden of your heart. Then alone will you rise unto a state of godliness. ‘Cleanliness is next to godliness’—this is said with more than one meaning. One should have great deal of zeal in cultivating divine virtues.

In the sixteenth chapter of the Gita you will find these truths delineated in a wonderfully inspiring manner. If you want to realise, "I am not this body, I am not this mind, Immortal Self am I", you must practise virtue. You must cleanse yourself of the basic impurity of the gross human nature. It is there, it is all a part and parcel of our nature. It is not really existing, but appears to exist only due to the absence of the good qualities. Cultivate the flowers of virtue in the garden of your heart. Through cultivation of virtues, the removal of the oscillating, tossing, restless nature of the mind is achieved. Through prayer and other interior processes the veil of ignorance is torn aside. Through deep meditation and philosophical enquiry, discrimination, self-analysis, ceaseless inner philosophical speculation, you attain to the state of Reality-Consciousness. Then what is your experience? How do you feel? What will you say? How can you describe that grand experience of Spiritual Consciousness or Divine Consciousness 'I am Satchidananda.'

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## YOGA

Yoga means the joining of the limited self with the unlimited one. Merging of the localised consciousness of a Jiva into the Supreme Self is Yoga. Even as the rain-water flows through the river and merges into the sea, wherefrom it originated, so also the Jiva that has sprung up from the Supreme Self tries to reach its source. The merging of individual soul with the Supreme Soul is Yoga, and when this is attained, the knots of the heart are rent asunder. This means the cessation of all sorrows and the acquisition of unlimited bliss and supreme peace. You have no more wants. You have no more cravings. You will feel yourself in a state of absolute plenitude. That is the culmination of Yogic endeavour.

All things upon this earth are passing. Therefore, they cannot give permanent joy. The moment the experience of enjoyment ceases, there will be disappointment. Hence they said, "*Sarvam Duhkham Vivekinah.*" To a man of discrimination this world is characterised by pain. Therefore, in this existence man cannot find real joy. Yet he tries to get joy, which is lasting. The sages, therefore, cry out from the housetops, "O, ye mortals! Wake up. Listen to our message. We have found that eternal thing, wherein you will enjoy imperishable bliss. Reach that state which we have reached."

So the bliss of the Eternal, the Supreme fruit of Yoga, is simply indescribable. So they say it is ecstasy. They cannot express it. That is the ultimate fruit of the state of superconsciousness which a Raja Yogi attains by practising the eight stages, viz., Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi. It is a limitless bliss that breaks your individual consciousness. One who gets this bliss, cannot say anything. He becomes dumb. Suppose you give the most delicious thing to a dumb man, he cannot express the taste. That gives you an inkling of the supreme bliss into which the Yogi merges himself.

Yoga bases its origin upon the necessity felt by man to rid himself of all sorrow and suffering and to free himself forever from bondage brought about by finite existence and to attain final victory over all fear, even over death itself. To this great problem, Yoga comes at the practical solution. It provides the lost link between man and the Infinite. Yoga plainly states that man is essentially of the nature of Bliss, Perfection, Peace and freedom. Everlastingly he is one with That.

The loss of his awareness of that oneness with the infinite, all-perfect Source of his being is the very cause of his involvement in this earth-process called life. To regain a true awareness and to realise once again his everlasting oneness with the Divine is actually the practice of Yoga. The means of overcoming the defects and imperfections of this earth-life and thus experiencing union with the Supreme constitute its structure. Yoga shows how to overcome the imperfections of the lower nature and to gain complete mastery over the mind and senses.

All the techniques of Yoga require perfect ethical and moral purity. Purity is the foundation of Yogic life. One cannot be a bad man and yet try to practise Yoga. One cannot allow himself to be impure, insincere, untruthful, deceitful and harmful to others and at the same time try to practise Yoga. There cannot be any spiritual realisation when interior circumstances are imperfect. There cannot be any religious practice or true interior life when moral goodness is not deeply implanted in the being. One has to be rooted in goodness, in purity, in truth and in selflessness. Half of the process of Yoga is in getting thus perfectly established in ideal moral conduct. When this basis has been established, then the application of the techniques of Yoga is like the striking of a dry match upon the match-box and immediately there is a flame. Without this basis, it is like trying to strike and ignite a wet match upon a cake of soap—nothing happens.

In all phases of Yogic life, the supreme factor is the Grace of God. Call it what you will. It is the Grace of the Supreme Essence, the Source of all existence in which alone man realises his true nature and his deathless divinity. All the practices are purposeful when they make man move towards God and merge into oneness with Him. That is the purpose of Yoga.

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## MEDITATION AND ITS VALUE

Meditation is the ultimate process when one has laid the foundation of spiritual life, when one has overcome the constant pull of the senses and has become the master of one's senses, when one through true discrimination and true inquiry, has realised the absolute hollowness of all that is perceived and therefore has overcome the natural tendencies of the mind towards appearances and has succeeded in turning away completely from the desire for names and forms and attachment to objects and experiences, when one has learned the techniques of withdrawing the mind from the outer appearances, and when one has cultivated and created within a state of quiescence, balance, and equipoise. In that condition of being firmly grounded in virtue, that condition of perfect sense-control and self-restraint, in that condition of conquest of desires and the mastery of one's passions, in that condition of inner stability and equipoise, one begins to gather oneself and move towards the concept or idea of what you feel of the Reality as opposed to appearances. This—the ingathering of the totality of your being, and the centralising of this ingathered power in one specific self-chosen direction,—is the object of your meditation, and the keeping up of a continued and unbroken movement of the ingathered totality in that particular direction of your entire being. This ingathered and directed, when this continued unbroken movement succeeds, you are in a state of meditation.

So it is the successful movement, continuously, in a self-chosen direction, of the totality of your being, ingathered in a unity—a unified whole—that is called meditation. All other things are

individual private notions of meditation. All other things are only what you think to be meditation. Meditation requires being perfectly grounded in virtue. Virtue means certain spiritual qualities which are absolutely indispensable prerequisites for the interior life of meditation, without which meditation is impossible. There are certain spiritual qualities, which are the building blocks for the structure, which ultimately attains the pinnacle of meditation. Meditation is, as it were, the point of the pyramid. It cannot be created in air. It is created from the broad base on hard earth. The structure goes on and on and then you attain that point where there is that one stone—that is meditation. And, therefore, it is a process which is grounded in virtue. Virtue means spiritual qualities and why those spiritual qualities are insisted upon is very simple to understand. Because they are the refined qualities which keep out of your nature forces that are the direct antithesis of the Divine experience—factors which are direct contradictions of the state of meditation and of the spiritual experience. As long as these contrary forces and factors are there, it is not possible to rise in spiritual experience. You cannot be wet and dry at the same moment. And in order to put out those factors and forces there is only one way. That is, you have to create in your nature a strong positive movement within yourself and then they are no more. They are countered and overcome. They cannot remain, because they are merely the negation of certain virtues or positive forces. They have no separate or independent existence and identity by themselves. So to overcome them, certain positive factors (virtues) have to be created in you. Those positive factors are called virtues for want of a better term. They are spiritual qualities which are essential in order to keep out of your nature those factors that are unspiritual and directly contradictory to and the antithesis of the experience which you are trying to attain.

Based upon this essential ethical change and readjustment meditation is an interior process. The senses always have as their main task the keeping of your entire psyche in an exteriorised condition. That is the very nature of the senses, and unless you know how to control your senses, the psyche can never be ingathered. The ingathering of your psyche is absolutely indispensable and necessary for meditation. So, control of senses comes as the next preliminary condition. But if the psyche is in a constant state of effervescence within, then even in spite of having success in making it ingathered, you cannot initiate this process, which requires a certain degree of stillness. Therefore, next comes the calming of the mind, its desires, the passions, the various ambitions, the constant attachments and the cravings that keep the mind always in a state of flux and ferment. They have to be overcome, and this does not come in a day. This is a process that takes time. This process of attaining a certain extent of absolute quiescence of this mind takes many years. Even if it takes years, it is worthwhile. Spiritual life cannot be in the presence of impatience. It cannot be done in the presence of haste. The eagerness must be there, tremendous eagerness—tremendous enthusiasm,—and at the same time it should be accompanied by patience. So, this state of quiescence can come about only if you are able to cast out of your mind miscellaneous desires, attachments, overwhelming ambitions, plans and schemes and what not. All these things have to give place to a unified aspiration. The mind wants only one thing. In that it should not want anything else. Total elimination of wants is impossible. Hunger, the desire for food and drink, desire for clothing and other desires by their very immediacy in your life are so very demanding and you cannot get rid of them. A father will have plans for his child, but all miscellaneous desires have to be completely out along with all ambitions and planning, and there should be unified aspiration, meaning that, by and large, the maximum predominant emphasis in your mind will be upon that ultimate goal. The mind is relatively unified, even though there may be in its periphery some of these unavoidable desires of the immediate life you are living. Mainly, it will be unified, and when

it is thus unified, all dispersal will go. There will be no ambitions, no other desires, no other attachments, no other passions, and cravings. The mind will be totally in a state of ingatheredness and unity. We call it in Sanskrit Ekagrata.

Ekagrata means attainment of a state of one-pointedness. This mind alone, which has now been rendered subtle by giving up gross sensual experience, by totally eliminating the sensual desires, and by renunciation, attains a state of purity. See, mind is also matter. It is a very subtle matter compared to physical matter. Compared to spirit it is also matter. When it is filled with earthly tendencies, passions and greeds, it is full of Tamas and full of Rajas, i.e., it is very close to the presence of the quality of inertia and becomes still more gross due to the presence of the quality of restlessness, selfish desires and activities. When these have been transcended and to a certain extent mastered, then mind attains a state of purity and subtleness. Then the mind assumes an upward direction. It is always horizontal in its dynamics.

It assumes a state of upward direction only when it attains a state of subtlety and purity. Such a mind, rendered pure, rendered subtle by absolute purity and virtue, sense-control and elimination of desires and passions, only becomes the instrument which can think of the Atman—the Reality. Otherwise normal gross mind has not the state in which it can think of the Atman—the Truth or the Reality. It only gets the capability of thinking about the Atman when it is thus rendered subtle and pure. That mind should be engaged in meditation. Thinking that you are meditating is only a thought in your mind.

You may be sitting straight and you may be thinking you are meditating. You are doing something with the mind but it is not meditation. Meditation requires a different mind. The outgoing mind, the objectifying mind, the mind with desires and ambitions, this mind cannot be really meditating. Yes, it may be trying to concentrate and do some exercises and going through valuable training, a valuable process of discipline. This is not completely useless. It will always prepare the mind in a certain way, but ultimately this total transformation in your interior, by bringing the mind into that state of subtleness and purity, is absolutely necessary to initiate the process of meditation inside, because that is the instrument. A subtle, pure mind, completely still and calm and totally inward, that is the instrument for meditation. With that mind alone one can really meditate.

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## SRIMAD BHAGAVAD GITA

The Gita is a veritable Divine Kalpataru or the bestower of everything to every one according to one's particular need. The historian would see in it a memorable document marking the moment when decadence set in the ranks of the human society with the lapse of Dharma from the land and the advent of the age of unrighteousness. The imagination of the philosopher sees in it the symbolic representation of the play of inner forces in the individual monad and the presentation of a sublime method of its perfect resolution. To orthodox traditionalists in the field of philosophy, it is one of the great Triad, i.e., the Prasthanatraya. To all votaries of Hindu culture, the Gita remains as the quintessence of all the highest flights of the Vedantic, Upanishadic investigations and conclusions.

There was once a young person. He played with cows. He spoke something which has now become immortal. What he spoke has become one of the greatest little books that the world has before it. It is the Gita. It tells us the dynamic practical way, the Upanishadic way of life. This tells us how bliss may be extracted from the Upanishads and tasted.

The Upanishads insist upon Aparoksha Anubhuti (direct experience) that the whole world is a dream. But what is our actual experience? A little word of abuse, a little difference in the taste of the food you get, and the dream, which you say the world is, becomes very real! That is the net in which you are caught.

Supposing there is a rich man and supposing he gives an open banquet. He extends an invitation to all. But, supposing the man has tied a fierce dog at the door. All can peep in, but none can enter; because the devilish dog is there. Similar is the case with the bliss of Self-realisation. In the religious field, too, there is this thing which won't allow you to eat the bread—to taste the bliss of the Self. Some call it Satan; others call it Mara or Maya. It is there in every religion. All the bliss of the Upanishads is there, tempting you; but there is this hurdle which is not easy to jump over—*Mama Maya Duratyaya*—as the Lord says in the Gita. That is why, in spite of all the Upanishads, all the scriptures, all the saints, all the Avatars and all religions, the dream continues to be real, and attraction to objects is still there. It is very difficult for man to turn away from the Preyas and take to the path of the Sreyas. Herein comes the real problem for us, if we ought to experience the glory, grandeur and bliss of the Upanishadic state of Atma-Jnana, what is the way? This obstacle, Maya, is there within every man. The ultimate analysis would show that it is actually man's mind itself. It is the overcoming of the mind in man that is the main problem of the seeker, overcoming which he would enrich himself with the experiences expounded in the Upanishads, enjoy the state of Para Brahman, that Bhuma,—an experience having gained which nothing more is to be gained. What is the method by which we can overcome this Maya or mind?

Maya is manifest in the human individual as mind. This aspect of individual Maya, deluding him completely, works havoc upon the external field of life, based upon egoism. That egoism may be in the form of a false identification of the self with the body, which is called Adhyasa. The Vedantins refer to the nescience in man in terms of Adhyasa. Break away from this false identification; you are what you are. Then, you will shine in your own glory. The Raja Yogins refer to this wonderful power in its aspect as Vritti (thought-wave). Vikshepa or tossing of the mind is always there. This Vritti is the bane of human life. Therefore, mind has to be completely subjugated by absolute annihilation of Vrittis. The same mind based upon ego, manifests itself through the emotional aspect of the individual in so many attachments. This clinging nature of the mind which works through the emotional aspect of man as Mamata (mineness) is effectively purified and sublimated, through another Yoga which they call Bhakti Yoga. This same mind has also got the habit of manifesting itself in another way, in the form of pride, selfishness, and the urge to acquire material gain: to that end man will work himself to death, so that there is a perverted dynamism completely seeking to engage oneself in selfish activity, with a desire for personal gain and taking pride in all the successes one has achieved in this process. This is effectively tried to be counteracted through yet another Yoga which they call Karma Yoga, the path of overcoming selfishness, pride; giving up of Raga-Dvesha, by an impersonal, altruistic unselfishness, acting with worshipful Bhava or mental attitude.

Therefore, to overcome Maya of the Lord, in these very broad universal aspects, was considered to be the one thing important, necessary and indispensable, if you had to make the Upanishadic truth live in you as glorious, direct experience. It is purely negative process. It cannot give you Atma-Jnana; but it is very necessary. This is the process of Sadhana which the Gita gives in various beautiful ways to suit various individuals.

We know that Sadhana is to be done. How is it to be done? We have got a lot of wrong Samskaras. How actually should a man do Sadhana? For that the Gita has given some Sadhanas. No amount of lecturing, no amount of reading can ever bring you nearer the Atman. These are all necessary, to know what the Reality is. The Gita itself embodies a discourse or a talk given by the blessed Lord to all of us, through Arjuna. Therefore, here, in this particular case the problem is to quieten all our talk and to listen to the voice of the Lord. We are Shrotas (listeners); and the Lord is the Vakta (teacher). We should silence all noises of our finite individual being, and in this silence we should strive earnestly to listen to this divine Voice of the Lord, the call of the Gita. Thus, silence was thought to be the best adoration of the Gita—a silent, earnest practice. That is the ultimate word with which Arjuna closes his eager questioning: “I shall do as you say.” Our duty also should be to be silent and to live the Gita.

We never know that the mind is different from us. Overcoming the mind is like killing oneself. But, that is the most important thing. Disassociating yourself from the mind means giving a death-blow to yourself, to that which you have always been feeling in your consciousness as yourself. A new ‘myself’ has to come into being. Non-cooperation of the mind in the Viveka-aspect of the individual’s personality can start to come into operation; and you will know that the mind is other than yourself. This Sadhana requires courage. Mind is able to play all this havoc with the help of the ego. We have to play another master-stroke. We have to kill the ego. This ego-dichotomy has to start in the very beginning of Sadhana. It is completed in Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Blind-folded, you have to walk. It is not outside but inside, about which we know nothing. How great is the necessity to have a guide and to have absolute trust in the guide, and to completely surrender oneself to him! These three things are absolutely essential.

*Tadviddhi Pranipatena Pariprasnena Sevaya:* Know that by prostration, enquiry and service. No one likes to fall at the feet of another, accepting oneself to be inferior, accepting there is one who is far superior to oneself in every way. This brings about a revolution in the consciousness of the individual. Pariprasnena: no one wants to know that there are lot of things he does not know. “Who are you to teach me?” he asks. You have to completely give up this aspect of your ego and humbly ask the guide and try to know the truth. Then, Seva. We all want to be served; but the effective method to batter down this aspect of the ego is, therefore, service. Renounce the ego. Serve the preceptor, serve him as an ordinary slave. This way the foundation is laid for the latter Sadhanas which are all concerned in attacking the ego in all its evil aspects and ultimately annihilating its last vestige in Asmita itself. Asmita is the realm of duality; therefore, it does not come up to the standard. Therefore, go on attacking, overcoming, sublimating and transmuting the ego, till there shines only the splendour of the universal Atman, the Infinite “I am That I am.”

In this process you may fail not once or ten times, but a hundred or thousand times. Sadhana is going from bigger failures to smaller failures. They are progressively lesser. When you wish to see the whole world as the Atman, you plunge into meditation; the moment you open your eyes, the

moment you come into Vyavahara, you see that one man is good and another is bad. Heroism is therefore needed in a man who has set himself to go forth and capture the Atmic experience. He does not care for discouragement at all. Then he will progress and he will get what he has set himself to get.

The first chapter of the Gita asks you to be bold and courageous. It stresses upon heroism and strength. The second chapter is full of wonderful Viveka and Vichara. Always discriminate between the Permanent and the evanescent. It reminds you, “The Immortal Atman does not die with the body.” This truth of the distinction between the body, mind and Prana on the one side, and the glorious, ever-perfect Atman on the other, is taught in this chapter. In the twelfth chapter is taught the way of transmuting emotions. The last eight verses of the twelfth chapter give you the Yoga of devotion. The tenth chapter gives you the experience of the Cosmic Being and the secret as well, how to keep up the Consciousness of the Atman. The fourteenth chapter gives you the secret—how to make yourself completely Sattvic, because Sattva is the nearest approach to divinity. Only after being established in Sattva can you reach the transcendental. The sixteenth chapter tells you how to recognise that which is undivine so that you may put forth effort, to erase them from your personality, and how to recognise all that is divine so that you may diligently and earnestly strive to acquire them. The fifteenth chapter tells you how to live your life as a sacrifice, and how to recognise the Atman which is immanent in all. The Gita deals with all important aspects of practical Sadhana which lead us to the realisation of the Upanishadic wisdom of Aparoksha Anubhuti. These we have to follow, and also enshrine the practical Sadhana of the Gita in our hearts. We have to live in a constant state of humble surrender to the Lord who is manifest as the Sat-Guru and if we thus live and carry on our Sadhana with perfect Vairagya, always choosing the Sreyas, every time a choice is put before us, rejecting the Preyas, then our Sadhana will become fruitful; the ultimate attainment is in the hands of the Lord. May you all lead the Gita way of life and attain Supreme Happiness!

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## GURU AND DISCIPLE

Guru-Kripa\* is a wonderful mysterious factor, that will enable the aspirants to seek and to attain the *summum bonum* of life, Self-realisation, the vision of God, or Moksha. Whether the disciple is deserving, or undeserving, Guru-Kripa sets aside all normal laws that operate in the spiritual plane and takes one to the transcendental Bliss.

There is absolutely not the least bit of exaggeration in the statement and also in the fact that the Guru is always gracious. But then, Guru-Kripa has not only to be bestowed, not only to be given, but *it has also to be received*. In receiving it, we immortalise ourselves and divinise ourselves.

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\* The grace of the Preceptor

There must be joy in obedience to the Guru and there should be a real craving in the spirit that “I should obey.” To be a disciple, you should obey even in dream. Day and night our Sadhana should be to cultivate this attitude of obedience to perfection. This is the external part of Sadhana.

To the disciple, the nature of the Guru is not human. We should be completely blind to the human side of the Guru and we should be conscious only of the divinity that he is. Then alone will we be able to partake of his Kripa which will transform us from the lower human into the transcendental divine. Our relationship with the Guru is purely divine, purely spiritual.

Similarly we have first of all to develop in us the consciousness that we are immortal beings and that we are in essence Satchidananda. Then we can demand that Satchidananda consciousness from Guru and Guru will be able to give.

Patience and humility in the spiritual realm may have to extend over a period of decades. We have to wait like a dog at the door-step of the Guru for a whole lifetime, if need be. There is no loss here. For, the goal is immortal life and freedom.

The best thing is to humbly leave everything to the Guru. “I do not know whether I am a disciple or not. Therefore, O Ocean of Mercy and Compassion, pray, make me a proper disciple. Generate in me that Mumukshutva which makes me a disciple and give me the spirit of willing obedience. Help me in trying to follow thy instructions. Help me in trying to mould myself upon the pattern set up by thee”—this must be our constant prayer. And, by this alone shall we be able to draw the Kripa of our Guru and make our life fruitful. And the perfect way of praying is in obeying and in trying our best to be a real disciple.

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## RELIGION

Existence being one all life is one. All life being essentially one mankind is also one. Uniformity, is the law of the spiritual plane. Though externally, variety or diversity is the Law of Nature in the manifest universe, in its inner aspect uniformity or unity is the Fact of Life. *Mankind is one*. Thus on the one side we have this unity of mankind all over the universe. On the other side, regarding Godhead too we have utterances of sages ‘*Ekam Eva Advitiam Brahma*’—*God is one*. Absolute unity has to partake of the nature of oneness. Thus when we go into the fact of religion from this observation and from this attitude or point of view, we are drawn to the conclusion that Religion too is one! Whatever the apparent external differences between religions may be, the inner *process of religion* has necessarily to be one and the same. For, all religion but implies and comprises man’s movement towards Godhead.

The process of religion is the freeing of man from the factors which bind him down to this earthly existence of pain and death. If unrighteousness is a factor in causing suffering, then be righteous. If through untruth man is to be bound to this vexing mortal life, and has to pay a heavy penalty in suffering and pain, then abandon falsehood: be truthful, if by being cruel, you will reap a harvest of pain, torment and suffering, cast away cruelty and practise Ahimsa, be good, be kind, be compassionate. Thus Ethics becomes a part of *practice of religion*. Thus the process of religion

develops in a scientific way by studying the causative factors of your bondage to this earth-life and its pain and sorrows. It insists that by living a life of practical religion you can remove all these causative factors of suffering. We must, therefore, lead the life carefully in such a way that we do not commit those things which result in painful experience and existence.

The process of religion slowly works out a scheme of life for you where you are made to bring into manifestation or into active expression, all these lofty life-transforming elements of the Divine aspect of your being, thus helping to overcome the animalistic aspect and progressively unfold the divine nature that is already the essential part of your inmost Consciousness. Man is made in the image of God; therefore Godliness is the very essence of his real inner being. Hence the external operation of lower nature has to be overcome and cast away, thus giving full scope for the manifestation of the Divine Svaroop (nature) in him. With the unfoldment and the blossoming of the Divine Consciousness in man, he becomes at once linked with the infinite divine existence, Sat-Chit-Ananda. The unity which had been for the time being veiled, as it were by ignorance is reestablished. The consummation of the religious quest is to make man declare: "I am not this body, I am not the senses, the mind and the intellect, I am Sat-Chit-Ananda Brahman." This comes from the fullness of experience and the culmination of religious practice which is the experience of your Eternal spiritual Unity with Godhead.

No religion wants you to be tied down to this earthly life. All religions have as their goal the reaching of perfection, freedom and immortality. All religions also have the same process in their essence, whatever be the difference in the ritual or ceremonial details. Real Religion wants the complete annihilation of the lower self, animalistic part of man, and the progressive unfoldment of his divine nature. Thus from the very genesis, the process to be worked out and the ultimate goal, we see that all religions are at-one.

Religions have come either from eternal wisdom enshrined in scriptural texts like the Upanishads, Vedas, or from some great men of wisdom inspired by God to give out His message about the Way of attainment. If we go to the source and look at the great and inspired lives of Jesus, Mohammed, Zoroaster, Buddha and examine the great fountain-heads of the various faiths in the world, we will find that by their practical example, through their exemplary life, they have shown us what is the very soul of the religions which they have given to mankind. They demonstrated the practical living of the religions which they later on gave to their followers and in these personal, living demonstrations they were all at-one.

Let us examine a few of the prophetic utterances of these great messengers of God. Is there any religion that tells us "Utter lies; be dishonest; hate people; develop anger and animosity; be impure; be immoral?" No, certainly not, is the emphatic answer. Every religion lays stress upon a life of *Truth, Absolute purity, of compassion, of love, of devotion, of tenderness, of a life of sacrifice* and of *goodness* in thought, word and deed. Every religion has given a way of life to its followers as the ideal to be followed, in order to attain the goal viz., ultimate imperishable happiness free from birth and death, disease and misery. The way or the means is one and the same in every great religion. It is a life of purity and devotion practically demonstrated by each one of the prophets, Saints and great men of wisdom.

Therefore, from whichever angle you approach and study the subject of religion and spirituality, and from whichever angle you look at it, you find that every important factor is fundamentally one and the same in all faiths. All faiths are one and all Prophets have lived the same life of ethical perfection, divine compassion, goodness and awareness of the oneness of mankind. Thus, however much we may try to close our eyes to these facts, we find the oneness of all faiths proclaiming itself in a living, irresistible way through the very motive force underlying each faith and religion. In other words through the oneness in the very process that these religious achievements are to be worked out and through the ultimate conception of the destination which each one of these wants its followers to realise. These different faiths are, as it were, so many beautiful flowers that go to make a beautiful bouquet which we offer at the Almighty Being.

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## THE GLORY OF SANNYASA

We, as seekers of Truth, have first of all to bear in mind that there is a twofold aspect in which Sannyasa pervades our life. In its purely spiritual aspect, Sannyasa embodies the highest spirit of Nivritti, viz., the total negation of names and forms, and the masterful and purposeful assertion of the One Reality, beyond all names and forms, Brahman or the Self. This is the highest outcome of the highest Vedantic Sadhana. This is the innermost core of the culture of Bharatavarsha, the highest and the only aim of human existence according to the Hindu genius. Not only this physical universe, but the countless number of universes that exist as a drop in the infinite ocean of Satchidananda, are negated in order to ever remain immersed in the blissful consciousness of the Atman.

To realise this great end and aim, our ancient sages and saints have interwoven and blended into the fabric of our social life the four Ashramas, viz., Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha and Sannyasa, to effect a gradual unfoldment of this spirit stage by stage in the life of an individual. In the Brahmacharya Ashrama or the student-life one has to live with his Guru, give up all distracting thoughts and give himself up completely to the study of scriptures, living a life of self-control, purity, simplicity, austerity, attention to studies and obedience to and service of the preceptor. In the next stage, he lives an ideal life of a householder, with selflessness, self-sacrifice and self-effacement as his mottoes. This is the preparation for the next stage, viz., Vanaprastha, where he has to discipline himself to enter the life of Sannyasa.

In the Sannyasa life, meditation and collecting food for his livelihood were the Dharmas enjoined upon the man who had done all his duties to society, to the nation, to his own family and to his friends. He has now no more attachment and has but to fulfil the one great duty, i.e., of meditation upon the Self, and realisation. Thus in the last stage of the social order, viz., Sannyasa, we have the highest spirit which embodies the soul's upsurge from finitude to infinitude. This is the natural and dynamic movement of every soul which strives to break all finite bonds and cast aside all traces of attachment; and, completely shattering the illusion of duality and phenomenal existence, it strives to soar into the splendour of Atman-consciousness.

This innate urge of the individual is the spiritual aspect of Sannyasa for which no social order exists. It depends upon the intensity of the soul's urge, upon the thirst for Self-realisation

which seizes the Jiva that has been awakened to the transient nature of the phenomena and to the ever-present Reality that is its very nature.

The real meaning and the true glory of Sannyasa can be best understood by devoutly observing saints and men of God who are the living embodiments of the highest and the best in Sannyasa. They personify Sannyasa in the truest sense of the term. Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj is verily the greatest exemplar of the true Sannyasa spirit. Every act of his is the illuminating revealer of the secrets of real renunciation.

The spirit of Sannyasa has been misunderstood to be a sort of retreat to the quiescent and a sort of escapism which arises out of inability to face life. That sort of Sannyasa stands self-condemned. Sannyasa is infinite strength. By escaping from active struggle of earthly life, an individual cannot escape his Prarabdha. This is an illusion which people who do not know the law of Karma hold on to. He who understands, would not dare to enter this fiery order of Sannyasa in order to escape from the struggle of life. Fate will show that he is woefully mistaken. Those very Karmas which he has sought to escape in secular life will stand before him, ruthless and pitiless, and he will have to work them out with compound interest.

Sannyasa is based upon heroism. The real soldier in the Adhyatmic field is he who has dared to see life as it is, who knows that everything in this world is a transitory dream; and having the courage of this conviction that the world is unreal, he has risen above the strong bonds of attachment to sensual objects and has come into the life where the greatest of all struggles has to be worked out—a struggle against one's own nature. There is no greater difficulty in the world than to attempt to wipe out the feeling or consciousness of one's individual existence—'I am the body', 'I am this mind', 'I am strong', 'I am good-looking, talented' and all the hosts of associations and Adhyasas which cling to the normal human consciousness—and to instil in its place the grand consciousness, 'I am not this body', 'I am not this mind', 'I am Satchidananda Atman', 'I am all-pervading and infinite, beyond birth and death, endowed with countless powers.' This is real heroism. In trying to do this, one has to give battle to age-old instincts which one has acquired through crores of births through which the Jiva-consciousness has passed. This is not the struggle of a day. It may well be the struggle of a lifetime, and many a time one has to face defeat and downfall.

The heroism of a Sannyasin lies in the fact that he will not be a coward. He admits of no failure, of no set-back. For him all these elements in the struggle are steps which take him nearer and nearer to the grand ideal, to the great goal having reached which he will be able to declare: *Deho naham jivo naham; Pratyagabhinna atmaivaham*—I am not this body, nor the Jiva; I am the innermost indivisible Atman. Every effort put forth is in the nature of an achievement never in the nature of a loss.

A Sannyasin is one whose life is based upon supreme Tyaga, upon perfect desirelessness. He has to give up all desire for this gross, physical, external world; even the desire for highest enjoyment in heaven. From a blade of grass to highest Brahman, all is dust for a Sannyasin. He rises above them and asserts his Atmic nature. His life is, therefore, based upon renunciation. He does not bestow too much attention upon his physical body, whether it is praised or censured, respected or ill-treated. He ever strives to elevate his consciousness to the consciousness of the Atman. Reflect over the above and judge what you are.

A Sannyasin's life is composed of the three factors of total renunciation, of a blazing aspiration for the Infinite, of spotless purity. A total renunciation is the negative aspect of his life, the blazing aspiration is the positive aspect in between, and spotless purity is the fabric of which his life is made up. Positive purity is the one condition of the descent of Divine consciousness into his receptacle. Keeping this as the model pattern of the Sannyasin's life, may we all ever struggle to come out of the intoxication of ego-consciousness, of this fever, Kama-Krodha-Lobha-Mada-Matsarya disease, this Samsaric disease which can be cured only through correct understanding of Sannyasa and Brahma-Chintan. If all pain and sorrow are to cease for ever, we have to take to Sannyasa. If our life is to blaze forth as peace and blessedness, Sannyasa, and Sannyasa alone, is the one way. For, it is selfishness that is at the root of all miseries upon the earth, of all fights and quarrels, all problems, all wars and hostilities; every sorrow and every misery that is now rampant in human society has at its root the Asuric trait of gross selfishness, where man wants everything for himself and does not care what happens to others in the process of fulfilling this craving for getting things for himself. Sannyasa cuts at the very root of this Asuric trait, for Sannyasa is based upon unselfishness and renunciation of selfishness; and if selfishness is renounced everything is renounced. Renunciation of selfishness means, if I may say so, renunciation of all desires for selfishness it is that takes the form of desire for various things for oneself. Therefore the real Spirit of Sannyasa may be started in the simple term complete desirelessness. In the light of this consider and evaluate your life and ascertain where your stand. Resolve freshly and strive boldly onward.

It is the duty of every aspiring seeker and earnest Sannyasin to try to take note without fail of two significant factors, namely, theoretical conception of Sannyasa as laid down in the authoritative scriptures and the practical living of Sannyasa in one's life as immortalised by the vital tradition of this great land. What does the true discerning Hindu take Sannyasa to be? We know that Sannyasa is the fourth order or stage in life (Ashrama). The individual entering this stage of life gets the Diksha through the Guru and performs Viraja Homa (sacrifice). It is this Viraja Homa that gives you the right clue and right answer to what Sannyasa implies. Viraja Homa throws a flood of light upon the true meaning of Sannyasa. Sannyasa means annihilation of the old, deluded, egoistic consciousness. It means the burning of all desires and attachments in the blazing fire of absolute renunciation. It means reducing to ashes the last vestige of physical consciousness. It is the emergence of a glorious, new consciousness. "I am neither body nor mind, immortal Self am I," is the consciousness of a Sannyasin, whose body, mind, senses, Pranas and the ego all have been offered up in the Viraja Homa flames. It is the supreme renunciation. Sannyasa therefore implies Sarva-tyaga. Hence his daily vow becomes: "I renounce the pleasures of this world. I renounce the pleasures of the astral world. I renounce the pleasure of heaven."

All desires are annihilated for anything here or in the hereafter. At this juncture we are given a startling revelation. We find that at the top of this great renunciation, comes another vow. For, the monk declares: "I will not cause fear to any being." The monk gives the promise of absolute fearlessness to all creatures whereby no living being need fear of any harm from him. By this he pledges himself to Visva-Prema or universal love. For, fear can exist only where harm or pain is forthcoming and the latter are manifest only where hatred or animosity is present. But where love becomes enshrined, only loving service and joy flow forth and all creatures may fearlessly partake of it with perfect assurance and confidence. Such universal love and service are therefore the spontaneous offshoots of Mahatyaga or supreme abandonment of selfishness. Therefore these two

great and sublime elements of Tyaga, i.e., abandonment of desires for name, fame and reward, and Seva, i.e. service to the sick, poor and needy,—constitute the sublime elements in the spirit of Sannyasa. Tyaga is for Atmasakshatkara or Self-realisation. Therefore service and Self-realisation form the lofty twin impulses that move in the life of a true Sannyasin taking him towards the attainment of the highest consciousness of Truth Absolute.

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## DIVINE LIFE

The way of Divine Life, which leads to the progress of inner spiritual unfoldment, is the way of selflessness and service, devotion and worship, withdrawal of the mind from externals, concentration and meditation. It is the way of ceaseless inquiry—“Who am I?” and “What am I?” It is the way of affirming: “I am not this body, I am not this mind, I am not this intellect, I am that innermost Being, the supreme Self, the Atman, nameless, formless, unborn, undecaying, deathless, imperishable, eternal One, I am That, That I am,—Sat-Chit-Ananda am I.”

So, based upon a life of truth, purity and goodness, simplicity and humility, good conduct and character, self-restraint and freedom from desires, the life spiritual is having God as the sole goal in the midst of all activities and duties dutifully done. Ever keeping in mind the great goal, remembering God constantly with love and faith, seeing His presence in all things and doing all things in a spirit of worship, progress through selflessness and service, devotion and worship, concentration and meditation and ceaseless Atmic enquiry attain the supreme blessed state of God-consciousness of Divine experience and Self-realisation.

That state will bestow upon you the experience, the consciousness: “I am the Supreme, I am the Sat-Chit-Ananda Atman. I am Existence-Consciousness-Bliss-Absolute, I have no old age, I have no death, I have no restlessness or motion, I have no fears, I have no sorrows, I am the Immortal One, I am Bliss, I am Peace.” That experience, which triumphs over all things, is the supreme, ultimate, victorious experience, attaining which one is filled with joy. “Anandoham, Anandoham, Brahma-Anandoham—I am bliss, I am bliss, I am Supreme bliss,”—one exclaims. Attaining this, one is victorious over all circumstances, all situations, all dualities and triumphs over everything.

Awake! Come! Arise! and move towards this great experience. Do all that is necessary to unfold the flower that is within. Let the bud that is closed blossom to make the seed spin up into life and rise up into the tree of Divine experience. You must work for it.

This realisation is already within you. It is there. It is like a locked box in which there is a priceless diamond of unparalleled beauty and the key is not to be found. You have to open the box to possess the diamond. Even so, this eternal Perfection is dormant within you. You are That already. Even as I talk and you listen, you are Existence-Knowledge-Bliss-Absolute. You are the ever perfect Atman. You are Sat-Chit-Ananda Consciousness. That is your true consciousness. This is Divine Life.

## CALL TO MANKIND

This life here upon earth, has a great meaning and a deep significance. Without clearly knowing the significance, you cannot live this life in a correct and proper way. It is most necessary to know the great aim, purpose and goal of this your earthly life, if you have to give it the right direction; otherwise instead of moving towards this true goal, your life will lose its correct direction and become side-tracked in running after small and petty aims and purposes. This will result only in misery, restlessness and deep disappointment. There is no greater loss than such a fate. Man is born for the living of Divine Life here and the attainment of sublime, higher, spiritual, experiences here and hereafter. This is a grand divine plan for each and every one in the human family.

You are indeed divine. You are not merely the body and intellect. You are distinct and different from the perishable body of flesh and bones and from the mind and intellect, which are finite and changeable. You are unchangeable, infinite, immortal Atman. Being overcome by the sleep of spiritual ignorance, you are dreaming this painful agitated dream of being a little, weak, imperfect, human individual person afflicted by egoism and selfishness, by desires and cravings, by fears and anxieties, by love and hate, by envy and jealousy, and numerous such painful conditions—physical as well as mental.

O Beloved Friend! When will you wake up from this deep sleep of ignorance? When will you arise from your dream and resolutely and joyously enter into the reality of Your true real nature—Divine Nature?

Come, come, wake up now. Break through this dream. Claim your birthright. Recognise your true identity. Know your real nature right here and now enter into the experience of the Divine joy, peace and wisdom, which is your eternal *Svarupa* (essential nature).

The life of yours is meant to be lived and utilised for the attainment of the above-mentioned goal, which is the central purpose of life. Therefore live your life in such a way and may all your actions be such, that your life itself becomes a unique and effective *Sadhana* for the attainment of joy, peace and illumination through Self-knowledge. Live wisely and intelligently and attain this goal and make your life a true success.

The notion of your petty personal identity is your greatest bondage and affliction. It is the root-cause of all human misery, discontentment, friction and conflict. The individual develops selfishness and pursues selfish activities—dishonesty, competition, corruption, exploitation, enmity, hatred, etc.,—and they arise out of egoistic approach to life and pursuit. This is foolish and blind. This is the greatest error of man. This is mankind's principal blunder. Life is a great opportunity given to you to eliminate this individual ego-consciousness and destroy selfishness and attain experience of the higher divine aspect of your inner Being. *Life is Sadhana*. Living is a spiritual process. All actions—mental, verbal and physical—constitute *Yajna*. They should not be for mere selfish acquisition. This will only fatten your ego-sense and tighten your bondage to *Samsara* and sorrow. All life and activity is to be a self-offering or a giving of oneself for the service of and benefit and happiness of all beings. *Paropakara* is the *Mula Mantra* of this life. *Yajna* or self-giving is the fundamental principle behind this life. The more you give yourself, the more you will succeed in casting aside this illusory egoism and the petty selfishness. The more you do this,

the greater will become your awareness of your higher divine nature. You will become spiritually aware of your true inner Self. The more your life becomes an active manifestation of dynamic expression of *Yajna*, *Paropakara* and *Nisvartha Seva*, the greater will be your conquest over sorrows and sufferings and your ascent into peace and higher bliss into life.

Let the spirit of Yajna pervade your entire life. Vexing problems of this modern world, its clashes and conflicts, its greed and exploitations, its hatred and hostilities, its mad craze for selfish acquisition and egoistic aggrandisement will never cease or be relieved until and unless there is a change of outlook in man towards his neighbour and towards his life around him and until a new approach of life is taken by men now. Man makes life as what it is. And life around man is but a reflection of *what he is*. The only rational and lasting solution to the afflictions that beset the organised society of civilised men is a reinstating the SPIRIT OF YAJNA into its rightful place in your life in all its aspects. Adopt the spirit of Yajna. Let the concept and attitude of Yajna prevail in all your relationships and activities. Let the principle and the ideal of Paropakara and Seva reign supreme in your daily life and day-to-day activities. In the home, let the members of each family be imbued with and inspired by this noble spirit and thus may they live and act to serve and to give joy to all the other members of the family. Life in the domestic field will now be elevated to a new and sublime plane.

Persons in each and every profession must now take a new look at their profession and reconsider their ideas of what their professional activity really implies. It constitutes their service and their contribution to the welfare and progress of the rest of the entire society in which they are living. Professional life is Yajna. Professional practice is Paropakara. Its income-bringing aspect is secondary and not primary. This must be clearly understood. It must be subordinated to the basic ideals of Yajna, Seva and Paropakara. Otherwise man is not man. He is but a beast in human form, a wolf in sheep's clothing. Similarly too, your social life should not become mere frivolity, dissipation, extravagant entertainment and waste of time, energy and money in meaningless status-keeping. Social life has to be constructive, creative, ennobled by fellow-feeling, compassion and the spirit of sharing. It must be gainful in terms of increased happiness, welfare and benefit to your neighbours and to all beings amidst whom Providence has placed you in this present earth-life.

Human beings individually as well as collectively must adopt the spirit of Yajna and exercise the principles of Seva and Paropakara in all the relationships either personal or groups or party or racial, national and international. This is today's need. This is mankind's need. The world needs this. If life is to prosper and progress and if it is not to become a destructive process of mutual annihilation then *Life* itself needs to accept Yajna as the governing principle and the inner motive-force for its total expression. This is the one hope for man and his future. This is one way to friendship, abiding harmony and commonweal. This is ultimately the pathway to Liberation and the highest attainment of Supreme blessedness.

Man is not a predatory creature. Man is divine. There is that-of-God in each one of you and in all of us. To awaken this God-essence, man has come into this world. Yajna helps you to do this by liberating you from selfish pettiness and releasing the sublime Grandeur of your true divine nature. Let men do this.

O beloved friend! O radiant Atman! Do it now.

Thus urges this servant of the worshipful master Swami Sivanandaji.

Glory be to the Divine. May abundant Grace and blessings ever be upon you. I am immensely happy to greet you and express my good wishes through this message.

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## APPENDIX

### SRI SWAMI CHIDANANDAJI MAHARAJ

*(Life Sketch)*

Swami Chidananda was born as Sridhar in Mangalore, South India on September 24, 1916, the first son of an orthodox Hindu Brahmin family. When he was sixteen, he shifted to Madras where, in 1938, he graduated with a B.A. from the prestigious Loyola College. During these years, devotional songs and stories from the scriptures, as well as the lives and teachings of modern saints such as Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Ramana Maharshi and Swami Ramdas awakened in him a fiery aspiration for the life spiritual.

In 1943 he joined the Himalayan Ashram of the sage and saint Swami Sivananda, the founder of the Divine Life Society, whose dynamic spiritual writings had long attracted him. Soon he was put in charge of the Sivananda Ashram medical dispensary, where his compassionate service to all, including the lepers, earned him the affectionate title of Dr. Raoji. He also headed up the Correspondence Section and was frequently called upon to give lectures as well as attend to the special needs of many of the guests. In 1948 he was appointed General Secretary of the Society and on Guru Purnima, 1949, was initiated into the holy order of Sannyasa.

Ten years later, in 1959, in response to many requests, Swami Sivananda sent him to the West, a trip that lasted for over two years. Succeeding Swami Sivananda as President of the Divine Life Society in 1963, his life since has been one of almost continuous travel throughout India and to all continents of the globe in the holy Master's service and in the cause of the central objective of the Divine Life Society, dissemination of spiritual knowledge.

Although, in his travels, he is frequently received by high dignitaries and he is the head of an institution with many branches both in India and abroad, yet he still remains at heart a simple monk, whose aim in life is to do as much good as possible for as many people as possible and, above all, bring to them the heartsolacing and liberating message of Yoga, Vedanta and the living of a divine life.