

SPECIAL INSIGHTS INTO SADHANA

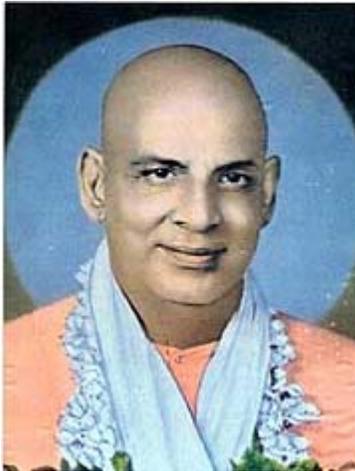
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By

SRI SWAMI CHIDANANDA

from

Early Morning Meditation Talks



Sri Swami Sivananda
Founder of
The Divine Life Society



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



Sri Swami Chidananda

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

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

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

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

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

THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

PREFACE

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

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

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

Swami Chidananda

“Being humbler than a blade of grass, more tolerant than the tree, free from vanity and being respectful to others, one should sing the glories of Lord Hari.”

—Gauranga Mahaprabhu

“All this points to one fact: That ego is folly, and wisdom lies in renouncing and transcending ego.”

—Swami Chidananda

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THE SUBJECTIVE DIMENSION OF PRAYER

Radiant Atman! Beloved and blessed children of the Divine! We will soon be observing the sacred annual worship of Lord Siva, Mahasivaratri. It is customary to regard and to speak of Lord Siva in terms of being a destroyer. The three aspects of the Supreme Being are Brahma, the creator, Vishnu, the preserver and Siva, the term destroyer. They say *srishti*, *sthiti* and *layakartas*. The “destroyer” is usually not used by me. I use the word “dissolver,” because they do not refer to Lord Siva in mythology as *nasakarta* or *vinasakarta* (destroyer) but as *layakarta* (dissolver). *Laya* means subsiding back into the original state. *Srishti* is emerging into variegated names and forms, the One becoming the many. *Sthiti* is preserving, continuing in time, and *laya* is merging back into the original unmanifest state, the nameless, formless unified state.

But, quite apart from this concept of Lord Siva as dissolver, it is very widely held, especially in North India, that He is the boon-giver. Even though He is the highest of all gods, *devadi-deva* (Lord of lords), *Mahadeva* (the great God), yet He is easily pleased. He is very simple and prepared to give anything, to give *anything*. And He is also a saviour. He saved Markandeya, His boy devotee, from death by appearing before him and daring lord Yama to touch His devotee. So here, He is not so much the destroyer as He is the protector and saviour. There are innumerable such instances of His saving grace.

And it does not take much to please Him. Pour some water over Him, give a Bilva leaf and chant His Name once. That is enough. So one of the terms with which He is referred to is *asutosh*, very easily propitiated, easily pleased—*asutosh mahadev*.

But, the most endearing term by which He is popularly referred to by devotees, in North India especially, is the term “bhola.” Bhola means simple-minded, one who has no complication in his thinking, feeling and acting. He has no complications, no crookedness, no cleverness. He is simple-minded. They call Him Bhola Nath. They call Him Bhola Sambhu. Bhola means simple. He believes whatever He sees. He does not look beyond. Even if a person asks for a boon with a wrong intention, He does not look to the intention.

If a person has taken His Name, or performed *tapasya*, He does not look into either the intention or the consequences. To anyone who propitiates Him, takes His Name, prays to Him, does *tapasya* and pleases Him, He asks: “What do you want?” Ravana did intense *tapasya* and just to indicate to what extent Lord Siva is simple, easy to please and prepared to give everything, He gave His divine partner, Parvati.

It would indeed be a highly beneficial thing if everyone would undertake an *anushthana* commencing tomorrow and concluding on Mahasivaratri day. Regularly repeat eleven maalas of Om Namah Sivaya dedicated to the welfare of humanity. If you cannot repeat eleven at least repeat five, one maala for each letter of the *panchakshari mantra*. Om Namah Sivaya. It is very simple, very easy. In five minutes you can do it. It will not be a *purascharana*, but it will be an *anushthana*. A *japa anushthana* you can do, and dedicate it to the welfare of mankind and the peace of the world.

Now, let us consider this ancient tradition in India, especially religious India, that is, praying for others, praying for the world, praying for the welfare of mankind, for the welfare of

all-creatures, praying for peace on earth, not only for mankind and all creatures but also for everything that exists, praying for peace, wishing peace, desiring peace and sending out thoughts of peace to everything that exists, to all existence. “Peace be unto all the five elements, earth, water, fire, air and ether.” It is desiring peace for the grass, herbs, plants and trees. It is desiring peace for the celestials, for the angelic host, for the gods right up to the creator, Brahma—*visvedeva santih* (peace to all the Gods), *brahma santih* (peace to Brahma), *santih eva santih* (peace for peace itself), wishing peace for peace itself. Let there be peace to all the Vedas, Vedic *mantras*, to everything. This is the ancient tradition.

Lokah samastah sukhino bhavantu—May all beings in this universe be happy. *Sarvesham svasti-bhavatu*—May prosperity and welfare be unto all beings. *Sarvesham santir-bhavatu*—May peace be unto all beings. *Sarvesham purnam bhavatu*—May plenitude and fullness be unto all beings. *Sarvesham mangalam bhavatu*—May auspiciousness and blessedness be unto all beings. *Sarve bhavantu sukhinah*—May all be happy. *Sarve santu niramayah*—May all be free from disease, pain and suffering. *Sarve bhadrani pasyant*—May all behold that which is auspicious, pleasant, nothing fearful nor unpleasant. *Bhadra* is auspicious, blessed, mild, pleasant. *Ma kaschid duhkhabag bhavet*—May not sorrow fall to the lot of anyone. Thus, this has been an ancient tradition—wishing well, wishing peace, happiness, prosperity, freedom from disease and pain, plenty, fullness, blessedness and auspiciousness to everyone.

The desirability of such prayer is not only because the world needs all these things. There is also the subjective dimension of prayer that has to be considered. The process has a very important effect upon the one who prays. By wishing for all that is positive, creative, constructive, good, conducive to welfare, auspicious and blessed to all that exists—all creatures, mankind, the whole world—it makes us aware that our ancients expected us to make life an active, dynamic process of constantly working to bring about those very conditions which we wish for, pray for, intend and want for others. For, unless our prayer is backed up by suitable action to bring about these conditions, it has no meaning.

If we wish peace for others and at the same time we are actively engaged in robbing others of their peace by disturbing them, agitating them, causing them distress, then we stand as a living lie. We stand in terrible contradiction to what we mouth through such prayers. We say one thing, but we act in another manner. We succeed in doing something that is contrary to that which we pray for. It thus becomes a very serious situation, a very undesirable state of affairs. Every day we say *ma kaschid duhkhabag bhavet*—May not sorrow fall to the lot of any being. Therefore, we have to be perpetually conscious, aware and careful that neither by thought, word nor deed do we create sorrow for others, grief for others.

“Where there is sadness, let me bring joy.” That is the sublime, noble prayer of Saint Francis. When we pray “May not sorrow fall to the lot of anyone,” then we should work in the way indicated by the simple prayer of St. Francis. “O Lord, where there is sadness, let me bring joy. Make me an instrument of joy to the lives of others. Make me an instrument of removing the sadness of others.” Axiomatically it means that if we wish happiness for others, joy for others, then we have to do something positively to bring joy to others; we have to also, simultaneously, engage in doing acts that remove the sorrow of others, lessen the grief of others, make people less sad. This is implied in this line from the simple prayer of St. Francis.

Apart from this, that such prayer is an indication of what we should work, live and act for, of what our great ancients have placed before us as an ideal for our life and the living of it, it also has still another aspect. By constantly thinking in such a positive manner of the happiness, welfare and peace of others, it brings about a change in our nature. Gradually we become so disposed to act in such a way, to live in such a way, that we become a centre of goodwill towards others, a centre of compassion and kindness towards others, a centre of peace for others. The constant repetition of such prayer, the constant dwelling upon these thoughts, and the constant harbouring of these feelings in our heart have a transforming effect upon our own nature. It tends to gradually make us grow in this quality of goodwill towards all, of ill-will towards none, of compassion and kindness towards all, of prayerfully ever wanting to live in order to bring peace, solace, happiness and comfort to everyone.

This constant prayer has this effect, but only if we pray feelingfully, not mechanically. If, as a matter of routine, we go on uttering this prayer mechanically with lip-service, then of course, we will be deprived of this purifying, elevating and transforming effect. We will not benefit from it; we will not gain anything by it. It is only when, every time we pray, we pray with earnestness, with sincerity, with feeling, in a meaningful manner, then alone it is a great life-transforming power, it is a great purifying and uplifting power.

That is its effect upon the one who prays. It has this unfailing effect of making us grow into those very qualities we pray for. This is the subjective dimension of prayer—how it benefits the one who prays. Constantly having these thoughts, these feelings of goodwill, of kindness, compassion, friendliness, makes us a well-wisher of humanity, a being filled with loving kindness, with good thoughts, goodwill and love, wishing and praying for the peace of all.

Then indeed our life mission is being fulfilled, because we become a centre for radiating around us the quality which is of God, *daivi sampad*. Compassion, kindness, peace, light, joy all belong to God, and we make ourselves a channel for the manifestation of these God-qualities in this world of His. What greater blessedness can one have? What greater privilege than this can one have? And what greater satisfaction that this can one have in life than the satisfaction “I have not lived in vain; I have tried to make myself a true child of God, make myself a channel for manifesting the qualities of Him whom I address as father, mother, friend, relative, and Lord.” That indeed makes life worth living.

It is in this way that we must understand the incalculable value of prayer for the one who prays. Thus may prayer transform your life and make it Divine. God bless you all!

WISDOM MAKES DEVOTION FRUITFUL

Homage unto the Divine Presence, Thou who art the universal Reality! Make us aware of Thy constant companionship with us, so that we may walk in Thy light, the light which shines within us as wisdom overcoming all folly and as knowledge banishing the darkness of ignorance. May we walk in the light of knowledge. May we walk the path and live in the light of wisdom. For that is good.

Beloved and worshipful Gurudev, you who shone on all as a great light of the wisdom of Vedanta in this sacred Uttarakand, the region of the divine Himalayas and the Ganga! Grant us the prayer: “From the darkness of ignorance may we rise up to the light of wisdom—*tamaso ma jyotirgamaya*.” Bless us with that knowledge and wisdom that leads to peace and blessedness. For we know that thou hast lived thy life for *jnana yajna*, for the dissemination of spiritual knowledge, to disseminate the wisdom teachings of the Upanishads which shine as a supreme treasure of all humanity. The global human family is enriched by the invaluable wealth of Vedic wisdom, the crown and glory of human achievement.

Satyam jnanam anantam brahma. The Supreme Reality is the truth, it is wisdom—it is *satyam* and it is *jnanam*. And it is truth that is boundless and limitless, for it is absolute, beyond all relativity. Therefore it is *anantam*, endless. That wisdom is, therefore, immeasurable, being absolute wisdom, *kaivalyajnana*. It is a nectar of wisdom—*kaivalya jnanam amritam*—absolute nectar, wisdom.

Radiant Immortal Atman! A *sadhaka*, a spiritual seeker, a Yogi, is called a *jijnasu*. A *jijnasu* is one who seeks wisdom, knowledge. *Jijnasu* comes out of the word *jna* (to know). One who thirsts for knowledge, who is seeking knowledge and wisdom is called a *jijnasu*. So it behoves a *sadhaka*, a true seeker, to be a *jijnasu*.

For the highest value in life is declared to be *moksha*, liberation—*sadyomukti*, instantaneous liberation or *kramamukti*, gradual liberation, in stages. Whether instantaneous or gradual, freedom, liberation, *mukti*, has always been declared to be the highest goal of all human aspiration. And the *Srutis* declare: “*rite jnanam na muktih*—Without wisdom and knowledge, liberation is not possible.” There is no liberation, there is no freedom without knowledge or wisdom. This is an emphatic statement, a sure categorical declaration. Therefore it is necessary for one to be a *jijnasu*.

Wisdom is good. It is the highest good, the greatest good. Devotion or love is also supreme good; it can also liberate. But if devotion is accompanied by folly, if devotion is accompanied by non-wisdom or foolishness, then, the devotion notwithstanding, one invites trouble and one gets into trouble. This is borne out by the lives of all great mystics, all great *bhaktas*, all great saints. When they were foolish, they got into trouble. Then, afterwards, they prayed to God, they lamented, they cried desperately for help: “All is lost, O Lord, please help me. Thou art the helper of the helpless. I have committed this folly. Come, come! Save me! Save me!”

So, when they were foolish, they had to turn and call aloud for the Lord’s grace. This we see in the lives of all spiritual, seeking souls, no matter how sincere they were, no matter how true their devotion. If they entered into folly, then, their devotion notwithstanding, their sincerity notwithstanding, they got into trouble. This is demonstrated in the lives of all great devotees of God. When they lost their head, when they lost their wisdom, then they were egoistic, they fell into the trap of desire, and then they lamented.

Therefore, while devotion is very good, all its goodness is robbed if folly creeps into the life of the devotee. Devotion, therefore, should be accompanied by wisdom. There is a prayer: “O God,

give us serenity to accept what cannot be changed, courage to change what should be changed, and wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.”

“*He prabho ananda data jnan hamko dijiye*—O Giver of Bliss, grant us wisdom.” That is what the opening line of the prayer says which you sing daily. Now, if all people are seeking happiness and bliss, and they address God as the great giver of bliss, why do they also immediately ask for wisdom? It is worth reflecting over, for it proves that when you are seeking bliss and when you are addressing the One who is the giver of bliss, you know that even though He is ready to give you bliss, if you walk the way of folly you will deprive yourself of it—in spite of the fact that He is ever there waiting to grant you that bliss. “O Giver of Bliss, grant us wisdom.” Wisdom for what? Wisdom to cast out of us all that is not good, all that is undivine, all that is unspiritual. Wisdom to remove from ourselves, from within us, all that stands in the way of wisdom and bliss. “*Sighra sare durgunonko dura hamse kijiye. Lijiye hamko sarana me ham sadachari bane. Brahmachari dharma rakshaka satyavratadhari bane*—Grant us the wisdom to surrender ourselves to Thee, surrender the ego to Thee, and to walk the path of good conduct, to become established in the path of righteousness and spirituality, that supreme ideal way of life, that leads to *brahma jnana*. Let us defend that wisdom, carefully protect that wisdom, for we know that that is the guarantee of peace and joy. May we have the wisdom and ability to adhere to truthfulness, adhere to *satyavrata*.”

That is the wisdom one asks for in this prayer. For where there is wisdom, there is joy, there is peace. Shorn of wisdom, one enters into grief. Folly leads to lamentation. Arjuna lamented when he lost touch with wisdom. The Lord says: “The wise do not grieve. The wise look upon all with an equal eye. The awakened one, the one who is wise and lives in the wakefulness of knowledge, wakefulness of wisdom, does not run after things that cause sorrow, does not revel in petty, temporary things, conditioned things, imperfect things, limited by time, space and causation. Therefore, he is wise; he knows where lie peace and joy. He seeks to be wise at every step.”

Therefore, one would wisely recognise this central fact about the life of the seeker and aspirant: that while devotion is both necessary and good, it is wisdom which makes devotion fruitful in experience. Peace and joy come through devotion only if it is accompanied, supported and enlivened by knowledge and wisdom. Sri Ramakrishna said: “A devotee should not be foolish. Wisdom is the highest good, for it makes, devotion fruitful.”

Therefore, a seeker, an aspirant, a spiritual *sadhaka* is also a *jijnasu*. He ever seeks to dwell in knowledge and wisdom. Knowledge is your great friend. Wisdom is your invaluable life’s companion. And knowledge and wisdom come through *satsanga*, through *sadvichara*, right discrimination, right enquiry and observation of life. We learn wisdom through the folly of others, from observing life around us. A true seeker is a learner at every step. He advances in knowledge; he expands in wisdom. Thus by dwelling in wisdom, walking in the light of knowledge, he guarantees that his quest after bliss and peace is not futile, that it is crowned with fulfilment.

Therefore, ponder well this truth that wisdom is your friend, that knowledge is the highest good and that Brahman is knowledge—*satyam jnanam anantam brahma*. Again and again the Srimad Bhagavad Gita reiterates this point, that if you want to have true peace, true joy, if you want to make your *sadhana* successful, let it be accompanied by wisdom. Seek to cast out folly and to

walk in the path of wisdom. For it is your greatest good; it is your greatest helper. It is a companion which will guide you in the right direction—knowledge and wisdom.

Not dry intellectualism, not vain rationality, too much of logic that goes on splitting, chopping—it is not this, but it is a higher thing, a higher quality. Mere dry rationality or intellectualism only becomes a burden. It is a trap; it boosts up one's ego. Therefore, a discriminating aspirant carefully avoids it. They call it lip-Vedanta. It is something that emanates from the brain. It is not the true, discriminating higher wisdom or understanding. It is a lesser thing that pertains to the ego.

One should know how to distinguish between spiritual knowledge and wisdom and dry intellectualism—sterile, splitting, chopping rationality. All rationality which springs out of the ego is unwise. That feeling that one knows everything is itself unwise. That spirituality becomes the opposite of knowledge, because it does not free you, it does not liberate you. It ties you down to your ego; it traps you and holds you fastly bound to your own ego.

Therefore, this lesser, dry intellectualism—which is the outcome of *rajas*, not *sattva*—you must know how to carefully distinguish it from higher spiritual knowledge which is always *sattvic* and accompanied by humility, by a clear understanding that one knows nothing, that one can walk the path of wisdom and knowledge only if the Supreme Being grants it, blesses us with it. So the truly wise person is never egoistic. This is the hallmark of wisdom.

A wise man has said: “What I know is like a few grains of sand on the ocean's shore. What I do not know is like the vast ocean itself.” So, be wise. Walk in the light of knowledge. Guard your humility, knowing that all knowledge comes from a supreme source higher than us. Living in wisdom, find peace. Walking in the light of knowledge, obtain the joy and the bliss that is your birthright.

May, thus, wisdom be your constant companion. May, thus, knowledge ever accompany your devotion, your spirituality. For, knowledge is your highest good and wisdom is the sure guarantee of your attaining the bliss that you are seeking, the peace that all people are ever seeking. Therefore recognise the place of wisdom and knowledge in your life and be blessed. God bless you!

THE FOLLY OF EGO

Radiant Atman! We have been considering the desirability of being wise, the necessity of wisdom in order to attain the Supreme Being who is pure wisdom-consciousness. And the Guru functions as a source of illumining and enlightening wisdom. The last and ultimate message of Gurudev to mankind was: “Happiness is when the individual merges in God.” This was the last sentence he wrote before he himself merged in the Supreme.

Therefore, the merging of the individual, the losing of the individual, is indicated as the supreme blessedness, the supreme wisdom. For the greatest folly is the ego, the greatest good is the renouncing and the losing of the ego. Again one has to reiterate: the answer to the question, “When shall I be free?” is, “When ‘I’ shall cease to be.” Then shall I be free, when “I” shall cease to be.

In the eternal drama between light and darkness, the divine and the demoniacal, the demoniacal in countless scriptures has been represented as terrible ego—Ravana, Mahishasura, Hiranyakasipu. They were all terrible egos, undivine egos, who denied God, who defied even God. They were enraged at the very mention of anything divine. The Puranas, the Mahabharata, the Ramayana all bring out this mystical fact that the undivine is represented by hard ego.

Therefore, the great Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, being a wise teacher, mentioned the necessity of transcending the ego, of eliminating the ego, of renouncing the ego through the practice of humility, egolessness, through the desire to revere all beings knowing that the presence of God dwells in all beings and through the desire to serve, to give honour and reverence to all beings, seeing God in them.

The desirability of humility, of effacing the ego, being patient, forgiving, forbearing was summed up in his famous verse on the spiritual life and worship of God: *trinadapi sunichena tarorapi sahisnuna, amanina manadena kirtaniyah sada harih* (Being humbler than a blade of grass, more tolerant than the tree, free from vanity and being respectful to others, one should sing the glories of Lord Hari).

All this points to one fact: that ego is folly, and wisdom lies in renouncing and transcending the ego. “When shall I be free? When ‘I’ shall cease to be. Then shall I be free, when ‘I’ shall cease to be.” Thus mystics and sages have drawn our attention to this one great truth of the spiritual life: that which stands between the individual soul and the Universal Soul is the ego in all its aspects—the ethical aspect, the psychological aspect and the philosophical or metaphysical aspect—the sense of separatist individuality. They say that this is the barrier between man and God, between the human and the Divine, between the individual soul and the Universal Soul—this mysterious something which makes one feel I am the centre of the universe, all things are made for me, I am the most important thing.

To cherish this ego, to support it, to protect it, to fight for it, to wish to express it, demonstrate it, manifest it, at every moment—that is regarded by the individual as the highest necessity, the highest need. Ego is, therefore, the primary, fundamental value of the individual’s way of approaching life, of the individual’s attitude towards all things in life. The point of view, the ground, is ego; the attitude stems from ego. I, and the rest of the world, I, and all others—wherein I is more important than all others.

That is the individual-consciousness: ego-oriented, ego based, ego propelled, ego impelled. We are ready to perpetuate it. We protect it. For when one is not awakened, one thinks that the ego is the most important thing. And that is folly; that is not wisdom.

And this, therefore, is wisdom: to recognise that what stands between me and God is my ego, that what stands between bondage and liberation is ego. Ego is the screen, the *dehatma buddhi*, the *ahamkriti*, the *avarana*. And through meditation and *jnana* the *avarana* of this false sense of separation is to be removed. That is what Vedanta says. *Mala, vikshepa, avarana*—the essential impurity of the individual nature, the restless, oscillating tendency of the mind, and then the veil of ignorance in the form of the separate ego-sense.

Wisdom, therefore, is in recognising what is what, recognising the truth about the human situation, the truth about bondage. Why then do they say: “Where ignorance is bliss ‘twere folly to be wise.” Yes, if ignorance were bliss, wisdom would lie in not being wise. But, unfortunately, our experience, bitter experience, is that ignorance is the source of endless trouble. *Avidya, ajnana* is the source of endless trouble, bondage, the wheel of birth and death and *tapatraya*, the threefold afflictions.

The first of the four great truths expounded by Lord Buddha was the existence of pain and suffering. Therefore, we find that it is not bliss that the individual soul finds and experiences on earth but the contrary of it. And the great *jagat guru*, Adi Sankaracharya, says that this entire earth life is an ocean of grief and sorrow: *janma duhkham jara duhkham jaya duhkham punah punah; samsara sagaram duhkham tasmad jagrata jagrata* (Repeatedly there is pain of birth, pain of old age, pain from wife and the painful ocean of worldly existence; therefore, wake up).

This ocean of *samsara* is *duhkha, dukkhalayam* (the abode of pain). Therefore, if ignorance were indeed bliss, it would certainly be folly to be wise. But we actually find that ignorance is the source of prolific sorrow, pain, suffering, complications and human clashes, conflicts, fights, quarrels, disharmony and discord. They all arise out of the folly of the ego. Therefore, if one has to live harmoniously as a family, a spiritual family, there is need to be wise and not to allow the ego to cause clash and conflict between one another.

Among equals there is always a sense of competition, wanting to get the better of the other. There is intolerance, envy and jealousy. This, being ego-based, is folly, and is always a source of suffering, the source of all problems. Being a seeker, a *sadhaka*, being in the life spiritual, being Yogis in the path of Yoga, one should be wise and awake to this truth—that my prime problem is my ego.

Therefore I should develop tolerance and friendliness towards my compatriots, my brethren in the spiritual family—not a sense of rivalry but a sense of friendliness—being very happy to eliminate my ego. *Maitri* (friendship), *karuna*, loving kindness, that was the great prescription of Lord Buddha—loving kindness. And Maharshi Patanjali, the expounder of Yoga, advocated *maitri*, loving friendliness, that puts an end to the competitive spirit, rivalry, envy and jealousy, which is a canker that destroys our peace of mind, makes us restless and agitated.

So, envy, jealousy and rivalry are folly, because we all seek happiness and peace. To take a contrary code of conduct that robs us of our peace and happiness—one could never say that it is wise. On the contrary, it is folly. We want something, but we work against it. That is foolishness; that is folly.

Therefore, to renounce the folly of the ego with its rivalry and competitiveness, envy and jealousy and to live in harmony, in peace, in loving kindness and friendliness is wisdom, is the greatest good. This is the teaching of all the sages and seers. Brotherhood, fraternity, belonging to one family means the ending of all envy and jealousy, competitiveness and rivalry. And this is possible only when the ego is recognised for what it is and it is renounced and one becomes wise. Immediately—harmony, peace, joy—everything comes flooding into one’s life. One is at peace,

peace with oneself and peace with others. And in peace there is joy. Egolessness is peace. Therefore, it is in wisdom that there is peace and joy. Wisdom is the great good.

Therefore, let us pray to the Lord “*jnana hamko dijiye* (Give us true knowledge and wisdom.)” Give us wisdom to walk the wise way, not the way of folly. Let us, therefore, seek and pray for knowledge and wisdom and be wise in our life, and thus be happy. One should work for one’s own good and the good of all others. That is noble life.

Let us be wise on all levels. Let us be wise in the field of mutual relationships and day-to-day activities where we have to relate ourselves with many others. Let us be wise on the psychological level, understand ourselves and do the right thing. Let us be wise on the ethical level also. For the ego is unethical, it is immoral. It is a destroyer of the welfare of all, ours as well as others. Let us also be wise upon the metaphysical and philosophical level, which declares to us in categorical terms that the ego is the great source of sorrow, it is the great bondage. The individual soul is bound by the bondage of one’s own ego.

Therefore, upon all levels let us be wise. Upon all levels let us do the right thing. Let us walk in the light of wisdom, understanding and practical knowledge. Let us, thus, eliminate clash and conflict, discord and disharmony, and live in peace and joy through wisdom at all levels.

Let us start this now by following the great adage, the great admonition of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu Gauranga Mahaprabhu: “Being humbler than a blade of grass, more tolerant than the tree, free from vanity and being respectful to others, one should sing the glories of Lord Hari.” He was supposed to be a *bhakta* filled with divine emotion, sublime spiritual sentiment, yet he uttered words of deep philosophical wisdom when he gave this prescription for the spiritual life and spiritual practice.

He was a wise teacher. He was a great healer of souls. He was a great divine physician. Therefore, let us honour his memory. Let us pay homage to Gauranga Mahaprabhu by taking his admonition to heart. Let us reflect over its meaning for us and follow its instructions by being egoless and engaging in spiritual *sadhana*. This is the highest way we can pay reverence to the lofty memory of Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Thus let us be wise.

God bless you all to ponder well this great insight into the life spiritual given to us by all sages and seers and by Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji also: “*abhiman tyago, seva karo* (Give up pride and do service). *Amanitvam, adambhitvam* (humility, unpretentiousness),” says the Gita. May the grace of Gurudev, the choicest benedictions of Gauranga Mahaprabhu (Lord Krishna Chaitanya) and all the sages and seers ever be with you in your noble spiritual life and your earnest and sincere spiritual practices. This is my prayer at the feet of the Lord and the saints.