

SPECIAL INSIGHTS INTO SADHANA

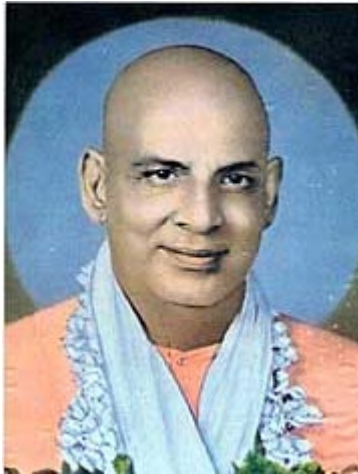
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By

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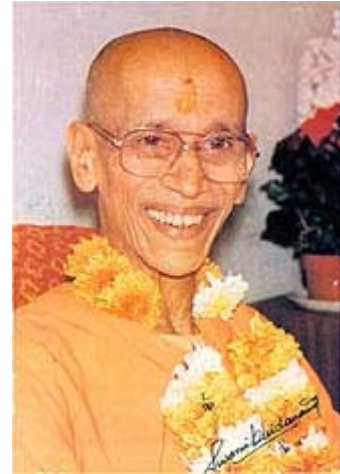
Early Morning Meditation Talks



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

“All things become possible with persistence, perseverance, patience, and above all sincerity. Having unwavering faith in yourself and with steady, continuous effort, you will find yourself rising higher and higher. By steady, persistent and patient effort, you will find yourself in that supreme peak of perfection.”

—Swami Chidananda

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THY KINGDOM COME

Radiant Immortal Atman! Beloved and blessed children of the Divine! We are fortunate to have conceived of a way of life where each day starts with divine Name, prayer and divine contemplation. By the grace, love and goodwill of beloved and worshipful Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji, in this holy Ashram of his there is scope to constantly keep in a state of remembrance of God, to start the day with God, fill the day with God and end the day with God. For in this God-filled atmosphere, in every direction, one encounters something connected with God. In numerous places, with numerous persons, upon numerous occasions one is brought into *bhagavat chintana*, *atma-chintana*, *tattva-chintana*, one is brought into the remembrance of God, into awareness of our higher goal, into awareness of a greater Reality and into the awareness of a deeper purpose in our life, into the awareness of the significance of our human status.

In this Iron Age, when *adharma* (unrighteousness), *bhagavat-vismriti* (forgetfulness of God), *vimukhi-drishti* (view against God), *atyachara* (irreligious conduct) is the order of the day, consider the meaningfulness of this unique God-filled way of life. Consider the normal trend of Kali Yuga and consider the trend of your life. And to whom do you owe it? What is its value and how best to utilise it? How best to benefit by it?

These are things which should be very much on our minds as we approach the advent of the New Year and the advent of a great *avatara*, a great descent of Divinity, who proclaimed: “Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven” and “What availeth it a man if he gains the whole world but loses his own soul?” He proclaimed the secondariness of all things in comparison to the attaining of God, the attainment of the great Goal, which is the fulfilment of the central destiny of man, the central purpose of life.

His greatest commandment was to adore God with all your heart, with all your mind, with your entire being. Let your life be whole-souled devotion to God, *parabhakti*. He not only proclaimed this message, preached this teaching, but He lived this teaching. He was perpetually and continuously engaged in doing good, helping others, relieving suffering. At the same time, inwardly, He was permanently rooted in God, perpetually in a state of God-communion inwardly. He literally lived, moved and had His being in God.

He was epitome of the Gita *jnana-upadesa*. In Him we find the very embodiment of *Gita-jnana* and the Gita Yoga. “*Yogasthah kuru karmani* (Perform action, being steadfast in Yoga), *mam anusmara yuddhya cha* (Remember Me and fight).” Be rooted in God and do good to your fellow beings. He taught this and said that the secret of this is to always be in a state of prayer within.

Prayer is a state of being linked up with God. Prayer is a state of being connected in spirit with God inwardly. The apparent outer part of you flows outwards towards *prapancha*, towards *samsara*, towards the *aneka*, the many, towards the manifestation. The superficial part of you is ever moving outwards because the mind and the senses are outgoing; whereas, simultaneously, the essence of your being is constantly moving inwards towards God, constantly flowing Godward in a continuous, unbroken stream.

Even as the rivers keep on flowing towards the ocean or the sea, even so your *antah-chetana*, your inner spiritual consciousness, is in a state of constant flow towards the source and origin of its being. Inwardly your life is God-oriented. It is a continuous, unbroken flow towards God, a current of consciousness flowing towards God unceasingly. Externally, to fulfil obligations, do your duty and play your part, you apparently flow outwards. But that which flows outwards towards *prapancha*, towards *samsara*, towards the many, *aneka*, is not your real being. It is something temporarily added on to you that flows towards *prapancha* because it belongs to *prapancha*. Your real being that belongs to God ever keeps on moving towards God. Your authentic, true life, genuine life, is a constant Godward flow—through remembrance, through prayer, through invoking His Name and grace. “It is not by bread alone that man lives, but by the Name of God.”

Thus Jesus taught us this Yoga of God-centred living in the midst of activity. And He Himself personified this state, the outer state of constantly doing good and the inner state of constantly being rooted in God through prayer, remembrance, the Name and dedication.

Our Father who art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy Name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our debts,
As we also have forgiven our debtors;
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.

Thus He taught His disciples to pray. “Thy kingdom come” means “May Your kingdom come into my heart. May you reign over my heart; not anything else—not gross passions, not selfishness, not worldliness, not desire, but may You be the monarch of my heart. You who are the ruler of Your kingdom, establish Your kingdom here, as it is already established there in the inner dimension of the Spirit, the unseen world of the Spirit.”

That was the call to the Lord—to come and take charge. Rule over me. Rule over my life. Be my centre. May You alone prevail and not my ego, not my ego-consciousness, not my ignorance, *ajnana*, not my *avichara*, not my lack of perception, but Your wisdom, Your light, Your divinity. Let that alone prevail in the interior of my being. Let me be thus filled with God, filled with Thee, filled with Divinity." That was the prayer.

Upon the eve of the advent of this great Teacher, let us try to know, assess and understand the meaning of His teachings and the place of His teachings in the living of our daily lives. This would be the most significant and important part of our celebration of the day of His advent. Let us try to find out the place and role His teaching has to play in our lives as spiritual beings, leading a spiritual life in a spiritual atmosphere, in a God-filled atmosphere.

THY KINGDOM COME

This then is the sharing, in the presence of beloved and worshipful Gurudev, as we begin yet another day. Every day is new. It is not like any other day that has passed. Let it, therefore, be to us an upward ascent, onward progress, moving in a Godward direction towards the Goal Supreme!

THY WILL BE DONE

Worshipful homage unto the divine Universal Spirit that pervades and permeates countless billions of universes like the one in which we are living. May we contemplate that Reality which also is the indwelling presence in all created things, dwelling in equal measure in the smallest and the greatest, hallowing and sanctifying all things, worthy of reverence and deserving of consideration in our thoughts, words and deeds as we live our life.

Loving adorations to the spiritual presence of beloved and worshipful Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji who taught us to behold that Being in all names and forms and to serve that Supreme Reality in and through all names and forms, who taught us to ever remember that great Reality in the midst of passing phenomenal appearances, to ever sing His glory, to ever chant His Divine Name, the all-purifying, sanctifying, liberating Divine Name and to ever be rooted in Him.

Thus indeed did he teach us to pray even as the Divine Master Jesus taught us to pray, addressing ourselves directly to the eternal source and origin of our being even as a child would address itself to its father: "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." Let it prevail in our heart as well as in our mind and intellect. "Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever." So He taught us to pray. And in our own times, even so did Gurudev teach us to pray:

O Adorable Lord of Mercy and Love!
Salutations and prostrations unto Thee.
Thou art Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient.
Thou art Satchidananda (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute).
Thou art the Indweller of all beings.

Grant us an understanding heart,
Equal vision, balanced mind,
Faith, devotion and wisdom.
Grant us inner spiritual strength
To resist temptations and to control the mind.
Free us from egoism, lust, greed, hatred, anger and jealousy.
Fill our hearts with divine virtues.

Let us behold Thee in all these names and forms.
Let us serve Thee in all these names and forms.
Let us ever remember Thee.
Let us ever sing Thy glories.
Let Thy name be ever on our lips.

Let us abide in Thee for ever and ever.

Thus a teacher, a master of our own times, taught us to address ourselves directly to that Being who is the unchanging, ever-present Eternal Reality in the midst of changing phenomenal appearances, who is the Reality within our passing, temporary, perishable bodies, who is the Reality in the midst of our ever-fluctuating, ever-fickle mind—*chanchal man me susthira tattva vah ek antaryami* (In the unsteady mind dwells that steady Reality, that one Indweller). *Isvarah sarvabhutanam hriddese' rjuna tishthati* (God dwells in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna)—the ever-stable, the ever-peaceful spiritual principle and essence in the midst of this restless and fickle mind.

That Being is the ever-luminous presence within this intellect, which is sometimes bright with discrimination, spiritual enquiry and alertness, sometimes overcome with the darkness of spiritual indifference, subject to folly, lack of discrimination and spiritual forgetfulness, *avichara, aviveka*. In the midst of that mind and intellect, that Being is ever-luminous: *jyotisham api tad jyotis tamasah param uchyate; jnanam, jneyam jnanagamyam hridi sarvasya vishthitam* (That, the Light of lights, is said to be beyond darkness; knowledge, the knowable and the goal of knowledge; abides in the hearts of all). It is the Kingdom of God within. It is the Kingdom of Heaven within. It is the Spirit of God, the Light that shines forever in this body-house, the undimmed light, the splendid radiance that ever shines within this human personality.

They taught us to address ourselves directly to that Being: “O Adorable Lord of Mercy and Love... Thou art the Indweller of all Beings.” “Our Father which art in heaven... Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Let Your will prevail upon this earthly frame of ours. Let Your will prevail and guide our senses. Let our senses obey Your will, Your direction, Your spiritual admonitions. Let our body, its appetites and movements, and our mind obey Your will, carry out Your admonitions.

That is the relevance of the kingdom here and now. That is the prevailing of the will of the Divine upon earth, meaning our earthly human personalities and propensities. Let them be guided and directed by the will of God, not by our own little, petty will. Nor let them be guided by the will of others to whom we have become enslaved through infatuated delusion or attachment, so that we become a toy in their hands. Then it is not God that prevails, but it is our infatuation that prevails. It is not God that prevails, it is our self-will that prevails. Either due to selfishness, self prevails, or due to infatuation one becomes enslaved and guided by the earthly will of others.

A political leader becomes a slave to those who support him in his power, in his status, in his position. He becomes a slave and loses his integrity. He knows what is right but does what is wrong. He becomes enslaved to the party and to the voters and supporters that put him in his position of power and authority. He is subject to their pushes and pulls. He seems to wield power, but he is under the power of someone else.

Even so, monks, Swamis, abbots, *mahamandalesvars* become enslaved by their own structure, their organisations, institutions, Ashrams, by the artificial organisational structure that grows up around them, in which they function. Difficult indeed it is for a worldly person to make himself free from worldly influences. Difficult indeed it is for a political figurehead to be free from

his political supporters. And difficult indeed it is for a spiritual personality, a monastic, to liberate himself from the pressures of his own organisation, his own prestigious place of power and recognition, and retain the simplicity of his heart, retain the integrity of his renunciation, his *anasakti*. Difficult indeed!

Only through the grace of God can monasticism be authentic in the midst of an organisational structure. Only through the grace of God can a political leader have the courage and strength to stick to lofty ethical principles and moral ideals in the midst of his political life and action. And difficult indeed it is for a person in the world to be able to overcome worldly influences and act according to his conscience, his inner convictions or the higher ideals placed before us by our ancients.

That is the struggle of life. That is the challenge. That is the true *abhyasa* (practice)—to keep intact the genuineness of our essential nature in the midst of the artifices of these added factors that go to make up our human personality structure, the artifices of the senses and the mind with its desires, its whimsies, its imaginations, its fancies, its cravings and its ambitions.

That is the *sadhana*. That is the great *abhyasa*—to be rooted in the Divine, to be guided by the Divine, to recognise the reality of the Divine and the Divine alone, and to give secondary place to all that is other than the Divine. It is for this that strength has to be prayed for. Deliver us from this evil. Lead us not into this temptation of succumbing to the influences, pulls and pressures of that which is other than the Divine, that which is other than your ideal, that which is other than the direction of your goal.

In the midst of the many pulls and the many pressures from other directions, to be what God means you to be, to be what Jesus the Christ wished you to be, wanted you to be, to be what Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji has clearly asked us to be, that is what proves, that is the touchstone, that is the acid test of the authenticity and the genuineness of our spirituality and our morality. What it is able to withstand, what it is able to resist, what it is able to overcome and still be able to be what it is—that is the acid test.

The relevance of the teachings of Jesus is not the church nor merely the words of the Bible. The relevance of the teachings of Jesus is the fact that He is an ever-present Presence, that He is an eternal witness, a companion who walks by us, who lives with us and who notes every movement, every thought, within and without us. It is this presence of His divine personality that has outlived His own contemporary times and is powerfully present.

Jesus the Christ is not dead. Buddha is not dead. Great ones who have merged in Brahman, they do not die. They step out of the body and continue to prevail, pervading all space as a presence that is relevant to everyone who recognises kinship with them. The Guru is eternal. The Divine Teachers are eternal. The relevance of Jesus and the Christianity that He taught is His presence, divine presence, here and now and always unto worlds without end.

So, one who is a disciple, one who is a believer, one who makes his life, words and actions a response to the call “Follow Me,” one who is such a follower, keeps, therefore, as one’s touchstone or criterion for action: “If Jesus was by my side or I was walking with Him, what would I do in this

particular situation? How would He have me behave at this moment, in this situation?” Your life and the living of your life should be an answer to this question. It is upon the basis of this criterion that one should mould one’s character and conduct, life and actions. That is the essence of Christianity. That is the heart of true belief, and it is indeed the very life breath of obedience.

Ponder this truth upon the eve of Christmas Eve. May Jesus become a living factor in our lives. Then indeed Christmas will become a turning point, a meaningful entry point into a new life of light and wisdom. “Arise and follow Me.” *Uttishthata jagrata prapya varan nibodhata* (Arise, awake, having reached the wise, become enlightened)!

HEAVEN IS WHERE GOD IS

Worshipful homage unto the supreme Universal Reality that pervades all space, envelops all existence and indwells all beings, which is the *nitya* (eternal) ever present in the *anitya*, which is the *avinasi* (indestructible), ever present in the *nasaya-vastu* (perishable). *Samamsarveshu bhuteshu tishthantam paramesvaram, vinasyatsvavinasyantam yah pasyati sa pasyati* (He sees, who sees the Supreme Lord existing equally in all beings, the unperishable within the perishing).

O Lord, grant us that vision that will enable us to perceive the eternal, the permanent, the everlasting, which is concealed, hidden, occult, yet present in the non-eternal, the temporary and the passing. Let us behold eternity in time. Let us behold the unmanifest within the manifest. Let us behold the concealed, *gudhah*, within that which is apparent. *Eko devah sarvabhuteshu gudhah* (God, Who is one only, is hidden in all beings). Let us behold the formless within all names and forms.

Thus beholding, thus recognising, seeing all things as the signature of God, let us develop the consciousness of His presence at all times. Learning to perceive the hidden Divinity pervading this apparently material universe, let us be able to live, move and have our being in God. Let us be able to recognise that now, here is the Kingdom of God. “My body may be part of material earth, but I shall ever dwell in the now, here Kingdom of God, the now, here Kingdom of Heaven.”

Let this be the inner consciousness of the awakened seeker. Even as he is struggling to attain God-experience, he already begins to develop the consciousness of the ultimate Reality that has to be attained, through fervent *bhav*, through faith, through feeling, through firm conviction, with mind and intellect and body—*mamevanusmara... mayibuddhimnivesaya... tameva saranam gaccha sarva bhavena bhārata* (Remembering Me only... Let your intellect dwell in Me... Seek refuge in Me with all your heart and being, O Arjuna). This is *isvara-pranidhana* (devotion to the Lord). This is dwelling on earth but living in God, living in heaven.

The truth is not that where heaven is, there God is. The truth is that where God is, there heaven is. Therefore, you, as awakened, intelligent beings, endowed with perception, endowed with knowledge of the scriptures, endowed with understanding, you can very easily understand this fact, that it is not that God is where heaven is. You cannot confine God to a locality. On the contrary, heaven is where God is. And God is now, here. God is the all-pervading one and only absolute Reality. Therefore, we are ever in heaven, ever in God, ever in His kingdom. It is the growing awareness of this fact that is required, not bringing into fact something that does not exist as a fact.

“Thy kingdom come.” When we pray thus, it is a prayer for an inner awakening to an ever-present reality. It is not a prayer for the coming into being of a state of affairs that does not at the moment prevail. Even when we were not, God prevailed as the all-pervading, universal presence. Even while we are, God prevails as the all-pervading, universal presence, the one great fact. And, even if we pass from hence and are no longer here, even then God will prevail as the one universal presence divine, the all-pervading presence divine. Thus it is that you should pray for the recognition of an eternal fact, that He dwells within us and we dwell in Him—God in you and you in God. O Lord, grant us recognition of this fact!

Thus is the sharing this dawn, in the spiritual presence of Gurudev, a sharing accompanied by the prayer that the peace of the ever-present God pervade your heart and mind, your entire being. May peace flood into your consciousness and envelop you. May you dwell in peace. May you live to share and to give this peace. May peace be the one thing that you pray for others, desire for others. And also may joy fill your heart. For where God is, there is perennial joy, for Brahman is *anandam*. In the beginning was Brahman, now is Brahman, always shall prevail Brahman. Therefore, in the beginning was bliss, now is bliss, and forever, worlds without end, there shall prevail this bliss supreme.

Upon this day, as the whole world awakens to Christmas, my wish for you all is peace. Upon this auspicious dawn my good wishes for you all is joy. And my prayer to you all is that you may live to make your life an unbroken, ceaseless flow of peace and joy into God’s good earth. May you live to share and to give this peace and joy unto all your fellow beings, that goodwill may prevail, that all may rejoice. *Sarvesham santir-bhavatu* (Peace be unto all beings). Live to realise and to make others realise this prayer. May the ever-present, indwelling peace of the Kingdom of Heaven within you, in which you dwell in the Spirit, may that peace be your gift to mankind day by day, day after day, through your every thought, every feeling, every word and action. May you live and move in this world as a messenger of peace, an angel of peace. May you live and move in this world as a source of joy to one and all. This prayer I offer to all of you as my Christmas gift.

This truth of God’s presence, this truth of the prevalence of the Kingdom of Heaven all around us, now, here, is to be heard, reflected upon and meditated upon, so that you may live to rejoice in the joy of the Lord, you may live to grant peace unto all, yourself being established in that peace that passeth understanding. May God and all His saints, may the Divine Master of the Middle East, the prophet of Nazareth, the child that was born in Bethlehem nearly 2000 years ago, the Wisdom Teacher Who gave us the Sermon on the Mount, may that Being ever walk beside you. May the wisdom teachings of that Being be the light upon your path and may His radiant life be a lofty ideal and example for you to emulate in your life, even as you are, step by step, trying to ascend the steep path that leads to the pinnacle of perfection and liberation and illumination.

God bless you all! May all His prophets and messengers bless you. May you attain that peace and joy that they came to grant mankind through their life, their example and their teachings. May the love and blessings of the Lord Jesus Christ, may the love and benedictions of beloved Holy Master Gurudev Sivanandaji make your life divine and grant you the experience of that peace, not in the distant future, not in some other realm, but now and here, every moment of your life!

HAVE DIVINITY IN YOUR MIND AND HEART

“Every day is a renewal. Every morning is a daily miracle. This joy you feel is life. All creation is gifted with the ecstasy of God’s light.”—*Gertrude Stein*. Therefore, beholding the light of God in all creation, let us live each day in this awareness of God’s light, of God’s divine presence.

Let us meditate of this one theme: the New Year should be to us a year of divinity. Let us live it in the awareness that we are more than human, we are really divine. Our human personality is a temporary, added factor beneath which lies our reality, our *nija svarupa* (true nature).

We are radiant centres of divinity, and therefore our life should be a constant expression, a dynamic manifestation of divinity in thought, word and action. We should live life in order to manifest our divinity in all that we do, in all the movements and actions of our life. Then alone our life is authentic, genuine, true. Otherwise it will only be an anomaly of life. If we are divine within but our life outside is undivine, unspiritual, ugly, full of all that contradicts our divinity, then that is not life. It is a living falsehood, a living lie. It is a contradiction.

Thus, at this moment when we are about to bid farewell to the old year and step into the portals of the new, let us contemplate this truth: we are divine; therefore, divine should be our life in all its parts. All twelve months, each day of every month, twenty-four hours each day, let us live in this awareness, let us make our life divine. Let us make it a thing of beauty that is a joy for all beings. Let us live as children of God, godly in our nature. That is real religion—to be what we are, children of God, shining with His godliness.

Therefore, I commend to you this maxim and resolve: always have divinity in your mind and heart. That should be the keynote of your life during the entire New Year, so that out of your life much good comes to you and much good comes to all.

NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR FAITH AND SINCERITY

Radiant Atman! Let the year that stretches before you be to you an ascending, upward stairway of 365 steps that leads to supreme heights of evolution, culture, spirituality and noble living, of sublime selflessness, sacrifice and service. May you scale these heights and go beyond into Divine-consciousness, into God-consciousness, Divine-awareness. Let each day be to you an upward, ascending step towards that great pinnacle and let the 31st of December of this coming year find you way above where you are at this moment.

Move forward this New Year determined to make it a steady, upward ascent of the spirit towards its great and divine destiny. And what you wish to make it, that it will be. For the supreme power abides within you. There is nothing impossible for an aspiring soul, for a really determined *sadhaka*. All things become possible with persistence, perseverance, patience and above all sincerity. Having unwavering faith in yourself and with steady, continuous effort—slow but steady, little but ceaseless—you will find yourself rising higher and higher. By steady, persistent and patient effort, you will find yourself in that supreme peak of perfection. That is the key.

Believe in yourself. Have faith, and know that nothing is impossible for faith and sincerity, for a true desire and aspiration to attain and to achieve. For you are made for it and this life is meant for it. And this is your birthright that you can claim. God bless you!

WORSHIP THAT IS DEAR TO THE LORD

Worshipful homage unto the eternal Reality—the one, beginningless, endless, changeless, infinite, eternal, all-pervading, immanent and indwelling Reality—that is the source, support and ultimate fulfilment of all existence! Infinite and all-pervading; therefore, everywhere present. Dwelling within you; therefore, nearer to you than yourself. That Being, in whom you live, move and have your being, indwells the heart-shrine of your body-temple; and, therefore, your every movement is a divine activity.

In this inner shrine of your heart in the temple of your body, worship Him with the flowers of truthfulness, with the flower of verity, with the flower of honesty, with the flower of loyalty to your vows, with the flower of a guileless heart, a frank and simple-hearted disposition.

Worship Him with a life devoid of all crookedness, deceit and double-dealing. Worship Him with the flowers of straightforwardness, simplicity, purity and compassion. Worship Him with the flowers of a self-controlled life, with control of your senses.

These are the flowers that are dear to that Being who is the indweller of your heart, the sanctum sanctorum of this body-temple of yours. He does not desire costly ingredients for His worship. He is the overlord of countless worlds. He owns everything. What can you give Him? There is nothing that doesn't belong to Him.

But your ego belongs to you, your heart belongs to you, your life belongs to you. If you offer your heart, your ego, your life as a flower at His feet, then indeed His grace will flow into you. For He delights, rejoices and finds intense pleasure when He is offered the flowers of truthfulness, forgiveness, compassion, simplicity, guilelessness, where there is no deviousness, no double-talk, no concealment, no human cleverness.

These are all despicable from the point of view of the spiritual ideal of a saint or a man of wisdom. These are the devices of the cunning and crooked, the dishonest and cheats. Therefore, these despicable devices do not become the dignity of a spiritual personality. They do not become a *sannyasin*, a *sadhaka* and a devotee of God who have chosen God as their highest value.

When these prevail, when these are not eradicated through introspection, self-examination, and prayer, they act as a brake in your spiritual life. You stop proceeding further. You may be living a spiritual life for ten, twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty years, but you will be where you are, because you are shackled to your earthly imperfection, to your human defects and foibles—you are not seeking to progress in divinity. That is the tragedy of spiritual life—to miss the way.

In our Vedic way of life, our entire life style is pervaded by the concept of *dharma*. Whatever you are, in whatever context, you have a certain *dharma* to fulfil. And for you who have become aware through the teachings of the Guru that your real identity is divinity, to be true to what

you really are and to manifest your real identity in your life by living a divine life, by thinking divinely, speaking divinely, acting divinely, living divinely—that is your *dharma*. Because you are meant to express outside what you are inside.

And if you know that you are part of *paramatma*—you are *jivatma*, part of *paramatma*—that you are divine, that divinity is your real identity, then it becomes your *dharma*, your *svadharma* to live to manifest what you are. To be what you are is your *svadharma*, to be contrary to it is to move away from truth.

To be true to the teachings of your Guru is truthfulness. To deviate from the teachings of your Guru is falsehood. To be true to the solemn vows you have taken is truthfulness. To give up such vows is to live a life of falsehood.

Truth pervades every activity of our life within and without. Therefore, ponder deeply the all-pervasive presence of the principle of truth in your own life—inner and outer, subjective and objective, individual and collective—and worship that great Being, that shines with the strength of a million suns in your heart-shrine, with the flower of truth! That is the highest worship, and that is your greatest duty!