



The most invaluable and supreme treasure in this world is faith in God and devotion to God.

The Lord is everywhere. Feel His presence everywhere. His eyes behold everything. His hands protect all. Trust in Him. Take refuge in His sweet Name. See God in every face, and then do your service as worship offered to the God who is within all beings.

God does not desire costly ingredients for His worship. He delights, rejoices and finds pleasure when He is offered the flowers of truthfulness, forgiveness, compassion, simplicity and guilelessness.

Swami Chidananda
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A DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY PUBLICATION

LAWS OF PROSPERITY IN THE HOME



SRI SWAMI CHIDANANDA

**LAWS OF PROSPERITY
IN THE HOME**

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Sri Swami Chidananda



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FOREWORD

Om Namō Narayanaya
Om Namō Bhagavate Sivanandaya
Om Sri Ram Jaya Ram Jaya Jaya Ram

Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj had started the SIVANANDA MATRI SATSANGA, in Sivananda Ashram, Headquarters on 8th May 1989 - Akshaya Tritiya Day. Swamiji Maharaj not only inspired, encouraged, enquired about its activities but also gave specific instructions for Swadhyaya and blessed the Matri Satsanga by his Holy attendance frequently.

I am immensely happy about this noble deed of publication of two booklets in English and two booklets in Hindi on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee Celebration of the Sivananda Matri Satsanga this year. Each booklet contains 25 short but elevating and inspiring Articles by Sri Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. It is respectfully offered to the womankind of today as well as tomorrow. I hope this will be found useful and beneficial to one and all. My best wishes for the success and wide circulation of these booklets.

May the Grace of the Almighty Lord shower upon the members of the Sivananda Matri Satsanga, which is active and regularly attended by the lady inmates and visitors to the Holy Ashram.

Swami Vimalananda

Swami Vimalananda
President,
The Divine Life Society

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**LAWS OF PROSPERITY
IN THE HOME**

1

THE FOUR STAGES OF LIFE

In our grand Indian culture they conceived of life in four stages: the preliminary stage, the development stage, the flowering or blossoming stage and the culminating fruitful stage. The satisfactory growth of the latter three stages truly depends upon the management of the first stage.

The Student Stage

The supreme value of the student period is incalculable. Student life is the most precious life. The way in which you utilise this period will decide the nature of the coming years that lie ahead of you. Your happiness, your success, your honour and your good name all depend upon the way in which you live now. In this present period, my dear student, you are preparing your future. Remember this.

I wish you to be great. The world has put its faith in you. Your elders keep their hope upon you. Now is the time for you to wisely mould your life, your character, your physical health, your entire nature. It is like the laying of the foundation for an important building you wish to construct. If this building is something very important to you, then just think how much more important its

proper foundation becomes in your view. The strong and continued existence of the building depends certainly upon the foundation. This is the stage you are now in.

Let your preparations be wise, correct, and of such a kind that will lead to your true welfare, supreme good, and lasting happiness. You should acquire knowledge not only of History, Geography, Mathematics, etc., but also about human nature, the science of self-control, the art of developing a pure mind, the duties of men and women, and the proper relationship between you, the world and God.

Thus, the first 25 years of human life should be dedicated to acquiring good health, perfect character, self-control and all that is necessary for you to know in order to live life righteously, to be financially independent via some trade or profession, and to thus attain lasting satisfaction and happiness.

The Second Stage: Married Life

Having already created a firm and ideal foundation, the student enters into the second stage of life, the householder's life. One is not merely entering into a physical partnership with another physical creature, is not entering into a social relationship with another family, but is entering into a spiritual partnership with another soul in order to fulfil a mutually shared divine

destiny, so that the relationship between husband and wife is essentially a spiritual partnership between two souls. Your spouse is to you everything: companion, friend, consoler, helper and partner in this great spiritual adventure. Such is the ideal and total concept of this relationship.

With such an understanding, the home becomes not only a place for living the normal worldly existence, but a place of worship and devotion. Daily worship, helping those in need, and honouring the guest (especially the chance visitor who happens to be at your door at the time of food) become primary duties of householders.

Another aspect of the householders' duty is to evolve between themselves reciprocally a certain ideal behaviour of mutual love, honouring each other's individual freedom. Such an atmosphere becomes the ideal ground for nurturing the new generation. The children find that between their parents exists a beautiful relationship of harmony, love, mutual respect and tolerance, which creates an ideal atmosphere for their growth. Through their personal relationship the parents place before the children an exemplary way of conducting themselves which becomes the first educational process of the child. Home is, therefore, the nursery of the nation, nursery of the world. Providing an ideal setting and an ideal

atmosphere for the generation of tomorrow is an important duty of the married couple.

Third Stage: Retirement

Having fulfilled the duties of raising children, making them adults capable of standing on their own feet, a new stage of life comes into being. Up till now you were entirely preoccupied with your family and your profession, providing for your parents, wife, children and other dependants. To a certain extent, it was a self-centred life, although one practised selflessness for the sake of the children and family. But now one must give way to the new generation.

Having retired, with a little more leisure on your hands, and with a vast reservoir of professional experience and expertise, one has the time to become true selfless servants of the society, to become altruists and philanthropists. This is also the time for husband and wife, together, to enter more into the inner life, study, meditation, prayer, pilgrimage. We must realise that a time comes when we have to say "Good-bye". We have to prepare for that last journey.

The Fourth Stage: Renunciation

At this time of life the only duty is to gather together one's mind and place it upon the Supreme Being. That is the fourth quarter of life,

the sun-set period of one's life, when all your relationships and connections are coming to a close. At this time, your entire mind should be fixed upon the Eternal, no more on the passing world. You have fulfilled all your duties, and now you have to depart. The river is reaching the ocean, and a time will come when it has to merge into the ocean.

Here one's mind has become calm, steady and pure. One's heart is desireless and free from all cravings. One is established in perfect self-restraint and virtue. This ideal state is the fruit of right living. Here, one automatically becomes absorbed in the contemplation of the Supreme and moves towards God-experience. He or she reaps the harvest of a rich inner spiritual life, supreme peace and bliss, obtaining that ultimate objective for which one has taken birth. That is the goal to be reached.

2

LIVE FOR A NOBLE HIGH PURPOSE

My Dear Child,

You are a teenager now. Remember, you are a divine child of God no matter what age or stage you are in. Therefore, at all times be divine in your thoughts, words and actions. Be strong. Be fearless in truth. Have firm courage to be yourself. Do not be weak and wish to imitate others, but be spiritually strong and bold and do not be afraid to differ from the crowd, if you think that is the right thing to do.

To flow with the stream is easy but to swim against the current needs guts. That is what being Divine means, namely, having the guts to remain what you are without being dragged into being what every A B ..Z is nowadays. Independent and original! That's what this Swami wants to find in you at all times, in all conditions, under all circumstances, in all crowds—Head and shoulders high above the rest, but with no snobbery or superiority, just simply, with humility, but with strength.

You will get respect. You will help others that way because you will show a new way, a way out of the mess which teenagers are in since the past 25

years. God bless you and may you shine as a Light.

Be an excellent student. Be an understanding son or daughter. Be an ideal human individual and also a true lover of all that is **good, virtuous** and **beautiful**.

Live simply, but think nobly. Feel Divinity and act ideally. Be perfect in small things and little acts day by day. Try to make each single day full of truth, selflessness, nobility and purity. Life will be grand and glorious then because your life is made up of single days one after another. Take thought of your day!

3

TWELVE KEYS TO HAPPINESS AND SUCCESS

There are Twelve Keys to successfully managing a student's life.

1. Develop A Clear Cut Aim

First, you must form a correct conception of how you wish to develop and perfect yourself. You must cultivate a clear-cut idea of what you want to become. Without such an aim, your life cannot move forward powerfully and progressively. You will be pulled in different directions and your mind will be distracted and much energy will be wasted. You can avoid all this if you have a well-defined aim or a set of a few definite objectives. Then there is no confusion in your way. You know what you wish to attain and in which direction to proceed. Therefore, you also understand what is right and what is wrong. What is desirable and what is undesirable. What is to be accepted and what is to be rejected in moving towards your aim of life. Such definiteness gives you great inner strength. It develops will-power. It makes you a positive personality. There will be no more negative trends in your life.

2. Draw Up A Wise Programme

The second important thing is to draw up for yourself a wise programme to help you to develop along the desired lines and to gradually attain the aim of life. Such a programme will provide a plan of action in meeting with all problems that face the young student, the growing youth, to deal with all the situations that arise in your life, to meet and overcome temptations with a firm mind and to surmount obstacles with boldness and self-confidence. The power to do this exists within you already in its latent state. It has to be unfolded and activated. A proper understanding of your own mind, its behavior and habits, and the law that governs the inner activity of the mind become very, very helpful in living this wonderful and interesting period of your life.

3. Guard Your Health

Now we come to the factors upon which depends the proper working out of your programme of life. Health is the key factor. Without health you can do nothing. Without health you can succeed neither in studies, nor in character-building, nor in sports and social activities, nor in home-life. Health is a matter of careful living. It is got not only from things you eat and drink, but it is also obtained from your wise and careful avoiding of such things that are not good for your health. Eat for your health. Eat for

your strength and not for your taste. Eat to live and to serve. Do not live to eat. Eat simple food. Go to bed early and get up early. Acquire healthy habits. Do regular exercise daily. Be moderate in eating and drinking. Chew your food thoroughly. Do not overeat. Do not eat without hunger. Avoid things that do not agree with you.

4. Conserve Your Energy

Then you must conserve your energy. Never waste your energy in useless pursuits. Too much talking and gossiping, aimless wandering, habit of worrying, losing your temper frequently—all these drain away your energy. Give up all habits that are likely to have an adverse effect on health. Smoking and illegal drugs are a curse upon students. Be established in perfect Brahmacharya. Abstain from sexual activity. Preserve health, conserve energy, develop physical and mental strength and thus lay the foundation of a successful life.

5. Value Character

Value character more than anything else on earth. Be perfectly truthful. Do not let your speech be vulgar or rude. Speech must be clean, polite and joy-giving. Cast away egoism, pride and selfishness. These three form the blemish upon human character. They arise out of ignorance and greed. Ignorance makes you proud and egoistic.

Greed makes you selfish. They lead to dishonour and unhappiness and failure in life.

By leading a simple life and having a cheerful disposition under all circumstances, you can overcome selfishness and egoism. Your life and conduct must be the cause of happiness in other people.

6. Adopt Virtues

Adopt certain virtues and principles and stick to them in all your activities. Never leave these principles. Never move away from virtue. These principles will be your true friends and helpers. They will assure your progress and ultimately grant you supreme happiness and success. Periodically make certain simple resolutions to practise those virtues. Maintain a personal diary wherein you make a careful note of your day-to-day conduct, speech and behavior. This will reveal to you how far you are advancing and show you your mistakes and where you must correct yourself. Such a diary will be your friend. It will reveal your weaknesses and teach you humility.

7. Pray to God

Pray to God and ask Him for inner strength and guidance. God's Divine Name has immense power. Repeat His Name always and remember Him in all situations.

Remember God with love in your heart. Have absolute faith in your inseparable relationship with Him. Cultivate constant remembrance of God by seeing His invisible presence in and through all things in this universe. God is not far away from you. God is here and now. He is the all-pervading Reality, the ever-present Divine Spirit pervading this entire universe. And also He is your innermost Self. He is closer to you than your very breath. Never forget this. Even when you are engaged in your daily activity, begin to feel the presence of God.

8. Reflect on Ideal Personalities

Reflect upon the lives of ideal personalities. Draw strength and inspiration from their lives and teachings. Try to mould your life upon their pattern. Always have a great ideal before your mind. Think of it at all times—morning, noon, evening and night. Develop it into the constant background of your thought. Then your mind will never be idle or vacant. This is important because right thinking is the key to noble living.

9. Be Kind

Out of your life there must flow ceaseless love, kindness and compassion. Never hurt anyone. Never hurt even the least of God's creatures either by thought, word or action. Even

in dreams you should never think of harming or hurting any creature. This sublime principle of non-injury, harmlessness, is given a very great place in the eternal Vedic way of life. Be a centre of help, be a centre of benefit, be a centre of happiness and peace to all. Never injure, never hurt, never harm any living creature.

10. Be Absolutely Truthful

You must be rooted in absolute truthfulness. Even at the cost of your life, never utter falsehood. Never be dishonest in any of your dealings with anyone in this world. Be a person of integrity, of verity. Become established in truthfulness in thought, word and deed. Truth is God. One who practises truthfulness rigidly will attain God. God is present in this human world as the sublime principle of truthfulness.

11. Serve Others

The vexing problems of this modern world, its clashes and conflicts, its greed and exploitation, its hatred and hostilities, its mad craze for selfish acquisition will never cease or be relieved until and unless there is a change of outlook in man towards his neighbours and towards the life around him. Man makes life 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 persons is a reinstating of the spirit of selfless giving into its rightful place. The more you give of yourself, the greater will be your conquest over sorrow and suffering and your ascent into peace and bliss.

There can be no greater joy than seeing the smile on someone's face whom you have helped. The gift of giving comes back a hundred fold in inner peace and contentment. It is a greater good to find ways to help those outside the family. Don't be afraid to offer to help carry something for an old or disabled person. Your healthy body was created for service to the world.

12. Think Nobly

As you think, so you will become, just as you reap what you sow. In the same way, you will ultimately experience and attain what you constantly think and feel. Your inner thoughts lead to outer action. Repeated actions grow into habits. Such habits become permanent qualities in your very nature. This nature goes to form your character. Your future and your destiny is the direct result of your character. Understand this very well. Carefully bear this in your mind. Think and act with this knowledge. Your inner thoughts are the seeds of your ultimate destiny. Safeguard

your thoughts and feelings. Think nobly and virtuously. You will become a noble man or woman. You will attain greatness and make your life fruitful. More than all the books that you read and study, more than all your lessons and examinations, more important than everything in life is the cultivation of virtues. This is the source of ultimate happiness. Become good and great.



4

THE WEALTH OF CHARACTER

What distinguishes the human individual from the animal is our behaviour. There is a difference between the Charitra (character) of a Pashu (animal) and the Charitra of a Manava (human being). If the Manava does not keep up to this higher standard of Charitra then even though he may be a human individual in Roopa (form) and Nama (name), he is only an animal because his life, conduct and behaviour is more suitable to the animal than to a man. Through your behaviour you must prove that you are a human individual. If you have no control over your senses, if you have no principles for your living, if you are subject to anger and passion and gluttony (Kama, Krodha and Vishaya Vilasa), if you have no moderation, then there you have the animal. Therefore, you have to prove your human status not merely by reading a few text books and passing a few examinations and getting a degree, but by the manner of your life, conduct and behaviour. The highest wealth in human life, the highest wealth of youth, is the wealth of character. The most precious thing is character. That is your real treasure. If you develop a noble character, then you are really a wealthy person,

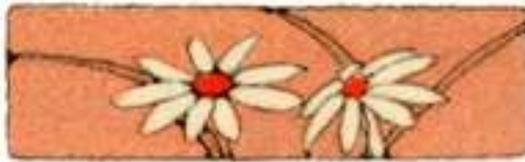
which means your life is rich with this Aishwarya (wealth) of Satcharitra (noble conduct).

The Relationship of Character to Human Life

What is the relationship of character to human life? The relationship of character to human life is the same as that of the foundation to the entire structure of the building which will be raised over that foundation. The most important part in the structure of the building is the foundation. If the foundation is well laid, if the foundation is strong, then the building will stand. You can raise it high, and it will last, it will be strong. If the foundation is weak or not properly laid, then any moment the building can collapse, the building cannot be lasting.

Upon the foundation of a well developed character and conduct, one can build up the edifice or structure of a successful life. Whatever someone undertakes, he will succeed in it. Whatever profession he adopts, he will make headway in it. He will shine; he will earn the respect of all people. He will have a magnetic personality. He will have an influence over his time. He will be a leader, for the power of character gives magnetism to the personality, and the power of character depends upon self control. Without self control you cannot be an ideal individual.

The secret of a successful career, the secret of a magnetic personality is self control and character which is the outcome of self control. The key to character is self control, and character is the basis of success in life. With character you can overcome every obstacle in life. You can succeed in all undertakings. You will shine brilliantly in every field of life.



5

HOW TO CHOOSE A PROFESSION

In deciding upon a profession, you must now take a new look at the professions and reconsider what professional activity really implies. It constitutes your service and your contribution to the welfare and progress of the society in which you are living.

Professional life is self-giving, is giving of oneself for the service, benefit and happiness of all beings. Its income bringing aspect is secondary and not primary. This must be clearly understood. It must be subordinated to the basic ideals of self-giving and service. Otherwise man is not a man. He is but a beast in human form, a wolf in sheep's clothing.

As long as you have a body, you have to work hard for your livelihood. You have to struggle to provide yourself with the necessities of physical existence—food, clothing, shelter, medical aid. But your efforts to earn your livelihood should not be immoral, unethical or unrighteous. Right conduct should be the basis of your professional or business activities. Ply a trade, do a business, be a farmer, be a doctor, it will not come in the way of your attaining supreme success in life, provided you ever adhere to right conduct.

Similarly, your social life should not become mere frivolity, dissipation, extravagant entertainment and a 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 all beings amidst whom Providence has placed you.

Be helpful to your brothers and sisters. Desire to serve your own neighbour. Desire to serve the society, nation, all creatures, even plants and insects. Desire to be serviceful to all. And do not forget that great being who gives us life itself—our Mother Earth. Without pure water and clear air, thick forests and fertile pastures, life on Earth cannot continue in a healthy manner. Already so many species have become extinct due to greed and selfishness. This will be our fate also unless great effort is put forth to turn the tides. Let your time be spent in these worthwhile pursuits.

6

SANCTITY OF MARRIAGE

Householders should not forget even for a moment that marriage is a sacred thing. The sanctity of marriage has to be realised in all its fullness and in all its seriousness. Marriage is a sacrament. It is not just the union of two bodies. That is the least important part of it. Marriage is bringing together by God two souls in this vast, vast phenomenon called life, in the vast stream of existence where countless millions of souls are moving in their individual planes of spiritual evolution towards the Divine. Through the grace of God, through the Divine Will, and through the operation of certain mysterious laws that govern this universal life, two souls are brought together. That is the meaning of marriage.

Through the coming together of these two souls, God means an important process to be worked out, and that is the sharing of the spiritual impulse between the two. The husband and the wife are to share what they have earned, what they have learned and also their spiritual potential. The husband is to enrich the spiritual life of the wife, the wife is to enrich the spiritual life of the husband, and both are to go hand in hand towards the supreme attainment of the

Divine Consciousness. That is the true inner meaning of family life. Marriage is sacred. It is not to be treated lightly. Marriage is an alliance, which is for something more than mere physical enjoyment or the propagation of the race.

The wife should be devoted to her husband, and should not think of any other man. All the rest of humanity should be to her like children; she is the great mother. The husband must have the vow which Rama had – the vow of a single spouse. That means that the thought of another woman will never enter his mind. In this way the whole family set-up becomes sacred and holy, and the interior life of the spirit goes on unhampered. There is nothing in the exterior life – either in the family life or in one's own personal life – to hold back or obstruct the spiritual life.

As the children are to be brought up to respect the law of celibacy, of continence, so the husband and the wife should adhere to the law of continence and celibacy in the form of a strict moderation of marital life. And thus, both husband and wife go in perfect harmony, and on the dual wings of exterior activity and interior prayerfulness, their lives go to the ultimate state of supreme God-consciousness. Blessedness becomes theirs, in and through their family life.

7

THE HOME—A SACRED PLACE

The home should be known to be a sacred place. The home is a sort of counterbalancing factor for all the bustle, for all the restless activity of your daily professional life. The moment you leave home, you give attention to things of this world, you are brought away from your centre, and your inner spiritual closeness to God is completely lost. In the home you are centred in the Self, you are recollected, you are in God. So the entire atmosphere of the home should be pervaded by a sense of God's presence. You should feel God in every nook and corner of your home. It should be a place where, the moment you enter, the mind which was brought out forcibly due to the secular, professional activities, is once again brought back into its own. It finds rest and peace in God. God should be the centre of the home. You should not feel "this home is mine", but rather should feel, "this is the abode of God, and here I am privileged to work out my Salvation, my Liberation."

The sanctity, sacredness and holiness of the home atmosphere are of paramount importance. The home should be kept sacred. This is essential. If the spiritual atmosphere of the home also is

destroyed, then how can you find your spiritual centre? Then how can you build a spiritual life? Therefore, in the home everything should be spiritual. There is enough of materialism, enough of forgetfulness and heedlessness of God all around you outside. So why should you add to it and let the home atmosphere also become vitiated? Keep God intact in the home. Let every atom in the atmosphere of the home be full of holiness, and do all that you can to maintain that atmosphere. Keep it sacred. Keep it sanctified. Always feel the home to be a place where you can get very close to God. If the home is ideal, with a harmonious atmosphere, with love for God as the centre of your family life, then you will love every minute you live in the home and no one of the family will want to get away from the home. And the time spent at home will be full of spiritual gain.

However, this spiritualisation of the home atmosphere should not be done in an eccentric fashion marking you off as a superior person, way above your neighbours, but it should be accomplished simply with a spiritual naturalness adorned with humility and thankfulness to God for the gift of this awareness.

8

GODDESS OF AUSPICIOUSNESS

In the domestic sphere the concept of Goddess Lakshmi is wonderful and unique in this blessed land of Bharatavarsha. For the home itself is regarded as the abode of Lakshmi, where the Mother manifests Herself in the worshipful form of the Grihini (house-wife or mistress of the house). Therefore, we are familiar with the expression Grihalakshmi, the Mother who presides over the auspiciousness, welfare and progress of the home-life and family. She is conceived of as the very embodiment of Goddess Lakshmi. In the West the woman is more conceived of as the wife, an equal partner to the man, vying for privilege with him in all spheres of activity and trying to assert not only her equality but even further her personal independence. Whereas, to the Hindu heart, woman is the mother. It is the motherhood of the woman that is ever present in the consciousness of the true Hindu. This is the blessing of being born in this Punya-Bhumi (sacred land), for out of this concept we shall be able to rise to the realisation of the Motherhood of God. This Matri-Bhava or the attitude and vision of the woman as the mother is a means of purifying our hearts and minds and elevating us

to a higher state, wherein the descent of divine light becomes facilitated.

Every home in Hindu society is a temple of auspiciousness, of Mangalya, presided over by Lakshmi in and through the pure person of the Grihalakshmi. The greatness, the power and the radiance of the Mother as embodied in the mother of the home is the radiance of chastity, Pativrata Dharma, which forms the grandeur, the glory and the inner radiance of the Grihalakshmi. Hers is the power that is unsurpassed in the whole world. To the Grihalakshmi in her sphere of the home, the husband or the Patidev is what to the Sadhaka and the seeker in the spiritual life the Guru is. The Sadhaka looks upon the Guru as the Supreme Being Himself, as identical with God, as brought out in the couplet:

*Twam hi Vishnur Virinchistwam
Twam cha devo Maheshwarah
Twameva Shaktiruposi
Nirgunastwam sanatanah*

This the Patidev is for the wife. Pativratiya (devotion to one's husband) is the greatest treasure a woman can possess, which makes her not merely exceptional, but a veritable Goddess-upon-earth. We must always bear in mind that in the eyes of Hindu idealism, modesty is a virtue of paramount importance, and in this form the Mother manifests Herself in and through the ideal of noble Indian womanhood. Another way of

honouring Lakshmi and worshipping her, is that no harsh word, no rude speech, no hard utterance should ever cross the holy lips of the presiding deity of the Hindu home, for graciousness and sweetness are part and parcel of the Hindu concept of the Grihalakshmi.

Another custom which is not properly understood, is the adornment of the Grihalakshmi with two important things, besides the Mangala Sutra (the marriage string with black beads woven into gold, worn around the neck). These are flowers and the Tilak (vermillion mark on the forehead). A Hindu woman should never go without the Tilak. There is a special significance and a deep reason for the wearing of a sizeable Tilak upon the forehead. There is a real necessity for this Tilak both from the subjective point of view of the lady wearing it, as also from the objective point of view of all people who have to contact her during Vyavahar (mutual dealing). Flowers are the very manifestation of Lakshmi. But, at the same time we should not forget that Mother Lakshmi acts both as Vidya Maya and also Avidya Maya. Therefore, in this aspect as Avidya Maya she is always to be worshipped from a very safe distance and we should daily pray to Her that she may save us from that aspect of Her play and only bless us as Vidya Maya.

Goddess Lakshmi Herself is the greatest exemplar of this sublime Pati-Seva. For, the

Vaishnavite concept of the great Mother is as an eternal Sevika (servant) of the Lord in Vaikuntha. She is ever at the feet of Bhagavan Vishnu, ever intent on the eternal service of the Lord.

Manifestations of Lakshmi in the Home

Coming from the person of the Grihalakshmi to the surroundings of the house, **cleanliness** is the one important way in which Lakshmi is present. Dust and dirt about the house is Alakshmi (inauspiciousness).

Then, **lamps**. The moment the time of twilight and sunset comes, we will find that in every Hindu home a lamp is lit and saluted and thus brightness and illumination will come before darkness sets in.

Worship of the Gods. This is of paramount importance. Where the Gods are not worshipped, there Lakshmi does not stay. She may of course come and take Her abode in Her extreme Avidya aspect. Money may be accumulated, but ultimately prosperity will go from the home, and grief, suffering and sorrow will be the ultimate fate of those homes. This is a very important factor which people of this sacred land, who have come to be increasingly influenced by occidental thought and Western ways of living, have to bear in mind, if they really wish their ultimate happiness and the prosperity of the family. If the days like Janmashtami, Rama-Navami, etc., are

neglected, we see that there is no auspiciousness in that house.

Charity. This is also an important manifestation of Mother Lakshmi in the Grihasthashrama. The Grihastha (householder) has the unique privilege of sharing what he has with others of the three Ashramas—the Brahmacharis who wish to carry on their studies, the wandering Sannyasin and also the Vanaprasthin who has renounced home and is living a holy life and preparing to qualify for the fourth order of Sannyasa. To give charity to these three classes of beings is a rare privilege of the second order, and to utilise this privilege is to manifest the power of Goddess Lakshmi.

Hospitality to the Atithi (unexpected guest) is an important aspect of Lakshmi. Where a stranger or a guest is turned away, there Lakshmi does not abide. But where there is a welcome for the beggar and the unexpected guest, there Lakshmi dwells in all Her radiance and blesses that home. Hospitality, charity and generosity are important aspects of Goddess Lakshmi which have to be diligently and religiously preserved by the devout Hindu Grihastha.

There are two more things which are peculiarly Hindu and in which Goddess Lakshmi manifests Herself. One is **the sacred Tulasi (basil) plant**. No home should ever be without the Tulasi. For this is one of the living forms in which

Goddess Lakshmi is present upon earth. She is the direct Vibhuti (manifestation) of the Divine Lord. I may say that the Maharashtrians are very particular about this; every home will have at least a small pot where the Tulasi plant grows. The moment you enter the house, you will see the Tulasi plant. The Mother blesses such families where She is worshipped in this form. No Maharashtrian Grihalakshmi will ever take anything until she has at least offered a flower or burnt a little camphor or done one Pradakshina (circumambulation) and bowed her head in devout salutation to Tulasi-Devi.

The second form of the Goddess, which is unfortunately fast disappearing in the urban areas, is the sacred cow—Gomata. It was the custom of all Hindus, a couple of generations ago, to worship the cow every day. Without **Gopuja** the devout Hindu wife would not take her food. In cities it is very rare to see a cow and all milk is supplied in bottles from dairies. Therefore, this is a tradition that is dying, except in villages. To make up for this, as a sort of Prayaschitta (expiation), at least upon one or two sacred days a year, every devout Hindu lady must make it a point to perform this Puja. There is of course one particular day which is specially set apart for Gopuja; and people somehow manage to worship the cow. Opportunities for this Puja should be created wherever there is this manifestation of the

Goddess in the form of the sacred cow, which at one time formed the grand concept of wealth.

Spiritual Wealth in the Sadhaka

Now we come to the most important aspect of Goddess Lakshmi as the Moksha-Dayini (bestower of liberation). Mother in Her aspect of Lakshmi is of the Rajo-Guna; because through Rajas activity is kept up. Life has to be preserved by dynamic processes. But yet She has within Herself the inner resources of pure Sattva, because Vishnu partakes of Sattva Guna and ultimately She has to merge in Her third aspect as Goddess Saraswati. As we approach the borderland between the manifestations of Lakshmi and Saraswati, Mother Lakshmi manifests as Moksha Lakshmi—that is the means that help us to attain deliverance.

The Sixteenth Chapter of the Gita gives us some of the main qualities in which the Mother is manifest. She is manifest as fearlessness, purity of heart, steadfastness in knowledge and Yoga, alms-giving, control of the senses, sacrifice, study of the scriptures, austerity, straightforwardness, harmlessness, truth, absence of anger, renunciation, peacefulness, absence of crookedness, compassion to beings, uncovetousness, gentleness, modesty, absence of fickleness, vigour, forgiveness, fortitude, absence of hatred and pride. These are the **twenty-four Daivi-Sampati** (divine qualities), aspects in which Goddess

Lakshmi takes Her abode in the heart of the spiritual aspirant.

Sama and **Dama** are two divine attributes that are manifest in the heart of the Sadhaka, serenity as opposed to fickleness, selflessness as opposed to selfishness which all possessions bring about. **Obedience** is another important aspect in which the Mother manifests in the heart of the Sadhaka.

Mother manifests Herself in the Sadhaka's personality as **keen observation, alertness and wakefulness**, qualities which are of paramount importance upon the path of Yoga. One should not be lethargic; one should not miss important things from which one can learn invaluable and priceless lessons.

One must have spiritual discipline. This is a sign of auspiciousness, because it springs out of self-control and firmness of mind. As the preservative aspect, Mother as power gives us the necessary quality of firmness and determination of mind. Therefore, **continuity and regularity** in one's spiritual Sadhana are two ways in which Goddess Lakshmi as Vishnu-Sakti manifests in the heart of the Sadhaka. They sustain the Yoga-Abhyasa of the seeker.

Persistence and perseverance are important aspects of Daivi Sampat. Also a feeling of

desirelessness and **self-sufficiency, contentment** or Santosha are the expressions of Goddess Lakshmi within our hearts.

Just as cleanliness in the domestic sphere, so also **Saucha** in the life of a Sadhaka is an expression of Goddess Lakshmi—inner as well as outer cleanliness in all aspects of the seeker's life.

Health and cheerfulness are two more aspects of the Goddess.

Slight Not the Mother

Having thus summed up the manifestations of the Mother both in the domestic sphere and the sphere of Yoga and Sadhana, we have to bear in mind an important law with regard to the manifestation of the divine power of the Mother. Where Lakshmi is worshipped and propitiated, there She stays. One must be very careful and avoid all slighting of the Mother. When such manifestations of Goddess Lakshmi are present, if we do not make use of them, if we ignore them, then we slight the Goddess. Therefore, if Lakshmi is neglected and if She is slighted, prosperity and happiness, secular as well as spiritual, will depart from that person.

Realising this important law, we have the belief that one should not get angry when one is sitting down to take food. One should not speak harsh words at food-time. To refuse food is a very great blunder; for it becomes a direct insult and

slighting of the Goddess in Her visible form of sustaining the very life upon earth. One should never slight food or treat it with disrespect. Therefore, in the Hindu family where this important fact is recognised, the Grihalakshmi will never allow food, especially rice, to be thrown about on the floor, for to tread upon rice is a very great mistake. Anna (food) is Lakshmi. One should never waste or throw away food unnecessarily, because by this we fail to recognise the worth and importance of this manifestation of the Goddess. We may by all means give food in charity, feed the animals, the cow, the dog, the cat, any hungry creatures; but wantonly we should not throw away food. For if She comes to us of Her own gracious will, and we thus fail to recognise Her worth, then at times of need, we will find that She is absent.

One more important manifestation of Lakshmi in the Sadhaka is **memory**. *Yaa devi sarva bhuteshu smriti rupena samsthita* (O Devi, who abides in all beings in the form of memory). Mother is Smriti (memory) in all beings, says the Devi Sukta. That is Smriti of the precious and sublime words of Upadesha (spiritual instruction), the words of wisdom from the lips of the Guru and all great saints, the men of God in this world, from whom we obtain this knowledge. It is through Smriti that these gems of spiritual instructions are preserved. If we do not bear them in mind, do Manana (reflection) and Nididhyasana

(deep meditation), we will not be able to reap the full benefit of this Upadesha. Therefore we should not neglect this important aspect of Goddess Lakshmi; and give the excuse “I did not remember”. If we do not remember the Guru’s Upadesha, we will be the losers.

Therefore, may we pray to Mother Lakshmi to bless us and grace both our homes and our hearts in all these divine aspects of Her Vidya nature and may we make the fullest use of Her presence and thus devoutly honour and worship the Mother. May we thus attain our eternal welfare here as well as hereafter.



9

LAWS OF PROSPERITY IN THE HOME

I have four or five things which I wish to tell you. Where elders are respectfully honoured, there prosperity prevails; and where elders—father and mother, grandfather and grandmother, uncles and aunts—are treated with contempt, with harshness, with scant respect, there is no prosperity.

These things are not known. So when people are miserable, when people are unhappy, when people lack prosperity, it is not known why it comes about that way. It is brought about by oneself by a total breaking of these laws. And then you try to find out the consequences of the bad situation by looking at the diary, or statistics, or expenditure and income account. Perhaps you blame economic conditions. But, no—you create your bad conditions by breaking the spiritual laws. Where elders are treated with respect and honour, are treated with reverence, there, in that family, in that house, prosperity will abide. In the life of that person who honours his elders, prosperity will always rest.

Secondly, where the women of the house are treated with reverence, where they are put upon

the pedestal which they deserve, there is prosperity. Where are we all, where is humanity if it is not for the women? It is the Supreme Mother who is the very source of the whole universe, and where the mothers, the women, are treated with the reverence that is due to them, in that house, there is prosperity. And where women are treated with disrespect, unkindness, harshness, prosperity cannot come. Prosperity does not abide in that house where the wife and the mother are made to weep, where tears of women fall. Prosperity takes wings and flies away from that house where the woman weeps.

Thirdly, for the womenfolk themselves, modesty is the magnet of prosperity. For a woman modesty is the highest ornament. The ornament of a woman, the beauty of a lady, is not in the jewellery she wears or in the type of material or the dress she wears—no, that is not beauty. After all, what is the beauty of the body? The moment you take leave of the body, it is just a useless thing here. So the true beauty and the grace of a woman is modesty. If a woman is modest, if she is chaste, she becomes worshipful; and prosperity becomes the servant, the handmaid of that family where women are adorned by the ornaments of chastity, modesty and gracefulness.

Sometimes it is very pitiable to see women getting unsexed in some of the modern, high-born societies. They are losing their feminine quality.

After all, the thing that makes a woman a woman is her feminine quality—her tenderness, her grace, her kindness, her forgiving nature, her forbearing nature. These are the things which make a goddess of a woman. If these are not there, if women are sharp-tongued, if they are caustic, if they are bitter, if they are full of hostility, there prosperity cannot come. It cannot come where a woman wants to be, in all respects, like a male. No! She can claim a certain type of equality, but not equality in all ways. If in this craze for being equal with man, woman loses her grace, her modesty and her chastity, then she has lost the most precious thing that God has given to her.

A Vedic declaration says: “Where women are worshipped, there indeed, the gods dance with joy”. And where woman loses this right of worship by her own immodesty, there prosperity cannot be.

And, last but not the least, where God is worshipped every day, there the whole house becomes blessed with the highest prosperity. All joy, all blessedness, all prosperity comes to that house where God is worshipped regularly. Say thanks when you get up in the morning, for your health, for your body, for a clean mind, for energy in the body to live a life of usefulness to yourself and to all, and in the evening, thank God again for

the bounty of a good day, for clear weather, fresh air, good health and energy, opportunity to serve and be useful to yourself and to others. If every day there is thanksgiving and you always worship God in your home, there is bound to be prosperity. Where there is worship, in that place, there is the tangible presence of God, and where there is this tangible presence of the Deity, what to say of prosperity? Everything that is good, everything that is blessed, will pervade that house, will fill that house.

Where God is, all auspiciousness, all blessedness, all prosperity is there as a matter of course—just as luminosity is there, radiance is there, where there is light. So, if you wish to fill yourself with prosperity, be worshipful. Do not make the temple or church alone the place of prayer and worship. Let every house be a place of worship. Let every house be a centre of prayer. Let every house be the abode of God. And, let women be the repository of such virtues as modesty, chastity, purity and graciousness, and let the children of the family and the male members of the family give due respect to the ladies and treat them with kindness, treat them with courtesy, treat them with the dignity that is due to them, and let the children revere their elders. If these things are followed, if these things are fulfilled,

prosperity will become an axiomatic condition. There can be no want, there can be no difficulty, there can be no lack in such a house.

This is the ultimate wisdom of the ancients. They say: “Prosperity is created by the behaviour of the human being”. Outside factors are secondary factors only. They are not the main factors.



10

DAILY SPIRITUAL ROUTINE FOR HOUSEHOLDERS

Each householder should have an ideal daily routine. The home life should not be left to itself, but taken care of. In addition to those unexpected things that come up every day—a visit of someone, a telephone call, an invitation to go out with someone—every one of you should have an accepted basic programme, a basic schedule for your daily life, which should include an hour of prayer in the morning and an hour of prayer in the evening. The prayer hour might include the reading of scriptural texts, the reading of sacred and inspiring spiritual books, a few minutes of quiet indrawn meditation, a few minutes of actually articulated prayer, inspiring prayer. The prayer can be spontaneous; it does not necessarily have to come out of some book. Or it can be both, as there are some very inspiring short prayers in the Gospel and also in some other books. The children should also be trained in this way.

There should be some actual act of external worship. After all, we are embodied creatures and we wish to exercise our bodies also in devotion. When you are in a state of worship, the body also

should take on the attitude of worship. You should light a lamp or a candle, burn a little incense, bow before the deity, offer supplication, ask Him to enlighten you, to fill your heart with virtue, fill your heart with divine love, goodness and selflessness, and then, bowing low, kneel and press down with your forehead. In this way, you humble yourself in the presence of God. As the body prostrates and humbles itself, it has a chastening effect upon the mind. We cannot become completely heedless to these reactions of the body upon the mind and the mind upon the inner spirit. Therefore, each day, you should have an hour when you have scope for the exercise of these aspects of your being—for the exercise of the body, the heart and the feelings in prayer; for the exercise of the mind and the intellect in study, reflection and enquiry; and for the exercise of the spirit in inner contemplation, silence, indrawnness and meditation.

Each member of the family should have a private altar. The mother should have her own nook or little corner, where she has her prayer and conversation with God, asking for guidance, a little intimate communion with God. The husband, likewise, should have a small altar for himself, and if this cannot be had, at least he must have some time for himself, when he communes with the Maker individually. And the children should be trained right from the very beginning to have such separate little corners for

themselves. Just as they have one corner for their toys, another for their books, a third for their pets, so they must have a corner for their own communion with the Most High, and if this habit is developed from childhood, then later on they will be able to have their own independent spiritual life.

11

SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE TO CHILDREN

The training of children is a great and onerous responsibility of the parents. You are only the trustees of these souls and have no permanent connection with the children, whom God has given to you. You should try to do what you can in the little time they pass through your hands, and make their lives more radiant. Therefore, the proper training of children is one of the most onerous duties. And if this is done in the attitude of being privileged to be the parent of His own children, then everything you do towards your children becomes part of your Karma Yoga and of your spiritual unfoldment. For, by giving to them the impulse for the spiritual life by your own ideal lives, you become the partaker of God's life. You are thus fulfilling the great gospel of Karma Yoga, which is selfless service of doing something good to others with only love in your heart but without attachment. If you train them along the path, which will take them to their eternal welfare of true blessedness, then, that is the highest bestowal that one person can confer upon another in this earth-plane.

Children are imitators. The great bestowal upon them, therefore, is the bestowal of the inspiration of your personal example. The parents have to be ideal at home. Their speech, their actions, their behaviour with each other, their conduct, their behaviour in relation to their neighbours – if these are ideal and based upon virtue and ethically perfect in all situations, then they do not have to give anything else to children. The children get all their education just by basking under the radiance of the parental influence. It is worth more than anything else that can be given to the children.

You can train them even before they are born. Even when they are within you, you can send towards them all holy thoughts, inspiring spiritual vibrations, spiritual ideas about God, prayer and love. Then a part of that nature will be imbibed even by the unborn child.

There should be a separate hour set aside for worship and devotion in the morning and again in the evening. Retire early to bed. Do not be glued to TV. This destroys the spiritual life of children. There is no sin greater than to bring forth a child and not to care about its ethical and spiritual development; for such parents have betrayed a trust. Out of their own volition they have created a trust and betrayed it. This should not be done.

12

TO ADORABLE AND DIVINE MOTHERS

Om Namo Narayanaya!

I bow again and again at the feet of all of you who are the very embodiment and symbol of the Almighty Mother. I am very happy to get this opportunity of giving this message in your service. Our most worshipful Master Swami Sivananda used to consider Indian women as the manifestation of the Universal Mother.

The key to the future development and progress of any nation is held by the women, because the mother is the first teacher of any child in every generation. Home is the elementary school for all children for inculcating good habits and higher values for the future development of the nation and the most effective element of education. Just as a potter or an idol maker takes hold of highly plastic clay and shapes it at will, likewise a mother shapes the character of a child by the manner of her speaking and conduct. Thus important and effective power is yours, and you have to keep this in mind while taking proper care and train the children in your family for building a strong future India.

The preservation of our culture is the responsibility of women and not men. Woman is the custodian of the culture of the land. Any soul born in a home gets initially conditioned and that too seriously by the atmosphere prevailing therein. The mother influences the child far more than the father. The hand that rocks the cradle, rules the nation.

You should understand yourself. The real you is your imperishable soul. The real you is neither male nor female and has neither any name nor any form. Do not forget this truth even for a moment. To realise the great divine power of the imperishable Self is as much your birthright as it is that of men. This has been firmly established in the ancient culture of India. The country, which produced great realised sages, also produced great ladies, who could participate on an equal footing with those sages in the debates on the knowledge of the Self. The main amongst them were Gargi, Maitreyee, Sulabha, Chudala, Madalasa etc. You are directly connected with this tradition. Not just in the past, but in modern times also we have great realised ladies like Anandamayee Ma, Janaki Mai, disciple of Ramana Maharshi, Sati Godavari Mai, Ramadevi, Mata Krishnabai etc.

To consider women as the weaker sex is a retrograde view point. You are all very powerful. You have the power to uplift man from the state of

incompetence and deficiency. You are the very embodiment of the all powerful Divine Mother. You will not find this elevating sentiment about women in any other society. During marriage ceremonies in Bengal the bride is given a sharp knife, when the bridegroom and the bride come into the marriage pandal. This symbolises the liberating power which can release man from bondage. You should understand this well and preserve your exalted status bestowed on you by the Indian culture.

Even in the polluted atmosphere of today you can make home a heaven on earth. Conduct daily prayers in the home. Display pictures of great saints. Read life stories of Sarada Devi, Meerabai, Madalasa and other female devotees and realised souls. Tell your children the stories of devotees, patriots, warriors and hermits. Stop all worthless talk. Your home itself will be converted into heaven if you maintain a sublime atmosphere in the home. Safeguard and perpetuate the flame of the lamp of Indian culture.

May God bless you all! Hari Om Tat Sat.

A QUESTION ANSWERED

Question: Why do children born of the same parents and brought up in similar manner turn out to be totally different from each other? Given the identical training, surroundings, opportunities and facilities we find frequently one turning out a wise man and the other a fool. How is this?

Answer: This phenomenon results from the operation of several factors. They may be classified into three types of factors. The first of them is the fundamental physical and mental capacity of the individual himself. Even though the external factors of training, of surroundings, of opportunities, environment and other facilities are identical, yet it is the individual's inborn talent, brain power and physical health condition that lays down the limit of the extent to which the growing individual can draw upon these factors, receive them and respond to them in the shape of growth and development. Each mind in this universe differs from the other. The brain capacity varies from individual to individual. Health and strength also differ. Hence despite all external, social and domestic factors being identical, different individuals develop differently.

The second cause of factors is more psychological and hereditary. Herein you have to understand a little of the law-governing conception of the individual as also of prenatal paternal behaviour. The ancient Hindus were adepts in this science and have laid down an elaborate system of rules and regulations, do's and don'ts for the parents-to-be and also for the expectant mother during the period of her pregnancy. The child that is born is definitely affected by the physical health, the condition of the nervous system, the mood and emotional and psychological state of mother and father at the time of their marital relationship. This neuro-psychic background may differ from child to child. Also the nature and later development of the child is powerfully influenced by the food, the environment, the occupation and the thoughts, emotions and aspirations of the mother during the entire pregnancy period. According to these, does the child turn out to be.

Now we come to the most essential and the fundamental factor at the bottom of this phenomenon. It is the Hindu who is fully awake to the significance of this factor. This is called Vasana or Samskara. It is the impressions of the past experiences that get stored up in the conscience of the individual. Actions done in the past incarnations, experiences undergone in the previous births—all get embedded as subtle impressions called Poorva-Vasanas in the Chitta

of man. They form the seeds of his nature. The individual carries them all from one incarnation to the next. They are dormant in the infant and the little child. But they slowly commence to manifest themselves as the individual begins to grow. Eventually these basic qualities tend to manifest themselves fully, notwithstanding whatever environment, training and opportunities the individual may be put into. Ultimately this is the deciding factor which gives the direction to the personality and the development of the individual to whomsoever he be born, wheresoever he be placed and howsoever he be trained.



14

THE PARENTS' ROLE

The Present Situation

The entire modern civilisation has engendered a way of life in which parents are responsible for their child's development based only upon material consideration, and never in terms of the spiritual level which is the only real and correct basis. There is a great spiritual dryness in the entire relationship parents have with children. It is based upon ignorance, attachment and mostly a total identification with the physical aspect. The child is thought of only as a physical being who has come into the family upon this physical plane through our own physical bodies. Therefore, everything is physical. The relationship is totally physical, never spiritual.

Humanity itself has lost that vision and, therefore, it is no wonder that when children of the present generation reach adolescence, reach the teenage years or young adulthood they have no direction, they have no goal or clarity of perception. They have not perceived the meaning of life and are therefore aimless, adrift, without purpose. Their life becomes a wild fling in all directions, trying to get what little happiness or

satisfaction they can from this sense-experience or that sense-experience. It is all sense driven upon the physical level, because they know of nothing better. They have no alternative. They are like children lost in a jungle or a traveler lost in the desert.

Yet they are not to be blamed if they are in pursuit of pleasure. The whole modern life is pleasure-seeking, sensation-seeking. How can you blame the children? That is how they have been brought up, blank, empty inside, yet madly driven in their search for happiness. In childhood they are taught that to have a good time means going to places or doing things or getting objects. And so, children grow up in this delusion. The adults which are produced are at the mercy of things which are outside of themselves.

Today our teenagers are a nightmare to their parents, to their teachers, to the society. Their own professors and principals are afraid of them, and the police doesn't want to be bothered with them. They are a constant headache. Why? Because of a basic error right from the very start. Their life unfortunately was started upon the wrong note. Confusion and chaos are inevitable where there is no goal, no ideal, no sense of direction, no purpose, no vision, where the significance of life, of this grand gift of God, is nowhere within their ken. That is the great error. But even a grain of proper understanding of this

world, as it really is, instilled into young people, would grant a rich harvest in terms of happiness and joy.

Children! Little Sparks of Divinity

The great ideal put before us from the Upanishads, Bhagavatam, all our great scriptures, says that children are little sparks of Divinity that have come into our circle due to some mystical past connection, some karmic connection. They are souls on a great pilgrimage, on their way towards the attainment of a divine destiny. Therefore, we have to perceive of them as such, as souls on their way to divine perfection. And whatever we can do in order to help them on their onward journey, their ascent into divinity, is the need of the hour. In what way can we touch the inner depth of being of this little beautiful creature which is to be awakened? Through our affection, through our intuition, through our vibrations, what can we do?

It is the impressionable and formative years of childhood that constitute the correct time to set the child going in the right direction, to mould it, to make it wise and aware of its goal in life. During the early years the parents fill the entire world of the child, so that whatever they radiate to it, that is what it receives.

*“That person indeed is the real mother,
That person indeed is the real father,*

*That person indeed is the real relative,
That person indeed is the real well-wisher,
Who right from infancy and childhood
Manages to impart to the child a love
For the Divine and the Divine Name."*

Who is father? Who is mother? Who is relative? Who is well-wisher? That person who right from the very start of your life manages to impart to you a love for that which is high, that which is sublime, a love for God and God's Name, who manages to impart devotion. That is what the scriptures have to say about this.

Queen Madalasa—An Enlightened Mother

We also have the lofty example of queen Madalasa. She made full use of all the privileges her queenly status gave her to cultivate the company of scholars, of people learned in the ancient lore.

A standing order was given to all the ministers of the royal court that any holy man, any sage, any saint must be brought to the palace and presented to the king and queen. And whenever a holy man was presented at court, queen Madalasa never missed the opportunity of having a little Satsanga with him, of imbibing whatever spirituality it was her God-given good fortune to receive. So gradually she developed discrimination, right enquiry, philosophical thought and knowledge. Ultimately she became

enlightened and was full of inner spiritual awareness. She knew that her aspect as queen was only something secondary, a little temporary part she was playing in this life's drama. In truth, in reality, she knew she was the ever-pure, ever-awakened, ever-free, ever-perfect Atman—*nitya-suddha, nitya-buddha, nitya-mukta, nitya-paripurna atma.*

Queen Madalasa bore four sons. And as she placed them in the cradle, what was the lullaby that she sang to her children? The queen sang to them wondrous wisdom songs:

*“You are the ever-pure Atman, o beloved child.
You are the ever-awakened Atman.
You are spotless, the perfection of purity.
O my darling baby, you are that Atman
Which is beyond darkness, beyond the veil
of Maya.”*

“Suddhosi bhuddhosi niranjanosi”

(*suddhosi* means ever-pure, immaculate
buddhosi means ever-awakened, illumined
niranjanosi means spotless)

*“O beloved child, you are the ever-pure,
the ever-awakened, the ever-spotless.
You are completely free from Maya,
free from the illusion of this earth-life.
Already you are awakened.”*

So, she put these positive suggestions into the children's consciousness right from their infancy. "You are not bound by Maya. You are already beyond illusion." Why not? Born to such a mother it is no wonder! This was the thought and feeling she gave when she suckled them. And with the milk of the mother came this wisdom milk of Vedantic awareness into the consciousness of the children. And the Upanishads say, that as the children grew up, they grew with the radiance of awakened consciousness in their inner being. They not only flourished physically, being royal princes; they also had the good fortune of being blessed with a mother who was an illumined being. They grew up into Jnanis. By the time they were sixteen they were Purna-Jnanis.

THE VISION OF LORD GANESHA

Lord Vinayaka is an Akhanda Brahmachari. He has no consort. There is a story of deep significance behind this vow of celibacy. It is said that once when He was a small child, Ganesha in a mood of playfulness beat a cat and injured it rather severely. He did not know what this ultimately implied. Later, after the play was over, he happened to draw near to His Divine Mother Parvathi and He found marks of severe injury upon her. The child was shocked and queried His Mother: "What is this? Who inflicted these injuries on you?" The Mother replied: "And just who else but you by your own hand." For a moment Lord Ganesha did not understand how this was possible. He said: "What do you mean, Mother? I have never injured you." Then the Mother said: "Try to recall, child, whether during the course of this day you have inflicted injury upon any creature?"

Ganesha reflected for a while. Immediately He remembered His play with the cat. "Yes, Mother, after all I beat a little cat; that is all." Then the Divine Mother smiled and said: "Can you not understand that whatever you see, whatever names and forms there are in this universe, it is

only I who have become all these names and forms. There is nothing else in this universe except Myself. There is nothing in the universe but your own Mother.” This is what Parvathi revealed to Ganesha.

This Truth entered into the innermost consciousness of this Divine Child and He realised the Truth of it then and there. He took a vow that He would never take anyone as His consort, because when He knew that the entire universe of diverse names and forms was the manifestation of His own Mother, all women became as Mother unto Him. This reveals to us the highest secret declared by the Vedas and Upanishads, in all the Agamas and Shastras, viz., *sarvam shaktimayam jagat*, whatever is in the universe is but the manifestation of the dynamic aspect of the Supreme Almighty Self.

There is another story which contains the highest wisdom of the Upanishads, *sarvam khalvidam brahma*, whatever is, is none other than the Almighty Being. It is this Almighty Being that has projected Itself as the entire universe. So, if we adore the Almighty we adore the entire universe.

Lord Ganesha possesses a priceless necklace of gems and the story behind this necklace is that once when Lord Siva, Parvathi, Ganesha and Karthikeya were all together, there arose a desire in the mind of the Divine Mother to test the

individual calibre and knowledge of Her two great divine sons. Therefore, she held out the necklace she was then wearing and said: “Here is this necklace. He who will go round the entire universe once and reach me first—to him will I give this necklace of gems.”

Immediately, Karthikeya thought that it was as good as His, because He knew that with His ponderous girth it would be very difficult for Lord Vinayaka to go round the universe. Karthikeya himself had a very fast vehicle, the peacock, which would take him quickly round the universe; immediately He was off on the peacock.

But, Vinayaka was not in the least perturbed. He sat before His Parents for a long time. When He thought that it would be time for Karthikeya to return, He went round in Pradakshina of Siva and Parvathi once and prostrated Himself before His Mother and held out His hand.

Devi Parvathi at once divined the depth of wisdom which had made Him do this. She saw that His intuition was such that He beheld the entire universe as made up of nothing else but Siva-Shakti. He beheld that they were immanent in all things and within them they contained the entire universe. Thus He got the necklace, and when Karthikeya returned after His strenuous circumambulation, he found that the prize had already been given to Ganesha.

16

THE GENESIS OF MOTHER WORSHIP

God as the Universal Mother has a special appeal to man due to numerous reasons. Firstly, the mother is the earliest recognisable friend of the infant; she is the supreme wish-fulfiller of the individual and, at a certain stage, the all-in-all. Secondly, of all human relationships on earth, the sweetest and the most loving is this relationship with one's mother. Thirdly, the father image is always associated with sternness and discipline; whereas, the mother image is that of spontaneous love, compassion, protective tenderness and care, forbearance and forgiveness too. No wonder then that erring man is naturally drawn to this approach to the Supreme Being as the Mother Divine rather than as the Universal Father. Seeking comforts, solace and forgiveness, man turns to the mother rather than to the father. Stern justice is more likely to stem from the latter, whereas solicitude, forgiveness and love would be expected from the mother. Thus, down the ages, man has evolved this approach to the Supreme Deity in Its aspect as the Cosmic Mother through the time-honoured tradition of Mother worship.

In this worship of the Mother Divine, the worshipper naturally feels himself as a child of the Mother. As a child approaches the mother confidently and with full trust in the mother's all-goodness, even so one adores the Mother, pouring forth the heart's love in surrender and sweet trust. This relationship has a profoundly transforming effect upon one's personality. Crude egoism gives place to child-like simplicity, crookedness to guilelessness, self-assertive arrogance to silent submission, fear and awe to fearlessness and trust.

Mother means love, compassion, protectiveness and tender care. This must be well borne in mind, if our worship of the Mother should maintain a sublime spiritual level and be effective in taking us towards the ultimate goal of all such worship, namely, God-realisation. The process of worship is aimed at bringing about a gradual divinisation of your consciousness. To experience the Divine, you must become the Divine. To invoke the love and the grace of the Mother, you must become a radiating centre of love yourself. An ascent into divinity is from Tamas to Rajas, Rajas to Sattva, and Sattva to Suddha Sattva, whence one goes beyond the three qualities and attains the divine state. True and correct worship of the Divine Mother is therefore a lofty spiritual technique of the highest Sattvic quality. If the purely impersonal aspect of the deity is stern and remote, this personal aspect of the deity is tender,

close, intimate and fully approachable. The Divine Mother is a love-filled Mother who waits with outstretched arms to draw the devoted soul to Her divine bosom.

Distinctive Forms of Mother Worship

Worship of the Mother, as it presently prevails, is to be found in three or four distinctive forms. Certain sections of the Saktas devote themselves to the worship of the Mother according to methods laid down in the Sakta Tantras. This is a highly technical mode of worship entailing specific rituals, into which one must be initiated as per Sakta tradition.

There are other sections of the Saktas as also non-Saktas, who engage themselves in the worship through pure Bhakti, with simple ceremonials. This is far less technical than the Tantric worship and it tends to invoke Her solely as love.

Then again, Mother Divine is worshipped throughout India by all sorts of people during the nine days of the Navaratra Puja. In this countrywide annual worship, the Mother is invoked mainly as auspiciousness and blessedness and prosperity.

Here it will not be out of place to make mention of yet another form of Mother worship. It is really a degraded and impure form that deserves to be renounced. It is Mother worship

through fear and superstition. In this form, the Mother is regarded as a dire deity given to anger and vengeance. She is more in a mode of punishing than loving. This is not Mother worship at all. It is a travesty of the concept of Motherhood. This is a Tamasic form of worship which evokes in the worshipper the Tamasic qualities of guilt, fear and cruelty. To appease this dire deity, the worshipper takes recourse to the despicable means of committing violence upon other living creatures. He takes life which he cannot give and which, therefore, he has no right to take. What such a blind worshipper fails to see is that the Mother is not the mother of man alone, but that She is the Mother of the entire creation. Every fish, fowl, beast and insect is a divine child of Her's. All life is sacred. If murder of man is a crime against the law, the murder of dumb beasts is a crime against Dharma. Their murder in Mother's Name is a crime against God Himself. Such sin cannot bring down Divine Grace. It will only bring the inevitable result in the form of much suffering. Worship should not contradict the universal Dharma of love and compassion. Cruelty cannot be condoned under any name. It may have the sanction of ignorance and superstition, but it has not the sanction of Sanathana Dharma. It takes the worshipper farther and farther away from God and will ultimately lead him into hell. It should be abandoned immediately.

There is a deeply significant thing to be noted with reference to one aspect of Motherhood. Upon occasion, she is worshipped differently as Maha Lakshmi, Maha Sarasvati and Maha Parvathi or Durga. Worshipping Her as Durga, you invoke Her Power to destroy the evil within you in the form of egoism, anger, lust, greed, jealousy and delusion. These lower qualities of darkness constitute the animal within man. It is the impure Pashu (animal) inside the Manushya (man). The worshipper is expected to offer as sacrifice this inner lower self made up of egoism, lust, anger, greed, falsehood and hatred. This is true sacrifice that elevates the worshipper and takes him near to God.

Worship the Mother with the flowers of compassion, peace, mercy, forgiveness, truthfulness, simplicity. Approach Her as the Mother of love. Approach Her for the highest blessedness of Moksha. Then She is no other than the Supreme Almighty and She can give you Kaivalya Moksha. O, Children of Sanathana Dharma! Approach Her for this highest gift and not for any petty objective here. The real glory of Mother worship can bring far quicker response than the approach to God as the Creator and Law-giver. Mother is especially there to forgive and save, whereas the Lord has to dispense justice. Thus the devotees of the Universal Mother laud their approach.

THINK OF GOD ALONE

Time is indeed most precious. It can never come back. It is rolling on with tremendous speed. Every second must be well utilised for the achievement of God-realisation, the goal of life. —Swami Sivananda

(This saying on the wall of the Samadhi Mandir was read carefully by Sri Swami Chidananda before giving the following talk.)

The essential point for all of you to ponder is that time is flying away. Days turn into weeks, weeks into months and months into years. Day by day our life span decreases, various distractions take our mind away from the goal. How do you expect or hope that your life will be crowned with God-realisation, illumination, liberation, bliss, peace, perfection? How do you expect?

It is only when one thinks ceaselessly of God and God alone, when one thinks of God alone to the exclusion of all thoughts other than God. For such a person there is not only the possibility, but we may almost say, taking into consideration the factor of God's grace, that there is the certainty of

attaining God-experience in this very life, even now and here.

For a person who has one's mind, one's inner gaze, steadily fixed upon God and God alone, ceaselessly without break, who does not allow any other thought to intrude—one who is totally fixed in God, one hundred per cent, without the intrusion of any other thought—the interior of such a person is not human, it is no more mental, the interior of such a person is God. For God dwells, infills totally the inner firmament of that being's consciousness. That being is in a state of God-consciousness, not human consciousness.

For this we should pray. For this we should ceaselessly make effort—with humility, without egoism—aware that even this movement is being initiated by God, carried on by the power of His grace—where I am nowhere and He alone is. And we pray to the Almighty, the transcendental Being, and we pray to Holy Master that they may vouchsafe this blessing and boon upon one and all of you! Amen.

18

YOU ARE UNIQUE IN THE EYES OF GOD

Blessed Atman! The key to blessedness lies in being aware of blessedness. If your awareness is turned in different directions, towards what you do not have, or what you think or imagine you do not have, then this wrongly directed pattern of thought will make you unaware of the many things that you have.

Each one is distinct and unique in the eyes of the Creator; there is none like that particular being, there is no second. So each one is precious and specially valuable to the Creator. In the eyes of God, therefore, each one is something special. This should always be remembered. No one can replace you in the role that you fulfil in God's creation at any given place and at any given point in time. You are most necessary and indispensable for that particular set-up, in that particular time-space context. And therefore rejoice and be grateful to the Lord that He has given you a role to perform.

Whether you perform your role perfectly and in a meaningful manner or not is irrelevant, because God expects each one to do what one is capable of, at any point, at any time. God does not

expect an ant to haul a great timber as the elephant does in the forest. Nor does God expect the elephant to fly gracefully in the air as do swallows and doves. He expects birds to fly and He loves them for what they do. He expects elephants to fulfil their role, giving dignity to the forest and doing incredible jobs of strength. And He expects man to live as man. And each one in his own place, in his own sphere, can fulfil a task and gladden the heart of the Maker and contribute something to His plan on earth.

And this is the truth. And to be aware of the truth is to be worry-free, anxiety-free. To be aware of the truth is to be grateful to God: “You have made me unique, You have given me a role, and You have prompted me and brought to me all helpful factors to fulfil my role and play my part. For that I ever give thanks.”

No one is dispensable. No one is useless. No one is lesser in the eyes of God or in the eyes of those who try to avoid human judgment and human standards of criticism, who accept God’s creation as it is, because God created it. For them, whatever God thought fit to make, in any manner whatsoever, is perfect; there is nothing wrong in it, and it is acceptable. For them, whatever emanates from God partakes of His divinity and perfection, and therefore in God’s own plan, and in God’s own way, is fully complete.

In this way, if we accept this truth that to God we are unique, and so we are to all those who are trying to look with the impartiality of God's vision, then in the presence of God and of those who are devotees of God, we must feel at home, we have arrived; we may no longer feel distressed in heart. One should rejoice in serene calmness of spirit: "I have arrived, I am at home, I am in the presence of God and I am totally accepted, I am totally accepted."

Things are as they should be. The Lord is in heaven and all is well on earth. This is the faith, the firm belief of those who have faith in the infinite love of God, who have trust in the infinite goodness of God and who are sure that in God's heart they have a special and unique place. This is ever kept reserved for them and no one can take it away from them, because God's infinite heart is large enough to hold the entire cosmos and everything within it.

Thus knowing, we should have great comfort in our heart, great satisfaction and contentment. And that is the secret of inner joy, the key to blessedness and the pathway to peace, serenity and inner calm, where there is no fretting, agitation or restlessness.

The peace of God pervades the entire earth; the peace of God pervades everywhere, without and within. The peace of God is the one great truth underlying all things, ever-present, ever-

accessible and available, ever-full and inexhaustible. Try to live in the light of this truth, and the heart and mind will be at ease. Never compare and contrast, because there is no comparing and contrasting amongst unique things. Every little fledgling hatched from an egg is unique to its parents; so is each being unique in itself, for God is the parent of all. Hence, sages and saints and men of wisdom look upon all with equal vision.

Therefore, rejoice that you are special to God in His infinite love. Rejoice that you have your own special place and role to perform in this creation of God. And rejoice that His love is immediately available to you, for He is not a remote reality, but He is the indwelling Reality, nearer to you than anything else on earth. And rejoice that within you is the peace of God as your own Self. You are God's peace and you have a duty to perform, that is, to spread this peace which you are to one and all. Live to spread this peace!

THE KEY TO HAPPINESS

Almighty Lord, prompt these Sadhakas, prompt these devotees of Yours to ever walk the path that leads to their own highest blessedness. Prompt them to live their life in such a way that it creates for them a spiritual Karma that liberates them forever from all Karma. That is my humble prayer at this moment.

Radiant Divinities! We receive from others what we make them do. It is not people who do things to other people, rather it is people who make other people do things to them, in a way which they have worked for, whether known to themselves or not. If you have keen introspection, analysis, then after a situation has occurred you find, "Yes, indeed, it is I who worked for it."

Sometimes we invite temptations, sometimes we invite aggravated situations by working for them, many a time half knowingly. We play with life in such a way that things do not merely happen to us, but we make them happen to us. Most of the time this is so. Karmic occurrences and experience are there no doubt; we do not deny it. But over and above, in addition, it is we who many a time bring about situations through our folly or through our wantonness.

It is said: "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." And that is why many a time mystics have prayed to God: "O Lord, save me from myself." This is a point seekers should be aware of. We, by our behaviour, our thoughts, our intentional acts, attract to ourselves situations. People act towards us in certain ways, not because they wanted to do it, but because we invited them to do it.

We then complain to God: "Why, how could this happen to me?" Why not? You have asked for it; you have worked for it. Therefore, when they speak of trying to discriminate between what is favourable and helpful to our spiritual life and what is not helpful, it is not only in regard to outer things and people, outer factors and environment, but also we have to discriminate within as well, find the very subtle, little known, hidden motivations for our actions.

If, day after day, a young girl in a house, instead of busying herself with helping her mother and trying to be a useful member of her family, continuously comes out on the balcony and attracts the attention of a neighbouring youth who then starts whistling at her, whose fault is it? Is it the fault of the person on the street, or is it the fault of the person in the house? She will say: "Father, that young person watches me and whistles to attract my attention." Father will lodge a complaint with the police. They will go and interrogate the young man. And they will never

know that the whole situation was brought about not by anyone else, but by the so-called aggrieved person who caused it by her own actions.

In this way, from inside, we many a time harbour thoughts and motives that attract towards us certain situations, and then we blame God, take a report to God: “How can this situation come to me? I am doing Japa, I am worshipping daily, I am reading the scriptures, meditating.” Yes, you are doing all these things, but the fact is, that inside, you are also doing something else that no one knows. But you should not think that God does not know. Other human beings may not know, but there is Someone within you and He is nothing but Consciousness, knowing, knowing, knowing everything from all the ten directions. Even if something misses you, it does not miss Him. He is awareness—Prajnana. He is Jnana-svarupa (full of knowledge). Nothing misses Him.

So when this is the situation, how can you complain: “How can this happen to me?” How can anything else happen to you when inwardly, by stages, you have worked for it, you have created it outside from inside? Therefore, it is necessary that seekers and Sadhaks be wise, not go into self-deception, not be asleep inside. Gurudev said: “Even inside, you must decide what is favourable to me, what is unfavourable, what are the deep, hidden motivations of my actions. Know yourself in this level, in this sense also and

make the requisite adjustment, requisite change within.”

A deep thinker said, “Life is a mirror.” You see in it what you show into it. If you stand before a mirror and make a pleasant face, a pleasant face looks back at you. If you make an unpleasant face, an unpleasant face looks back at you. What comes to you from inside the mirror is created by you standing outside. Because happiness and misery, favourable environment and unfavourable environment, to a large extent depend upon our state of mind, how we look at it. Happiness is not contained in things, situations or the environment outside. Happiness or unhappiness is in how we look at it through our mind. It is, therefore, the situation within. It is the state of our mind that makes our happiness or unhappiness.

If that inner state is adjusted and corrected, then nothing has the power to give us any experience except that which we give to it. We give it the power to affect us in either this way or that way by the state of our mind. If our state of mind is right, then even a situation which may put an unwise person into sorrow or unhappiness will not have the power to put us into sorrow or unhappiness. Because our mind approaches the situation in a different state.

It is told that a traveller into a rural area asked a shepherd: “How do you think the weather

will be today?” “Oh, it will be weather that I like.” “How do you know it will be weather that you like, how can you say that?” The shepherd answered: “It is like this, sir, knowing that over such things as the weather I have no control, knowing I cannot change it, long ago I decided that whatever weather comes I will like it. And therefore, now I am at peace. I am always sure that I will get weather that is to my liking 365 days of the year. Because I cannot change it, I have started liking whatever I get. Instead of always trying to get only that thing that I like, I decided that it is wiser to like whatever thing I get. Therefore, I always like the weather I get.” So it was not the weather that mattered, it was his inner state of looking at it, relating himself to it, perceiving it, that mattered. So, he had the key to happiness.

The key is inside. It is a state of mind that we diligently create within us that ultimately has the effect of creating happiness or misery for us. Therefore, mind alone is the cause of bondage and liberation. Mind is the cause of pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow. Whatever it is, *Mana eva karanam manushyanam*—for human beings, mind itself is the main cause. And in the higher metaphysical sense, Vedanta says: *Manahkalpitam jagat*—this world is created by your mind.

That is too high for us, we need not bother about it. Let us not look upon it from this great truth. Let us look upon it from a psychological

angle, an immediate angle, that which is of relevance to us here, now, today. Today let us apply this truth, find out this truth: "I make my day; I make my happiness and misery; I make my darkness and light; I from within create it." A picture does not paint itself. It is the artist with his brush who paints it. If he dips it in green, he cannot expect blue to appear on the canvas; if he dips it in red, he cannot expect yellow. So what he uses, that appears for him. Apply this truth and then see what happens. God bless you!



EARLY IN THE MORNING

Worshipful adorations to the sacred spiritual presence of beloved and worshipful Holy Master Guru Maharaj Sri Swami Sivanandaji, into whose presence and proximity you are all fortunate enough to draw near, day by day, morning after morning, to start the day in as sublime and perfect a way as it is possible to start it.

Pratah smarami, pratar-bhajami, pratar-namami (I remember Thee early in the morning, I worship Thee early in the morning, I bow down to Thee early in the morning). With these words several of the hymns of salutations and adorations, several of the well known Slokas of Adi Sankaracharya begin. So much so, that this triplet of verses has come to be known as the Pratah Smarami Stotra. What is the speciality about praying early in the morning, worshipping God early in the morning? Mahatma Gandhi, in Sabarmati Ashram, as well as Sevagram, used to hold the morning prayers when it was still semi-dark. There is a reason. There is a speciality in this early morning hour.

“Start the day with God,” they say in the West. And very shrewdly, with a touch of humour, there is also a saying, “The early bird catches the

worm”, which means it pays dividends to be early. The earlier you are up, the more time you have. The more time you have, the less hurried you are, the less under pressure you are. The less under pressure you are, the less tension, which is better for your health, your heart, your blood pressure, your entire nervous system, even your digestion. This is the pragmatic reason. If you are up early, you have greater leisure. If you are not up early, you are more hard-pressed for time, and it is not good to start a day being pushed for time.

But what is the higher meaning? The higher meaning is that it is a period when your consciousness is in the most suitable condition to receive higher impulses from the inner world of the Spirit, the divine world; your consciousness is most sensitive as well as receptive. Your inner Antahkarana, the normal human consciousness, which you exercise during your active hours of waking, is in its most calm and Sattvic condition at this hour. This is conducive to introspection and prayerfulness.

For, when you are fully awake and have started to move in this world, your entire mind is outgoing. It is completely drawn into the world of the many, into the field of names and forms and ever-changing activities. So it is completely occupied and caught up, dominated by the visible, the outer, the material, the phenomenon. Therefore it is not available to receive higher

impulses, unless it has been trained to receive them even in this state of being completely drawn out. Then too, that same mind when it is caught in deep sleep is totally unreceptive and completely closed to all higher impulses, sublime divine impulses.

But in the early dawn the Antahkarana is freed from the Tamas of sleep and is still yet free from the domination of the Rajas of the outer world, the compulsions and impulsions that catch it and draw it into this very hectic field of many tasks to be done, many people to see, and very diverse types of thought forms, due to the diverse fields in which the mind is required to be engaged and involved in.

So you are free in this interim period from both the handicaps of the sleep state as well as the shortcomings and involvements of the fully wakened state. Here, therefore, is a period of openness, of receptivity, of Sattva—a period most suitable, most propitious—when you can give yourself a lift and enter into God. And that sets the tone for the entire day.

If in this way you start the day with God, you start with *Pratah smarami, Pratar-bhajami, Pratar-namami*, then the whole day is beautifully qualified with this Bhav or attitude of prostration, of worship, of remembrance. And that is the secret of being in the world but yet abiding in God—being

in Kriya (action), yet inwardly there is a centre of silence, Nishkriya (without action).

A mystical poet has beautifully given to us, in brief, this little secret of the right way of starting one's day, so that one reaps a golden harvest of fullest benefit from this charming, this wonderful, this magic period of the early dawn.

*I met God in the morning
 When my day was of its best,
 And His Presence came like sunrise,
 Like a glory in my breast.
 All day long the Presence lingered,
 All day long He stayed with me,
 And we sailed in perfect calmness
 Over a very troubled sea.
 So I think I know the secret
 Learned from many a troubled way,
 You must seek Him in the morning
 If you want Him through the day.*

—Ralph Cushman.

Thus it is that there is this special quality, a special state of consciousness prevailing in this interim period between the disadvantages of both the sleep state and the fully awakened, pre-occupied state. Both are necessary, but both contain obstacles in total communion, inner communion with the Spirit, the Supreme.

I have great joy in sharing with you, therefore, this secret of why our ancients said *Pratah smarami, pratar-bhajami, pratar-namami*. Because they knew this secret, this inner Yogic secret, the mystical secret of the state of consciousness that the individual possesses in this early morning dawn hour. It sets the tone for the entire day, and then you live with God, you move with God, you sail the troubled sea of Vyavaharic life with perfect calmness and serenity, because God is with you. You do the sailing with God as your companion.

May we benefit ourselves fully from this golden hour and make each day a further ascent towards the great Goal, attaining which you become blessed. May you all be blessed!

SERVE LOVE MEDITATE REALISE

Gurudev Swami Sivananda has given us four wonderful mottos and maxims for our guidance, each holding a world of meaning, a world of significance. These four words are meant to make our life full of peace and joy, free of restlessness, sorrow, clash and conflict. And these four are: Serve, Love, Meditate, Realise.

Serve: When you go out of yourself and seek to serve others, two great things happen: your ego becomes less important, and the off-shoot of the ego, selfishness, becomes gradually eliminated. Because when one is self-centred and egoistic, peace is not possible; happiness is not possible, neither for oneself nor for others.

Love: Here it specifically means Bhakti, love for the Supreme Reality. By Bhakti we plug in, as it were, and make a contact or create a connection between ourselves and that which is profound and perfect peace, peace that passeth understanding, that which is the perfect joy, that which is the Param Ananda (supreme bliss). And naturally when you relate yourself, make a connection, with that which is the very embodiment, an infinite, limitless, immeasurable ocean of that very thing—then who in the world can prevent you from having that peace, that joy? So connect yourself

with that supreme peace and joy, ocean of peace and joy. Then, what no one can get, you will get. What is nowhere available in this world is available to you, wherever you are. Whether you possess anything or not, whether you have anything or not, you will have peace, you will have joy, you will have a supreme state of fullness and satisfaction.

Meditate: Why be short of it? Once you have made this connection, take it to its logical conclusion and you yourself become the embodiment of peace. Instead of experiencing the peace and joy of the Divine, you yourself become the very ocean of peace and joy; you yourself become divine, for you are divine. Put an end to this forgetfulness once and for all, forever, and shine with divinity.

Realise: Keep what has just been said as the one supreme goal of your existence; never forget it even for one moment. Each day, when the sun rises and you begin a day, keep realisation as your supreme goal. Let that be the very meaning, the direction-giver, the propelling force of your life. Let your life be vibrant with the aspiration for realisation. Let this one principle, this one maxim and motto, this one factor of realisation enrich your entire life, your thoughts, your feelings, your actions. Let it dominate your entire life, so that you live your life and direct your actions towards that great consummation of realisation, liberation.

Serve, Love, Meditate, Realise! These four significant words have a relevance to each one of us in our attempt to seek and find happiness while we live upon this earth, which is Anityam, Asukham, Duhkhalayam, Asasvatam (evanescent, without happiness, an abode of sorrow, impermanent), while we are seeking happiness upon this earth which is Janma, Mrityu, Jara, Vyadhi, Duhkha (birth, death, old age, disease, sorrow). Yet you can fully succeed in attaining the highest happiness, highest bliss, highest peace and satisfaction, if you hold on to these four words, ponder their meaning, and manifest them in your life. They will lead you to peace and joy.

God bless you all! I wish you peace and joy of the highest quality, not second rate, third rate, fourth rate, petty, petty, petty peace. No! Peace and joy of the unparalleled, unique, supreme, highest quality, which is divine peace and joy, which is ever your birthright. To attain this, you have come here into this world of pain and death. To attain this, you have been blessed with human status, with the power to think, feel, reason, listen, receive and understand.

May today become the starting point of a vigorous onward ascent into that state of peace which is awaiting you, to ask for it and get it, to seek it and to find it. It is awaiting you. Let us not lose the opportunity!

WHAT PLEASES THE LORD

Blessed immortal Atman! Beloved seekers and Sadhakas! *Patram pushpam phalam toyam yo me bhaktya prayachchati*. You see, Bhaktya (with devotion)—He who offers to Me even a leaf, a flower, a little fruit, a little water with devotion [Gita 9.26], if it is given with the right feeling – noble, sublime, lofty feeling—then it becomes far more acceptable than any pompous ceremony done with a great many things. One should keep this feeling ever fresh, ever present.

For that you should pray to the Lord: “*Dehi me kripaya Sambho tvayi bhaktirachanchalam*—O Lord, give me constant, unswerving, unwavering devotion to Thy feet, devotion to Thee that never varies.” This is the key to success in Sadhana, in all devotional practices. This you must cultivate. Pray to the Lord with a genuine Bhav.

It is the Bhav that converts Karma into Karma Yoga, work into worship, an ordinary action into a spiritual process. A sweeper sweeps the street, may be reluctantly, and cursing his fate. A devotee takes a broom and sweeps in front of Vishwanatha Temple. He may be a high official, but here he feels himself to be a humble servant of the Lord. What is the difference? There is a world

of difference. The outer act is the same, but the Lord beholds the feeling. It is the feeling that brings in a spiritual quality to an action.

There is a narration about a little, neglected shrine of Lord Shiva in a remote, deep forest where once in a while a priest used to come and worship. A forest-dwelling hunter, by chance, saw that. So whenever he got a chance, he also tried to do little worship. He used to hunt some animal, cut it and take some raw meat in his hand, and some flowers which he carried on his head, as he had no plate. There was no vessel to take water, so he used to put it into his mouth and spat the water upon the image. In the context of Hindu religion, all this was unfit for offering to any Deity, but he did not know it. However, he offered what he had with a heart full of devotion. And ultimately the Lord gave Darshan to this uncivilised, uncultured tribal. What was his merit? The genuineness and great depth of his feeling.

Let us not forget this essential point. Let us purify our heart, and that purified heart will have sublime Bhav. Devotion, compassion, meditation, combined with Bhav please the Lord and make your Sadhana successful.

God bless you!

THIS MOMENT

True life is made up of “now”. True life is not made up of bygone yesterdays of uncertain tomorrows. What we have is like a lump of clay in a sculptor’s hands or a piece of gold in goldsmiths shop. We can create out of it what we will. At this moment, what are we doing with the time we have? Are we thinking of something else? Are we forming opinions of people who are sitting beside us? Or of the person speaking to us? Or, are we engaged in making our life sublime, enriching ourselves, uplifting ourselves, drawing nearer to the Divine and awakening within, unfolding ourselves, shining with the awakened light? What are we engaged in doing in this moment? This moment, this concept, this word, this fact, this truth is the most tremendous truth of life. Life is made up of this moment and this moment only – not of dead yesterdays nor of unborn tomorrows. But your life to each one of you is not even today. It is this moment. This moment is what we effectively have. Other aspects of time are present in your mind as ideas and concepts. They are most deceptive ideas.

If you make this moment all that it ought to be, it will bring something improved the next

moment. Because you have already enriched yourself this moment, the next moment will be built upon it and therefore will be one step higher and may be one shade brighter. Each moment can be an ascending step, a manifestation of a brighter light from within you. Moment by moment, illumination is attained. Moment by moment, enlightenment is brought about. Moment by moment, is liberation ultimately experienced. Moment by moment is the supreme Goal achieved.

You do not have to wait for any moment; you do not have to exercise patience. On the contrary the moment does not wait. It comes before you with each breath. Therefore, great mystics have said: "Oh Lord with every breath may I remember you. With every breath of my life, may I ever seek to draw nearer to you". Because the moment does not wait, it does not tarry. If you take it and live it, then you have it. If you daydream, allow yourself to be diverted elsewhere, get bogged down in something else, then you lose it. It is no longer yours; it is gone forever.

Each moment is your real wealth, more precious than gold, diamonds and precious stones. Each moment is your very life. Each moment is what you are and what you can be. There is nothing that can compare to it. The tremendous importance of the moment, the incomparable value of this moment, is the most

important insight and understanding that a living individual must have. “My wealth is each moment that is before me now. It is now I have to live my life, not in yesterdays or tomorrows. I have but this moment to live, to mould and to fashion, to make something out of it. This is my effective life.”

Remember, we do not have to work for it, we do not have to ask for it. It is continuously being given, constantly. It is always immediate. It comes. It does not delay, but you cannot ask it to wait. You cannot afford to allow it to pass by and then imagine you can do something about it. When it has passed, it is no longer yours. When you confront it, it is yours; you are master of the situation, you have full claim. It allows itself to be taken by you and made use of in any way you like.

Hence the adage Uthistha Jagritha (Arise Awake) – come, come, slumber not, be up and doing, arise, awake. For they knew this truth: that life is now. There is no other life but now. They knew that the only thing the individual soul has for his highest evolution, his supreme blessedness, is this moment.

Ponder, ponder well this great all important truth of your life. Go on pondering it and never stop deeply pondering this truth. For it is the most important truth. If it is grasped, life is yours; there is nothing that is withheld from you. If you do not grasp it, life is in vain. A hundred things will come and clutter up your consciousness, and your

consciousness will lose the most precious of all things – the now, the moment, here. Wherever you are, at whatever time, you are at that moment in-charge of the moment, in-charge of your life. If you allow it to pass away, then no lamentation can bring it, no effort can recall it.

Therefore they say: “Grasp time by the forelock”. Even before it is before you, have it in your hand. For the moment is all that you have, and that is more than enough. If you take care of your moments, you have your whole life. Life will take care of you. And there is no limit to what you can attain if you take care of this moment, this now. For it becomes a dynamic moment, full of power, full of potential, full of unlimited possibilities—this moment. Live now, live effectively. Make this moment your wealth, be enriched and move towards your great divine destiny.

TRUE JOY AND HAPPINESS

Simplicity of life is the true secret of happiness. Unhampered experience of the joy which lies within comes out of simplicity. Your life should never be complicated with too many things. Due to too many things, due to too many desires, modern man unfortunately has missed this joy. Modern man allows his life to become so complicated though he knows that simplicity is the secret of happiness.

Have the capacity to derive joy out of whatever situation you may find yourself in. A simple and a contented life depends more upon God-made things than upon man-made objects. There are hundreds of things that can fill you with happiness if only you have the eyes to see. When you get up in the morning, you can step out of your room and look at the dawn and be happy. When the sun rises, still more happiness. When you feel the cool breeze blowing, there is no end to happiness. Know the technique for deriving happiness from these simple things - from the dawn, the sunrise, the birds, the laughter of children, the beautiful blue sky, the white Clouds slowly sailing like majestic ships, little dancing

flowers. They can inspire you if only you know how to derive joy.

Learn to experience joy from the happiness of others. Instead of becoming envious, become filled with joy whenever you see others happy. Feel happy by beholding the happiness of others. Train yourself to derive happiness out of bringing happiness into the lives of others. Learn the technique of getting joy by making others joyful. Your happiness will multiply a thousand fold.

Learn to accept the experiences that come through life. There is no use fretting and fuming and making yourself miserable over them. Have calm and wise resignation. There is one Supreme Intelligence that is guiding the lives of men here and these experiences that come from that source, learn to accept like human beings. Endure the little troubles that come through life.

Be friendly to all. Do not give way to anger. Anger destroys happiness. Maintain rational restraint over the senses. Base your life upon virtue, truth and purity. Keep close to that great Inner Source of all happiness, all joy, all bliss. Love the Supreme. Practise the Divine Name. The Name of the Supreme and the Supreme are not two, they are one. If you have the Divine Name within you, you have the Supreme within you. This is Great Spiritual Truth. God bless you and may your life become radiant with joy.

THE PATH OF SURRENDER

Blessed Divinities! I wish to share with you one Bhajan, which is full of instructions, inspiration and great strength. It goes to the heart of the life that overcomes and triumphs over all obstacles, all trials and tribulations, everything. Its refrain is:

सीताराम सीताराम कहिए, जाहि विधि राखे राम ताहि विधि रहिए ।

The gist of the Bhajan is: "O man, in whatever state the Lord has placed you in secular life, be content. Be where God has placed you, and be full of inner serenity, inner joy. Never mind what your mind may say, what people may say. Know that all comes due to the supreme will of the Almighty; everything is in His hands.

In all conditions, at all times, amidst all experiences, in all trials and tribulations be serene, be powerful. Rejoice in the Lord knowing that you are safe in His hands. For He, the infinite goodness, love, compassion, justice, wisdom, can never do anything that is wrong, harmful or inimical to your highest welfare. Thus by accepting His dispensation for you, surrendering to that great Will, be at rest; keep on chanting His Name, glorify Him, praise Him; ever send your voice towards His throne.

Let your hands be always engaged in His service, let your tongue ceaselessly keep chanting His glorious, divine Name. Never think you are alone, abandoned, for it can never happen. For He is the all-pervading, indwelling Lord, who is ever by your side; you are never alone. Know this.

Knowing fully well that He is the dispenser of the destiny of all beings, just forbear. Success or failure, gain or loss, good or bad, whatever comes, endure knowing He is the supreme dispenser. Say, “His will is most acceptable to me.” Thus accept all conditions and dualities that fill the world and be at peace. In whatever way the Supreme Being has been pleased to keep you, O beloved pilgrim soul, be thou content with His dispensation, and rejoice in glorifying Him and chant His Name ever and ever.”

This is the quintessence of Prapatti Marga (the path of surrender) and Sharanagati Rahasya (the secret of surrender). God speed you and grant you success!



