



Within each one of you there is the potential of a godly nature. Like a towering tree within a tiny seed, there is God within you.

We are radiant centers of divinity, and therefore our life should be a constant expression, a dynamic manifestation of divinity in thought, word and action.

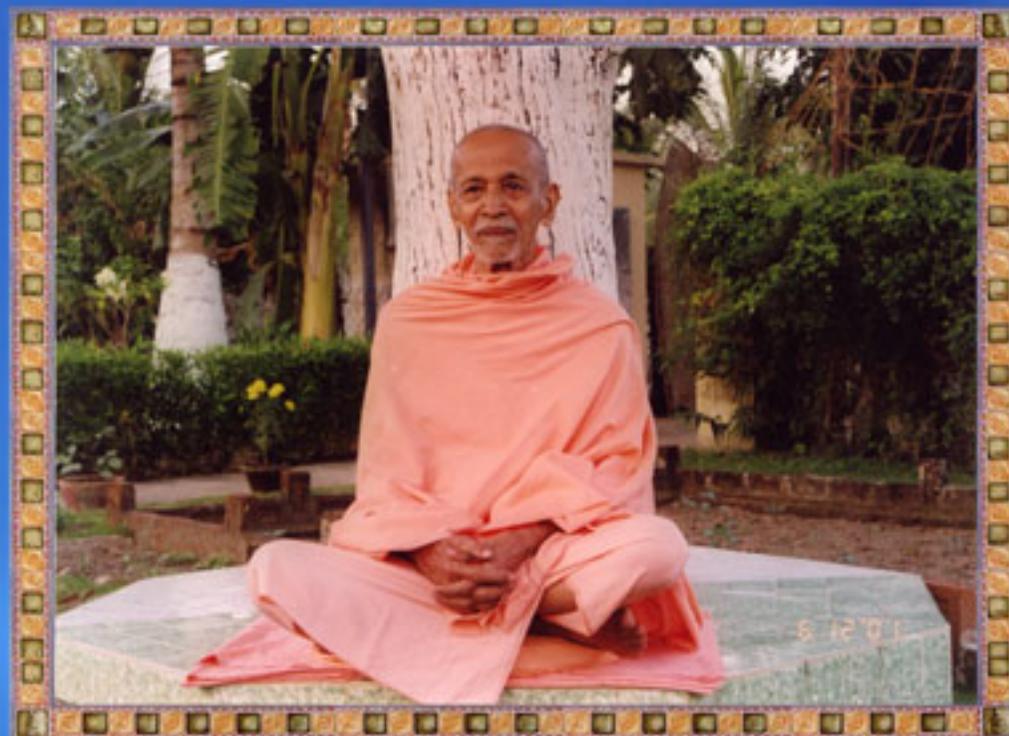
If you fulfill all the so-called tasks of this life without knowing Yourself, your life would be wasted.

*Swami Chidananda*  
ॐ



A DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY PUBLICATION

# KNOWING THE VALUE OF FREEDOM



*Sri Swami Chidananda*

**KNOWING THE VALUE  
OF FREEDOM**



# KNOWING THE VALUE OF FREEDOM

**Sri Swami Chidananda**



*Published by*

**THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY**

P.O. SHIVANANDANAGAR—249 192

Distt. Tehri-Garhwal, Uttarakhand, Himalayas, India

[www.sivanandaonline.org](http://www.sivanandaonline.org), [www.dlshq.org](http://www.dlshq.org)

First Edition: 2014  
[ 2,000 Copies ]

©The Divine Life Trust Society

**Swami Chidananda Birth Centenary Series—19**

FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION

Published by Swami Padmanabhananda for  
The Divine Life Society, Shivanandanagar, and  
printed by him at the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy  
Press, P.O. Shivanandanagar, Distt. Tehri-Garhwal,  
Uttarakhand, Himalayas, India  
For online orders and Catalogue visit : [dlsbooks.org](http://dlsbooks.org)

## **PUBLISHERS' NOTE**

24<sup>th</sup> September 2016 marks the auspicious occasion of Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out one hundred booklets comprising illuminating talks of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

To propagate Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's gospel of Divine Life, Worshipful Sri Swamiji Maharaj travelled extensively in India and abroad and showed the path of divine life to countless seekers through his spontaneous and highly inspiring lectures. His lectures, in Sadgurudev's words, are the outpourings of his saintly heart, the revelations of intuitive wisdom.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of his hitherto unpublished lectures in booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary. The present booklet **'Knowing The Value Of Freedom'** is a compilation of his five inspiring talks at the sacred Samadhi Shrine during the year 1991.

We express our heartfelt gratitude towards Shri Mukund Jere, Mrs. Moo Briddell, Mrs. Mary

Dean and the inmates of the Headquarters Ashram for their loving service in transcribing, editing and compiling these talks.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—The Divine Life Society

## **1. KNOWING THE VALUE OF FREEDOM<sup>1</sup>**

Radiant Immortal Atman! Beloved Sadhaks assembled in the spiritual presence of worshipful and beloved Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in this sacred Samadhi Hall of his holy Ashram on the banks of Divine Mother Ganga in Uttarakhand, assembled together here for your morning hour of prayer and meditation and chanting Guru Stotra, Shanti Path, Nama Sankirtan, Prarthana, Dhyana.

Yesterday we had shared with you all some thoughts about the 15th of August, some thoughts about this day in 1947 when Bharatvarsha became 'Bharatam', independent India. It completed 40 years of its independence in 1987. Now it is in its 44th year, and it is full of problems, full of complications in its national life. People may attribute economic reasons, communal reasons, religious reasons, linguistic reasons, cultural reasons and worst still, interference by other nations, external political parties. That is the worst reason.

But all these are only superficial excuses. The real reason is misuse of the freedom granted by the life-long self-sacrifice of Mahatma Gandhi, not knowing the value of that freedom, not having love

<sup>1</sup> Early morning Talk given at the Samadhi Mandir on 16/8/1991

and great reverence for that freedom, for free India, Bharata! We should be prepared to live for it, work for it, die for it. That spirit sadly receded into the background. That spirit which once dominated the entire nation, from Himalayas to Cape Comorin, from Assam to Punjab, that great sublime feeling of patriotism, love for the mother country, love for freedom, and being prepared to make any sacrifice for freedom, to die or to be life-long in jail—that love has faded away, receded into the background. It was replaced by selfishness, self-seeking, and the value of that freedom was not realised. That freedom was misused and we have brought ourselves to this present condition. This is it!

If there was the fervent love for this freedom, then no other factor, either communal, religious, economic or external interference would prove strong enough to overcome this great passion, this great dominating emotion. It would be too strong. When that love is not there, there is essential weakness in the ethics of the nation, and every influence can bring us down.

Even so is the life of the individual Jivatma. Life is like a field that is given to someone. All right, here is this piece of land; make use of it, cultivate it, plough it, sow seeds, look after it and reap a harvest. Here is a new book, a pen. Write what you want. All the pages are clean and blank. They invite you to fill them. How will you fill them? In what way you will fill them is left to you. In what

way you will use the land is left to you. Whether you will sow, wheat, rice or barley or grow vegetables, make a fruit orchard, a flower garden or a wilderness of thorns, brambles, poisonous fruits, it is left in your hands.

This body is the field. Through your actions what will you produce in this body? What type of actions? Here you have freedom. We have no freedom for experience. We already have sown the seeds through previous Karmas, so the experiences are inevitable, but not the actions. The actions are a matter of choice. Your actions are an exercise of your freedom, of your intelligence, of your spirit of enquiry, your discernment, your observation, your wisdom or folly, your discrimination. It is entirely left to you what type of action seeds you produce in this body field, mentally, verbally, physically. No one is after you 'You must do this, you must do that'. God is not urging you. Devil is not urging you. No angels are urging you. There is no external factor, man or God, devil or demon. It is your interior, it is your Antahkarana, it is your own sentiment, emotion, craving, imagination, desire. If it is of the right sort, then you produce for yourself a golden harvest, a blessed future. If it is of a wrong sort, you produce what you have worked for.

After a mighty renunciation, after intense penance, great austerity, fasting, practice of Yoga, meditation and with the determination to do or die, Buddha, Prince Siddhartha, attained

illumination. Out of it he discovered the truth that the cause for all suffering is Trishna, craving, yearning, grasping, thirst for life. That gives rise to desire, leading to attachment, leading to bondage, leading to confusion.

He gave this as the second of the four noble truths: the presence of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering and the way to the cessation of suffering. Four noble truths he proclaimed and the second was the cause of suffering, Trishna. One who has renounced craving is free, he has attained freedom.

But then, how will he use this great freedom—for foolishness, for indifference or for alertness, for meditation, keen yearning, great determination? Therefore, what you write in the book of life is left to each Jivatma. How you make use of this Kshetra or field, is again left to each Jivatma. God does not want to interfere in your independence. He has given you intelligence, perception, power to observe. And therefore one is expected to observe. The least that one could expect of any being who has been endowed with tools, is to make use of these tools in a wise way. Thought, speech, action, body, life, time, energy, talent, intelligence, these are the tools with which we are endowed. It is up to us to be wise and to make use of them in a right way as they go to comprise our entire human personality. If they are put to proper use, you create your supreme good fortune, your highest welfare. You have got the

power to create. You have got the ability. You are given the great opportunity. This is life, this great opportunity, this golden chance! This is life!

Therefore it behooves each one of the Sadhakas, Yogis, seekers, aspirants who are present here at this moment to ponder well this fact of your situation, this simple truth of your present place in this universe, to ponder well your role in life. Then great good may come out of it. This is the truth and this is the thing needful, with which one can bless oneself. God bless you.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

## **2. THE ESSENCE OF ALL SADHANA—GROWING INTO THE NATURE OF GOD<sup>2</sup>**

Worshipful homage unto the divine all-pervading Almighty Spirit, the Eternal without beginning and end, the supreme Absolute! To that Being that exists in all the three periods of time, who is the very form of luminous consciousness, radiantly aware, whose absolute existence is the form of knowledge, wisdom consciousness, Kevalam Jnanamurtim, to that Being who is absolute bliss, Kevalam Ananda Svarupa—to that Being my worshipful homage.

That Being whom all the religions worship and adore, that Being who existed when there was no creation, no prophet, messiah, messenger of God, no Avatara, when there was no world, no sun, moon, stars; nothing existed, and therefore there was neither temple nor synagogue, nor fire temple, nor church, nor mosque, Gurudwara, Buddhist Vihara, no place of worship. There was no earth to exist upon. There was no scripture, no religion, theology, dogma or philosophy, to that Being who then existed beyond name—there was no one to give Him a name, no language in which to call Him by a name—to that Supreme Being who indwells your heart, who pervades

<sup>2</sup> Early morning Talk given at the Samadhi Mandir on 10/9/1991

everywhere, who is present in every speck of space, every atom of matter, every creature, to that Being who like a thread passing through all the beads of a necklace, who is the indwelling universal Consciousness, i.e. the Sutratma, in whom all creatures find their oneness, in whom all existence finds unity—to that Being my worshipful homage! May that Being grace you with the awakening of this awareness of the fundamental, essential unity that is the basis of all philosophy, of all faiths, all religions.

Loving adorations to Gurudev, in whose presence we have gathered together today, on the second day after his 105th birthday, and on the third day of the Srimad Bhagavatam Maha Purana Saptah. May his benign spiritual presence inspire all to live an ideal life through which you may attain divine consciousness, Brahma Jnana, God-realisation. May his benedictions enable you to adhere to the path that he has put before us for attaining God-realisation in and through our normal day-to-day life and activities.

There is a wonderful redeeming feature. That redeeming feature is that in spite of birth, death, disease, old age, decay and dissolution and sorrow, in this world of love and hate, conflict and strife, fights and quarrels, there is that great goal that beckons us. The world will be what it is, but do not take this life merely to be this petty experience of pain and suffering, discord and disharmony! This earth life is a golden chance, a

wonderful, invaluable opportunity. Look at it that way, understand it that way, and with both hands eagerly grasp this opportunity and become blessed. That is Gurudev's great message to modern mankind.

You cannot change the whole world, you can change yourself. Do not look at this world as an obstacle, but as an opportunity. Do not look at this world as a closed door, because a closed door can become an open door if you turn the key in the right direction and if you push or pull in the right manner. If the door opens outward, if you try to push it, thinking you will open the door and enter the mansion, it will never open. You have to pull it and open it outward. And if a door opens inward, if you try to pull it, thinking you will pull this door open and enter, you will never enter. Only if you push, it opens inward and you can enter the mansion.

Even so, you must know exactly where the door is, how it opens and how it shuts and then do the needful, with wisdom, with understanding. Live your life with wisdom and understanding. Know what it is that will throw open the portals to blessedness and what action on your part will close it and exclude you. This is something God has allowed us to do by our observation, our enquiry, our discovery, our discrimination. So enquire, discriminate, discover.

You do not have to do it all by yourself, helplessly. There is the great treasure or wisdom

teaching of saints and sages, seers, mystics, illumined perfected masters of all traditions, of all religions in the Orient as well as Occident, ancient as well as modern. It has sprung from the texts of the Vedic religion, the Judaic tradition, Christianity, Islam, the Zoroastrian religion, the Sufi tradition, the Sikh tradition, and of every shade of the Taoist philosophy and Zen tradition. From all these sources of revelation, we have plenty of wisdom teachings to make our task simple, make our path clear and our struggle very easy and effective. We are not thrown upon our own resources. Light is there in plenty from these great sources of wisdom, and we must devotedly imbibe them by studying the scriptures, by listening to their expounding. That is the wise way. Equip yourself with knowledge by study, by devotedly questioning:

*Taddviddhi pranipatena pariprasnena sevaya*  
(Gita 4:34)

*Know that by long prostration, by questioning and by service.*

Equipped with this knowledge, with firm determination to adhere to this path, attain the goal and crown yourself with supreme blessedness. That is the one thing needed.

This world is an obstacle or an opportunity according to how your mentality is, how you look at it. If you are a negative person, it will be an obstacle. If you are a positive person, it will be a grand, glorious opportunity. The world is the

same to all people, whether optimist or pessimist or lethargic. But it is different according to the way in which you look at it, understand it and approach it. The world is a Kamadhenu (wish-fulfilling cow), it is a Kalpataru (wish-fulfilling tree). It yields whatever you wish, in the manner of your approach and the living of your life.

Therefore be wise, discriminate, enquire and learn from life, learn from the great teachers, from the scriptures, from your own observation and reflection. This will teach you that the essence of all practical spirituality, the essence of all religion, of Yoga and of prayer is growing in the nature of God. If we are children of God, we have the light of God within us. It has to be brought out and increased. So you fill yourself with that light.

We must prove by our life and by our actions that we are related to God, we are His children. He is our father, our mother. We are therefore like Him in our nature. We should not allow ourselves to forget this fundamental fact—that He is our Creator, and we are His creation. He has made us in his likeness, and therefore we have within us the God-nature. We have to grow into that God-nature. If your Sadhana succeeds in doing this, your Sadhana is being carried out correctly. If it fails to do this, then there is something wrong. If you are not growing day by day into a God-like nature, then there is something seriously wrong in your understanding or in the practice of your

Sadhana. You have not fulfilled all the conditions. It is only when the self dies that Sadhana becomes fruitful in divine experience. This is the truth.

Growing into the likeness of God—Divyatva (divinity) is the essence of spiritual life and Sadhana. That is Gurudev's teaching. That is why he wanted your life to be a divine life. That is the long and short of it. That is the essence of his teachings. Be divine, because you are divine.

With these words I offer my homage and worship at the feet of beloved and adorable Holy Master in his spiritual presence. With these words I offer and pay my homage to the Universal Spirit who pervades all existence, who indwells you, making your body a sacred temple of God, who indwells you as the light within. With these words I conclude my little Seva in this early morning spiritual fellowship.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

### **3. IMPORTANT GUIDELINES OF THE WORLD'S SCRIPTURES<sup>3</sup>**

May the blessings and loving benedictions of worshipful and beloved Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji enable all of us assembled here to be true to ourselves, true to the world around us and true to God. If thus we fulfil the principle which upholds the entire universe and makes all life possible, namely Truth, our success is assured. If we uphold this principle, the power of Truth will uphold us and grant us success and fulfillment in our life and in strife. Therefore to be true to oneself, true to this world around us, true to God, who has sent us here amidst His creatures, is an important part of the life spiritual. It is an ideal in itself for any human individual. It is part of a many-sided ideal for the spiritual seeker who seeks to go beyond relative truth and enter into an experience of Absolute Truth and to merge with It.

The Upanishads and the Vedas say that this is the essence of Dharma. The Truth, along with a certain moral order that the Supreme Being has brought into existence, sustains all creation. Principles and ideals are the secret strength of the spiritual seeker. They are the secret of his being able to stick to a certain path without deviation. They are the secret of his ultimately overcoming

<sup>3</sup> Early morning Talk given at the Samadhi Mandir on 20/8/1991

all obstacles and making all factors favorable and helpful.

Principles and ideals to live by are provided by all the great scriptures of the world, like Zen, Talmud, Torah, Koran, New Testament, sermons of the Buddha, the Upanishads and Srimad Bhagavad Gita. While many of these scriptures are simple in their language, easy to understand, the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads are not so easy to understand, not so simple in their language. To better explain them to us we have various commentaries by Sri Sankaracharya, by Sri Ramanujacharya, by Sri Madhwacharya and others. They have brought out the inner meaning, the exact significance of these scriptures through the commentaries they have written.

Again and again the seeker must go to these constant well-wishers, namely all the key scriptures of the world, as well as the Bhagavad Gita and Upanishads. They are a constant source of blessedness and support of the life spiritual. This does not mean that we need to learn all the languages and read all these scriptures. It is meant that the followers of a particular faith should take recourse to the wisdom teachings contained in their scriptures. The essence, the central message of all the scriptures are available to us today. Because many international scholars and many philosophers have written in the English language the essence of all the world religions. There are many books by different

writers, such as *The World's Religions*, *The Principal Religions of the World*, etc. Even Gurudev has written about all the main religions. Thus you can study and understand the central message of these scriptures by reading the essence of their teachings in English. *Perennial Philosophy* by Aldous Huxley is one such book. But, though we may try to get inspiration and information on the various religions by reading these books, we must consistently go to two or three scriptures for guidance, that they may act as light upon our path and help in sustaining our efforts to adhere to certain noble principles and lofty ideals. The teachings in these scriptures are our permanent wealth. They will never fail us. Again and again one should take recourse in them.

Thus ever remain in the light, ever tread the path of righteousness and idealism that takes you ultimately to the source of all Dharma, to the source of all truth. That Source is God, attaining Whom one's life becomes totally fulfilled.

Therefore, we have in these sources of wisdom a great repository of strength, of light, of spiritual force. Their study should not be underestimated or neglected. They are ever available to us. Through them God speaks to man.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

## **4. HOW TO OVERCOME THE DUAL THROUGH AND REGAIN OUR SATCHIDANANDA CONSCIOUSNESS<sup>4</sup>**

Worshipful homage unto the adorable presence or the great eternal Reality, the one supreme, non-dual universal Being! Existence absolute, Consciousness absolute and Bliss absolute, that is the unchanging Reality behind ever changing names and forms that constitute the universe in which we live.

All things here are subject to change, decay, ultimate dissolution, including this body-house with which I have identified myself to such an extent that I know of no other identity than this mortal cage of flesh and bones; it has been a source of constant trouble and botheration, of aches and pains from head to foot. Every cell in this body is capable of being a nuisance, capable of giving inconvenience, discomfort, pain. If there is a little extra heat, it suffers; if there is a little extra cold, it suffers. If you do not get sufficient food, you suffer; if you take more than sufficient food, you suffer; if you take just the required amount and it disagrees with you, you suffer. Everything in this world is so constituted, that contact with it brings about sufferings. But the mind, which is the seat of Maya, deludes the

<sup>4</sup> Early morning Talk given at the Samadhi Mandir on 13/9/1991

individual pilgrim soul that has come here in order to achieve a grand goal, so deludes it that it is engaged in the pursuit of everything else except that one goal of life. That is forgotten. Everything else becomes the object of our pursuit, our quest, our desire. The whole life is a series of struggling and exerting in order to attain a thousand petty goals, which very effectively succeed in turning our attention away from the ultimate goal of life. And time passes in the meanwhile.

Every second that ticks in the clock shortens the time available; every second, every minute, every hour. That is why the great injunction: "Arise awake and hurry, quickly attain illumination, attain enlightenment!" For that alone can ultimately liberate you from all that you think and feel to be unpleasant, undesirable, but willy-nilly you are obliged to undergo and experience it in a hundred different ways, day after day. Arise, awake and attain illumination which alone can liberate you from the darkness of spiritual ignorance and from this vexing limitation of time and space, of birth, growth, old age, disease, decay, dissolution; it will liberate you from the fretful, imperfect earth life with like and dislike, love and hate, attraction and repulsion, attachment and aversion, battering the soul in this ocean of existence, now full of noble sublime thoughts, now caught in the net of thoughts and longings. This is the dual throned like waves that

batter a person struggling to reach some haven in a stormy ocean. That is the plight of the Jivatma.

Illumination alone can liberate you, make you Dvandvatita, make you transcend duality; not only in the metaphysical sense, but even in the pragmatic sense of our life. “I am what I am”, I am Satchidananda—nothing can alter this, nothing can affect this. I am ever established in Satchidananda consciousness. Deep down within me flows a nectarine stream, an unbroken stream of Satchidananda.

I exist, I am luminously aware that I exist, that I am. I am conscious existence and in this sublime unqualified pristine state of existence consciousness, none of the experiences that pertain to this petty phenomenal plane of existence can ever approach; they have no access to it. The dual throng, the entire range of so called human experience have no access into that most sacred, sublime inner centre where you are what you are, where you are as the Supreme Being fashioned you in His own image. The shining, radiant light of lights beyond all darkness abides within you as your real nature, as your true, unchanging eternal identity.

That innermost centre or your cosmic nature is uncreated. It is eternal, for it is the God-essence within you. It is the Brahmatva of the Jiva (considering itself as individual soul). It is the Svarupa, your own self, your true being. It is your real Svarupa, Sat-Svarupa. It is your essential,

unchanging nature, Nija Svarupa. You are That. And in that depth nothing that is manifest, nothing that has come later, dare enter. In that state of pristine existence-consciousness there is no dual thron, there is no change, there is no happiness or misery. There is only bliss, bliss, bliss, always bliss. It is that supreme Cosmic Reality which is the infinite ocean of Satchidananda consciousness. You are That. You are made in the image of God—so the Bible says. The light of God thus shines within you as your true identity. This truth is to be heard again and again, and yet again. This truth is to be reflected upon again and again. That is life and Sadhana. That is true meditation. This truth has to be deeply meditated upon. Thus the ancients have said for your highest good.

Everything pertaining to this outer universe did not exist. It came into being at a point in time. It is only a dream into which a part of a unity has entered into, thinking itself to be separate from the whole. The wave is never separate from the ocean. It is nothing but ocean water. The ocean itself assumes the form of a wave, appears like this for a while and regains its eternal vastness. That alone is. The Supreme alone abides. All other things are only temporary appearances upon its vastness.

The play or Shakti dances upon the unchanging, ever stable substance of the Siva Tattva (principle, truth of Siva). It is only a play of

energy. Countless, millions and billions and trillions of universes arise. They have a brief existence of a few million years and sink back into oblivion. But the fullness of Satchidananda consciousness ever abides. It is that Reality within you, is what you really are.

Be That and let your life shine with consciousness and bliss. Let your life be a glorious manifestation of your real identity. Let every thought, every sentiment and emotion be filled with sublime divinity. Let every word that you utter be full of divine joy and peace, so that it will fill the hearts of all with peace, with joy. Let all your actions convey this divinity in the lives of others. This is your Sahaja Jivana (natural life), your Satya Jivana (true life).

Anything contrary to this is a living lie, is false. It is not authentic. It is not real. It is something that denies your divinity, denies that you are from God. Let your life be thus a radiant manifestation of the divinity that you are and a journey to the infinite Satchidananda state which is your commencement and also your conclusion.

*Ahamatma gudakesa sarvabhutashayasthitah  
Aham adischa madhyam cha bhutanam anta eva cha  
(BG X/20)*

*I am the Self, O Arjuna, seated in the hearts of all beings; I am the beginning, the middle and also the end of all beings.*

We live, move and have our being in this Satchidananda consciousness. May the supreme Cosmic Being, who is our source bestow to us the inner strength to overcome all contrary imaginations and steadily move towards the Goal each day. Let each dawn find you fully equipped to convert that day into a day filled with divine thoughts, sublime, divine emotions, divine words and divine actions, and let each sunset find you so much better for having passed through that day.

Towards that Goal let each one strive. May the glance of grace of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji, our eternal companion, our never failing mentor, whose wisdom teachings constitute the light that illumines our path, be gracious. He is ever with us. Let us walk in the light of His divine life teachings. Then all will be well. Our journey will be crowned with success of our regained Satchidananda consciousness, attaining which you will ever rejoice and rejoice. So be it. God bless you.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

## 5. SADHANA<sup>5</sup>

Radiant Immortal Atman! Sadhana is the process of the alteration of both the nature and movement of your mind, as well as of all your senses. Both your mind and senses by their very nature are outgoing, moving towards many external attractions, towards the ever-changing appearances of this phenomenal process; moving towards things with name and form, things limited in time and space. Therefore the mind and senses are necessarily moving towards temporary, perishable things, towards the unreal, the evanescent and the transitory. However, these transitory, created things are incapable of giving you either true satisfaction or true happiness, let alone peace.

When the senses force your consciousness outwards towards temporary, perishable unrealities and the mind follows suit, ever insisting upon dwelling upon these temporary objects, we cannot hope to reach the goal. For the goal is beyond time and space, beyond mind and senses. It is absolute and supremely transcendental. The knowledge and comprehension of this goal has been termed in the Upanishadic literature as Para Vidya, the science of the transcendental Reality.

.....  
5 Early morning Talk given at the Samadhi Mandir on 16/9/1991

Our scriptures say that dwelling upon temporary, perishable things that are contrary to the absolute, imperishable Reality, always ends in sorrow and greater bondage. The Bhagavatam says:

*Asadhananuchintanam bandhaya bharatavat  
(Dwelling upon anything other than your  
Sadhana leads to bondage as in the case of  
Bharata).*

O man, beware! Be aware that dwelling upon things that have no direct relevance or connection to your spiritual life and Sadhana, to attaining the goal of the Eternal Reality, will lead to terrible bondage.

There is a reference from the Puranas. A forest-dwelling Rishi, a recluse, got caught even as he was engaged in earnest Sadhana. Due to his mind dwelling upon an earthly object, it had attachment to it and soon became overwhelmed by that attachment until it became impossible for the mind to be taken away from it. Even when he sat for meditation, instead of the mind going towards the Divine Reality, it started going towards that earthly thing upon which all his affections had now become centred. He became caught in the bondage of attachment. He lost concentration and the balance of his mind. This became the cause for terrible bondage, even to such a spiritual personality as a forest-dwelling hermit.

Therefore, this timely warning: “Dwelling upon things that do not pertain to Sadhana, that have no relevance to your spiritual life and practices will lead to bondage. Be aware of this O man, O Sadhaka!” We therefore pray, “O Lord, from unrealities lead us unto the Eternal Reality”. All things in this ever-changing physical universe are part of an unreal temporary show, a temporary appearance.

Therefore, Sadhana means diligently engaging in necessary and suitable practices in order to turn the senses away from the objects of the world appearance and directing them inward towards the Reality. Sadhana means engaging in disciplines that will oblige the mind to gradually change its nature of constantly moving towards this objective universe and make it go towards the inner centre of your being where the great Reality is ever present as the Antaratma, as inner Self, as Satchidanandatma.

This is the quintessence of Sadhana: detaching your senses and your mind from attachment to this passing appearance and attaching your senses and mind to your concept of the Supreme Being. You must constantly engage yourself in this practice of detaching from the many and attaching your mind and senses to the one non-dual Reality which is imperishable, eternal and indestructible. All the processes and techniques of Sadhana have as their objective this transformation of the behaviour and movement of

your Antahkarana or psyche, the inner four-fold instrument of thinking, reasoning, contemplating and recollecting.

The ego should not dwell upon unrealities. The Sadhaka's 'I' should be fixed in that of which it is a part, upon that great Reality—Tat Sat. It is an ingathering of the entire personality, sensual and mental, and directing it towards the Eternal Reality. "Enough have I dwelt upon this passing show. Life after life, in many incarnations, I have been overcome by delusion and have mistaken the unrealities for the Reality. I have mistaken sources of pain and distraction for sources of happiness. I have committed this blunder because I have been unwise".

*Ye hi samsparshaja bhoga dukkhayonaya eva te  
Adyantavantah kaunteya na teshu ramate budhah (BG V/22)*

*The enjoyments that are born of contacts are only generators of pain, for they have a beginning and an end. O Arjuna, the wise man does not rejoice in them.*

The wise person never runs after that which is pleasant in the beginning but painful in the end. He says: "No. For the sake of a little momentary pleasurable sensation, I shall not foolishly make myself prey to later sorrow and suffering. I would much rather seek something which is happiness in the beginning, happiness in the middle and happiness in the end. I would rather seek something that culminates in happiness, even if it may be seemingly painful and

difficult in the beginning, and then laugh unto eternity, rather than have a little rejoicing now and then regret for all times”.

So it is the Sadhaka's choice to reject the temporary, the transitory and to seek the Eternal, the Immortal. Engaging in necessary and suitable disciplines and practices to this end constitutes Sadhana. Among these necessary disciplines is the shedding of one's erroneous notion that one is this perishable cage of flesh and bones, that one is this psychological personality made up of mind, intellect, ego and memory, with all its content. It is the giving up of this deluded notion, this error, and of identifying oneself with one's real essential nature.

If we are to move in the right direction, we must also rid ourselves of the various unspiritual and undivine tendencies in our limited human nature that drive us towards external appearances, which make us engage in activities and thoughts contrary to the spiritual ideal. In the sixteenth chapter of Srimad Bhagavad Gita Lord Krishna says, “In the human nature there are two tendencies. One is helpful to spiritual life, Sadhana and the attainment of the Goal, and the other one is a hindrance, taking us towards greater bondage”. Therefore, these helpful divine qualities are to be cultivated and actively practiced, and the contrary is to be eradicated and taken out of our life.

You are all divine. You must know that you are not different from the ideal which you are

seeking. The deluded idea that we are something different from the source and origin of our nature should be uprooted and ousted from our consciousness. And with equal determination, we must establish the truth, the simple truth that we belong to It. We are It! We are essentially ever divine and never anything else. With this firm conviction start thinking divinely, feeling divinely, acting divinely and living divinely. That is the quintessence of Sadhana.

May God bless us and grant us success in our spiritual life, in this process of moving towards that ever-present state of divine perfection that is inherent in each and every one of us, even as a tree is already inherent in the seed and a beautiful bird already inherent within an egg. Even so, man is potentially divine. Divinity is ever-present within us as our very own nature. Recognising this, being what we are, and refusing to be anything contrary to what we are, is Sadhana.

God grant you success in this spiritual adventure, God grant you success in this sublime quest, which is the central meaning, significance and purpose of the human birth. May Gurudev's grace and his wisdom teachings grant you success in this great endeavour!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

