

If you want to make yourself a fit receptacle for the knowledge that liberates, become a doer of good in a supreme spirit of total dedication.

True life is made up of now. True life is not made up of bygone yesterdays or uncertain tomorrow. The now that we have is like a lump of clay in a sculpture's hands; we can create of it what we will.

Swami Chidananda
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A DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY PUBLICATION



WORSHIP OF KARTHIKEYA



Swami Chidananda

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Sri Swami Chidananda



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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

24th 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We are immensely happy to bring out some of his hitherto unpublished lectures in booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary.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 '**Worship of Karthikeya**' is a compilation of his four 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. DRAWING NEAR TO REALITY¹

Homage unto the supreme all-pervading Divine Presence, the immanent Presence of the eternal Reality! It is the one fact in the midst of innumerable names and forms, which are but the vanishing appearances that go to make up this ever-changing flux that we call the physical universe around us. Worshipful homage to that great Reality that indwells your innermost being as your eternal companion. The great Reality, the Antaryami Tattva, the radiant centre of divine consciousness, is the indweller of all beings. It is that selfsame Being who makes your body the moving temple of that living Reality. Worshipful homage to that Being who has brought us into His Presence at this early morning hour in the sacred Samadhi Hall of Gurudev's holy Ashram.

Loving adorations to Gurudev, who has blessed us with the gift of spiritual fellowship, thus giving the right direction to our thoughts and feelings for the entire day. Each day becomes a further progress towards the ultimate goal of our life. Each moment becomes a process of drawing near to that Reality. Each day becomes an Upanishad. For this gift, we offer our heartfelt

1 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 9/11/91

gratitude to the spiritual Presence of worshipful Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji.

We adore the great Reality as a benign spiritual force. It is the power of God's grace that leads the sincere seeking soul to victory over all that stands in the way of attaining its divine destiny—Self-realisation, God-experience and Cosmic Consciousness. The power of grace helps to overcome all the unspiritual forces that stand in our way of attaining that great goal. Know that special manifestation of the divine power as Shanmukha, Subrahmanya, Karthikeya, Saravanabhava, Muruga, Shadanana (the six-faced God). To that Being we offer worship and salutations.

Radiant Atman! You are here upon this earth plane not to make a mess of your life, not to aimlessly wander, stumble, fall and bemoan your lot or blame the heavens or providence. You are here to be what in the Kathopanishad episode Yamadharmaraja refers to as: *Kashchid-dhira pratyagatmanam aikshat avrattachakshuh amritavamichhan* He who resolutely curbs his senses from going outside towards ephemeral names and forms, perishable things of this phenomenal world and resolutely turns them within, is referred to as Dhîra. You are here to be a Dhîra. You are here to be a being of resolution, determined to curb the senses, to turn the mind

within. There is no greater glory to human life than to be a seeker after that which is imperishable and everlasting, that which is all-full and perfect. There is no greater glory to human life than to utilise life for this supreme purpose, which is God's plan for each man. To that end, apply yourself with one-pointed dedication.

Thus Karthikeya Bhagavan, Subrahmanya or Shanmukha, silently admonishes us. In His hand He holds a spear. In South India, He is known as Velmuruga, the son of Shiva, who wields a spear. Unlike the trident, which is three-pronged, the spear has a single point, broadest at its base and gradually narrowing and tapering off into a sharp point. The spear represents a power that is able to cleave asunder everything by its thrust. Nothing can stand in its way. Such is the silent message of the weapon that the commander of the celestial forces wields in His hand. It shows the absolute one-pointedness in the quest after the great ideal, the total dedication and a determined thrust in one direction, the direction of Brahman. "I do not opt for anything less than the Supreme, the all-full Paramatman, the Cosmic Being." Making life such a determined thrust towards that Supreme Being, cleaving asunder all that stands in the way, rentng asunder the veil of Avidya, of Ajnana, is the great task of the Jivatma.

Forgetfulness of that great Reality is the great disease of the Jivatma.

That indeed is the silent, symbolic admonition of the spear that Karthikeya holds in His hand: “Let your interior, your consciousness, be ever like the weapon that I wield. Be one-pointed. Be of single-minded dedication to the great ideal of Self-realisation. Falter not! Swerve not! Resolutely move forward in that one direction. Let there be unity of purpose. Let all the factors that go to make up your human personality be gathered together and be directed in this single direction; your heart, mind, intellect, your soul, your five senses—seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and touching—let them not distract you. Let them all be gathered and taken in this one direction.”

An inspiring Bhajan runs thus: “All these faculties have been given to you to seek the Eternal, to be directed towards the divine Atma. The sum totality of your personality is meant to be dedicated towards this single grand and glorious ideal. Let it be applied towards this.”

We spoke yesterday of the need not to fall, not to be overcome, but rather to be filled with the force of divine inspiration. Stand up and resolutely apply yourself to this great ideal. We spoke about standing up—Uttishthata. And the Upanishads follow this admonition ‘Uttishthata’

with 'Jagrata'. If you are standing and yet become drowsy and fall asleep, you will fall again. You cannot afford to fall asleep when you are standing. Be ever alert and vigilant. One French writer has said: "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty". It is no less true upon the spiritual path as on the political field of the struggle for liberty by man.

The symbol for waking up all over the world is the crowing of the cock. Metropolitan, urban areas are not the real world; they are only a tiny fraction of the whole world. By far the largest part of planet earth is rural. But for the labour of rural people, urbanites would not get bread for their breakfast. Therefore, the universal symbol of awakening is the cock crowing in the predawn hour when the world is still slumbering. It wakes up the farmer, who dwells not in concrete jungles, but upon green earth. The crowing of the cock heralds the dawn and proclaims the new day and awakens sleeping man from his slumber.

Jagrata! Karthikeya or Shanmukha holds the banner of the cock. They say in Tamil Nadu 'Velmuruga'. He is the one who has in his hand the spear and he has the banner of the crowing cock. Just as Arjuna is described as Kapi Dhvaja, even so Karthikeya ever proclaims to seeking souls: "Be ever awake, let there be Viveka and Vichara of inner spiritual consciousness!" Never fall asleep to your divine destiny, to the

attainment of this great goal. Never forget the deep significance of the supreme gift of God, for which this human life is given to you. Be ever wakeful to this great truth. Be ever wakeful to the depth of the sublime higher meaning, its central purpose and its great goal. Be ever awake. The fluttering banner is proclaiming wakefulness: “Uttishthata! Jagrata!” It is the great sign of Shanmukha, Saravanabhava, Karthikeya.

Let us respond to the silent indicators of this great incarnation, this manifestation of divine Grace, who is there to help you attain victory. Thus is this worship offered to the great Lord in this early morning spiritual fellowship.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

2. CULTIVATE UNIFIED CONSCIOUSNESS²

Radiant Immortal Atman! Blessed Divinities in the form of Sadhakas and spiritual seekers gathered here in the spiritual presence of beloved and worshipful Holy Master, Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji! May the divine grace of the all-pervading Reality be upon you all! May He grant you success in your meditation. May the Gurukripa and the special benedictions of Holy Master be upon you all, and by His blessings may you attain steady and unhampered progress in your spiritual life and practices, day by day, until you attain the fruit of your meditations, namely Self-realisation and liberation!

Meditation is the means by which the individual soul seeks to attain experience of the supreme Universal Soul. It is the means by which one transcends the limitations of a confined individual human consciousness and enters into limitless experience of universal consciousness, where one is in union with the Universal Soul—that Reality beyond the ever changing appearances. That Reality is said to be

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2 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 10/11/91

experienced in deep meditation—*Yogibhir-dhyanagamyam*'.

That which is known or cognised by the Yogis in states of deep meditation is to be meditated upon. It is That which is to be heard about, reflected and meditated upon. That is the instruction of your Upanishads. The great sage Yajnavalkya, while imparting Jnana Diksha and initiating the Adhikari (best qualifying person) Maitreyi, said: "This is what you must do. You must engage your mind in these three processes. Mind should take interest in listening to the exposition of the Ultimate Reality. If it is overly interested in perishable things, it cannot evince a keen eagerness to listen and know about that great Reality. This is the first step, the entry point into meditation later on.

"It is only when you cultivate in your Svabhava (own nature) a keen longing, an intense eagerness to hear about Brahman, about the great eternal Being, that the mind will be goaded to go to such places where Truth is expounded. It will be urged to go to Satsangas, go to places where one can find someone prepared to speak about the Atman, to explain the Atman. And it is this longing for Brahmavichar that is the first step in preparing yourself for meditation. It is an eagerness for spiritual subjects, spiritual truths, Tattva Vichara, that prepares the mind to dwell

upon eternal Realities, not upon petty, perishable things of these phenomenal appearances.

“Therefore, your feet must always take you to places where there is such exposition about the great Reality. Your body must be prepared to sit quietly, motionless and listen. Your ears must be longing to drink this nectarine truth, the admonitions about the Supreme Being. The eyes should be fixed upon the one who is expounding these things with keen attention. All the five senses should be observing silence.”

So observing silence, not talking, paying attention visually, listening intently with the ear, curbing the urge to get up and move here and there (Rajo Guna), not desiring any other thing except to listen, keeping the hands folded or resting upon your thighs or knees, one should be the very picture of absolute stillness, absolute attention, absolute one-pointedness, dwelling upon the Reality.

Thus the five senses, including the sixth, the mind, are all unified and engaged in one single process to the exclusion of all contrary processes and activities. This is silently conveyed to you by Lord Shanmukha. This should be your inner state when you meditate. All the six senses, the five senses and the mind, the sixth, should be unified and dwell upon one Reality.

This is conveyed silently and symbolically by Lord Shanmukha. He has six faces and He is leading the celestial hosts in the direction of overcoming all that opposes them in attaining victory, fulfilling their great task. Thus indeed the essence of the process of meditation is the unification of the entire being of the meditator, and thus unified, to move in one single direction, focusing upon the object of meditation, to the exclusion of everything else. That is that inner state, the serene state of Dhyana, or meditation. That is the one thing desirable. It is the aim and end of all Yogas, all spiritual practices and processes, this inner state of absolute unified consciousness.

May God grace you with that inner state. May the blessings of the Guru lead you gradually to that inner state and may it grant you illumination. Thus is the sharing of this morning's spiritual fellowship. This is the offering at the feet of the Guru and God in the form of this sharing. Blessings of the Guru and the divine grace of God take you to that ultimate state of enlightenment, full awakening and realisation and liberation! God bless you!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

3. LIVING WITH SKILL AND INNER BALANCE³

Radiant Immortal Atman! We are drawn together in early spiritual fellowship by the gracious will of the Supreme Being in this sacred Samadhi Hall in the holy spiritual presence of beloved and worshipful Master Gurudev Swami Sivananadaji. Yesterday we had the good fortune of dwelling upon the silent message of Shanmukha, that all-conquering manifestation of divine power; victorious over all undivine factors, victorious over all forces of darkness and negativity and conquering all factors that stand in the way of supreme blessedness, divine experience, realisation and liberation.

While considering this supreme manifestation of the all-conquering Divinity, the darkness-banishing-and-light-bringing Divinity, we received the silent message of His unique six-faced form as Shanmukha. We considered and dwelt upon the necessity of directing ourselves in toto—the totality of our being in one unified direction and of fulfilling the task for which we have come to this earth plane. The manifestation of Lord Karthikeya was to lead the celestial forces

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3 *Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 11/11/91*

in battle against the undivine powers and grant them victory. Therefore, He is also Deva Senapati, the Commander-in-Chief of the celestial forces.

It is necessary that the totality of your being, the five senses and the superior, the sixth, are all unified in this one task of moving towards the great goal of attaining the experience for which all Sadhana is meant. It is the goal, the end and the fruit of Sadhana. The five senses perform their activity only in the presence of the sixth sense, the mind. Otherwise they cannot function. When the mind is indrawn in the deep sleep state, the five senses are inoperative. When the mind is elsewhere, the senses do not effectively perform their duty. People say: "I was absent-minded, I did not hear what you said."—"My attention was elsewhere and I could not see."—"I did not notice." That means they were not here even though they were physically present, but the mind was elsewhere.

We have to be totally here now, if meditation is to be successful. In life also, in day-to-day living, as you move amongst people performing your duties, fulfilling your obligations, executing various tasks and functions, at the same time the overall orientation of your personality should be towards the ideal and the goal. Never for a moment should it be out of your mind. Never for a moment should the mind be out of it and put into

any other thing. The mind should be fully centred in God. It should be God-centred.

“Perform actions O Arjuna, remaining in a state of Yoga within. Be in a state of Yoga within and perform action.” This is the great teaching of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, of the Upanishads, of Vedanta, expounded again and again in and through the Srimad Bhagavad Gita. This is the teaching: “Remember Me at all times and carry on this struggle towards the ideal in life—*Mamanusmara yudhya cha.*”

Inwardly, ever be in a state of contact with the Divine and carry on this struggle of life. That is the great admonition. Always we have to abide in the Divine; no matter where we are, what we are doing, in what surroundings we move about, we must always be centred in the Divine.

That is the secret of successful meditation. The outer life should support your periodical meditation, because your meditation is only periodical - maybe in the morning, maybe in the evening, maybe once more. But what about the rest of your time? You are involved in the outer world of many things. The mind is not indrawn, the mind is not God-centred. The mind is attending to many affairs that need your attention. What is happening to you then? A portion of you should be ever rooted in God: Ishwara-Pranidhana. You have to offer yourself to

the Divine, live your life and do your meditation. Dwell in God and do your duty. That is the art and science of supporting your inner meditation by your outer life and making your outer life a suitable base, supporting your inner meditation.

This total co-ordination is absolutely essential; all the five senses should move in the same direction in which you are making your mind move. The senses should follow the mind and move in the direction of Yoga, in the direction of God-realisation. It should not be the other way. If the mind moves in whatever direction the senses pull it, then it is the opposite of meditation. If you let this undesirable state prevail, then your meditation will be a futile struggle. Because the greater part of your life will be contradicting this little part of your time which you devote to meditation. You are creating within yourself a conflicting two-way pull: one in the direction towards your goal of meditation, and the second in several directions towards other desires and fulfillments in the outer field of activity. So you will stand in life as a great contradiction. You will stand in life as one in opposition to yourself.

The Gita does not permit it. You have to be your greatest helper. Your outer life has to be your greatest support of the inner meditation towards God. If your body is steady in meditation but the mind is restless, if you sit silent but the mind is

busy, engaged in inner conversation with the past or with the future, then you are here and yet you are not here. Just as a fickle-minded schoolboy is sitting in the classroom and the lesson is going on, but the boy is not listening to the teaching. And what happens in sum totality? He fails to obtain any benefit by his time spent in the classroom. Because he was he was elsewhere, even though he was sitting in his seat.

Meditation requires you to be here now. Mediation requires that you are present totally, not partially. Meditation requires the ingathering of your entire being and concentrating that entire potential towards one central ideal and goal. It requires dedication. Meditation means dedication. Meditation means a constantly God-centred or Truth-centred life, or a divinely oriented life.

Even so, pondering these various truths and requirements of the meditative process, we conclude that there is need for wakefulness. There is need for total dedicated one-pointedness and there is need for the awareness at all times that: "I am here not for anything else, but for attaining the goal supreme." When there is such a state existing inwardly, then you are called a Yogi. You are called a Sadhaka, because inwardly you are always united with your goal, with the Reality. That is Yoga. In that state you must be inwardly,

and at the same time you must function and fulfill your duties and obligations outwardly. That is the Gita ideal.

The Upanishads tell you: “O Sadhaka, have you not noticed how skillfully the danseuse executes her dance? Her concentration is always on balancing the pots she has placed upon her head, so that they may not fall, while a portion of the mind is attending to all the necessities of a perfectly executed dance sequence—Tala, Gana, Laya, Nritya—all these are not allowed to affect the perfect balancing of the pots on the head. Even as the dancer very skillfully executes the dance and maintains the balance, even so, O Yogi, live your life and engage in activity. O Sadhaka! O seeker! O Bhakta! Thus you should live your life with skill. The activity should be done with such skill that it does not in any way affect the inner balance. Such skillful action that does not affect the direction of your life towards God-realisation is also part of Yoga.”

And the Gita says: ‘*Yogah karmasu kaushalam*’—*Yoga is skill in action*. Yoga is not unconnected with daily life and activity; they have to be made to proceed in a unified direction, hand in hand. A connection between the outer activity and your Yoga practice should not be absent. This should be remembered.

And this, therefore, is the sharing of this morning talk, offered at the feet of the Guru and God. May they be pleased with this sharing and serving and deign to accept it and bless us all. God bless you!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

4. YOU ARE MADE FOR VICTORY!⁴

Radiant Immortal Atman! May the grace of the Supreme Being manifest as the all-conquering leader of the celestial forces! May the choicest blessings and benedictions of the Supreme Being manifest in the form of the spear-wielding Karthikeya, Subramanya, who is Deva Senapati. Karthikeya is to be invoked within the heart of all seekers who are struggling to overcome negative pulls and undesirable trends, the pulls of the gross Tamasic aspect of one's nature. Human nature is triune, composed of a gross brutal nature, of a vacillating imperfect human nature and of dormant divinity. Thus, these three factors that make up this mysterious phenomenon called the human individual have to be recognised and dealt with suitably.

The Tamasic or lesser nature whose pull is downward, away from Light, away from Divinity, is not to be encouraged, is not to be given free play, but is to be kept under one's wise discriminating control. It is called Samyama, or Dama. It is one of the Sadhana Chatushtaya (four necessary preliminary qualifications of the seeker—discrimination, dispassion, sixfold virtues and burning desire for liberation). If the

⁴ *Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 12/11/91*

higher mystical knowledge of Vedanta is to be imparted to him, the seeker must first be qualified. He should be fit to hear and receive such knowledge. Otherwise he will not be able to grasp the right implication of what is taught and will not be benefited by it.

If the correct meaning of what is taught is to be grasped, one requires a subtle Sattvic understanding and intellect. For that preliminary disciplines have to be developed and within these preliminary disciplines four factors have been prescribed. It is called Sadhana Chatustaya. The four-fold disciplines are very important, and they are required to be able to receive higher knowledge, to grasp it and understand it correctly. Dama is one of the six factors (Shad Sampada) that go to make up the third of the four-fold disciplines.

The right way to deal with the lower Tamasic nature is not by pampering it, encouraging it nor by allowing it free play, but by wisely keeping it in its place. It has a place for itself. Even inertia has a place; weight has its place. Weight will hold one back from rising up, but the same weight is necessary if something needs to be held in place. We have paperweights to hold papers from flying away if the fan is on or the window is open and a gust of breeze blows in. So in its right place, in its right function, it has a role to play and a place in

our life. But if it is given the wrong function, it starts interfering, and it becomes an obstacle for the onward evolution and ascent of the Spirit. Therefore the Gunas have to be dealt with in a manner that is wise, that is suitable. They should not be given free play, but be held in check. A Sadhaka or seeking soul should not come under their domination.

Victory, not slavery, is the keynote of effective spiritual life. Therefore, at all stages, at all times, you have to be in control. If the driver behind the steering wheel is fully in control, the vehicle proceeds in the right direction and reaches its destination without any mishap. If the driver seated behind the steering wheel is inebriated, the car goes out of control. If the brakes fail or the steering wheel does not function properly, the driver is no longer in control, and there is the possibility of a mishap.

We should not be controlled by something, but we should be in control of it. When we have to use something, we should know how to use it. We should not be used by it or be at its will. It should not be allowed to take us over. We should always be in charge. That should be the keynote of the spiritual seeker, of the Yogi.

Thus the right way of relating yourself to the lesser self is to be the master and to direct it as you want it to function. And in relating yourself to

the human part, you should always say: “Better and better, day by day. The human aspect is imperfect. Now it is up to me to cut it, polish it and make it shine, to make it perfect.” Where there are drawbacks, lacks and insufficiencies, you must eliminate them. Trim and prune where there are excesses of any kind. This should be a daily process, a daily movement towards perfection. The Apurna should be transformed into Paripurna. There should be constant evolution, progress, unfolding and shedding all that stands in the way of the process to perfection.

We have to relate ourselves as a sculptor relates himself to his material. Whether it is a lump of wood or a piece of stone, he goes on working on it and gradually eliminates all that stands in the way of revealing the beauty hidden in it. He works upon it as a jeweler works upon a gem or a diamond, cutting, polishing and thus giving it the right angle and shine.

In this way we have to work constantly and not be absent any moment of our life. In all ways, physically, mentally, intellectually and morally, we should go on working. That is our supreme task in life. Never opt for number two. But always say: “I should be number one.” Never be satisfied with merely acquiring one or two little special abilities. See what is lacking and try to fill the lack. This is Sadhana. This is the right way to

relate yourself to yourself. *‘Uddharet Atmanatmanam* (Let a man raise himself by his own self.) This is the right way to deal with the human level, always towards excellence, always towards fullness and completeness.

Our ancient Upanishadic seers have already said that in relating yourself to the Divine, it should be to make it awake, to make it arise, to make it dynamically manifest. *‘Uttishthata, jagrata, prapya varan nibodhata!’* (Arise, awake, having reached the wise, be enlightened!)

They have given this call. “Arise, awake!” Be fully aware of your divinity. You should not be slumbering. You should not be in a state of self-forgetfulness. And you should not be inactive. If you do not use a faculty, it gradually becomes inactive, and eventually it does not function anymore. It is only by exercise that muscles are developed, made strong and kept in a good condition. Similarly, failure to exercise Divinity gradually makes it lose its tone. And then it atrophies. Therefore, divinity should also be exercised. It should manifest dynamically in our dealings with life around us. That is the way of developing it. That is the way of gradually expanding it.

This is the way in which you should relate yourself to this innermost reality, to the divinity that is your true identity which has been

forgotten, ignored, neglected. Start actively engaging yourself in arousing it, making it dynamic, making it manifest. That is Sadhana. It should not be ignored. Ignoring Divinity is the greatest folly of the human being. To ignore one's reality is a great folly. It would be losing a priceless opportunity through foolishness. Therefore be wise, be wise!

Thus fulfill your destiny, which is victory! Victory and not defeat is the destiny of man. Therefore we always call upon the Divine within us. We say: *Sri Ram, Jai Ram, Sri Ram Jai Ram!* Gurudev used to greet people "Jai Oji! Victory unto you!" And there is a great Sanskrit hymn, '*Jitam Te*' in which every verse begins with the words "Jitam Te! - O Lord, victory unto Thee! Victory unto Thee!"

Today is the day when the devotees of Karthikeya celebrate this victory. In South Indian temples there is a grand procession where the Deity, gorgeously adorned, is drawn in a chariot. They call it Rathotsavam. The chariot comes out of the temple, perambulates the city, town or village and returns to the front of the temple. The culminating feature depicts the victory. One of the worshippers takes the spear in his hands, walks across to where a representation of the demoniacal force stands, Surapadma Asura. He then takes the spear and makes the tip touch the

throat of the demon from the front. At that time someone from the back removes the head of the demon. Then suddenly another head appears. It is repeated several times because this demon is not an ordinary demon. If you cut one head, another head comes. If you cut the second head, a third head comes. If you cut the third head, a fourth head comes. Like that, he assumes various aspects, refuses to accept defeat, refuses to die. So we have to go on cutting heads. Just as they say, “a cat has nine lives.”

This particular undivine force is the main barrier between you and God or Self-realisation. It is this ego-principle that assumes various guises. It is not merely ‘I’ or arrogance. You might have eliminated the gross manifestations of the ego, such as pride, arrogance, haughtiness, disobedience, impertinence etc. But then it takes other subtle forms. You think it has gone, but it says: “No, I have not gone.” So it requires introspection and a sharp, analytical intellect, if you want to find out in what form the ego is lurking within you. As long as the ego in one form or another—very gross or less gross, or even very subtle—as long as it is lurking in you, you cannot claim victory. Even if one strand of a thread is crooked and moving sideways, the thread cannot pass through the eye of a needle. No matter how pointed you think you have made the thread, by

putting it in the mouth and sucking it and twirling it with your fingers, yet if one strand is sticking out, then try as much as you can, when it comes near the eye of the needle, the thread will become a camel's back. It will not pass through. This is an analogy I am taking from the teaching of Sri Ramakrishna.

Therefore ego, even in a subtle form, should be found out and eliminated, so that you are filled with Aham Brahmasmi or divine ego or Atma-Nivedana. "Not I, oh Lord, but Thee, Thee alone, not I: *na'ham na'ham twam eva sarvam, tvam eva sarvam*—not me, not me. You are the all, You are the all!" And so Atma-Nivedana if proceeded with Bhakti, or Aham Brahmasmi and Brahmakara Vritti if proceeded with Vedanta, that state is to be attained analytically. With discrimination you have to eliminate the last vestiges, the last traces of the ego-principle. Then there is victory. Once all the heads are exhausted, the spear passes right through and then there is a headless demon, and victory is celebrated!

Today is Skanda Shashthi, the culminating sixth day of the lunar fortnight. And it is the day of victory, of rejoicing, hailing the Lord, Jai Ho! Just as on the tenth day after the nine nights of worship of the Divine Mother, the Cosmic Force, the tenth day is a day of victory, Vijaya Dasami.

May you all rejoice, for you are essentially divine, and you are made for victory. Defeat is alien, foreign to you. Victory is your element. Victory is your natural birthright. Know this, affirm this and say: "We shall overcome. One day we know that we shall overcome." Gear yourself up for it. Orient yourself in a positive pattern and crown yourself with victory and attain life's supreme goal. Become a perfected being, become a Jivanmukta. Become an Apta-Kama (one whose desires have all been fulfilled) and a Krita-kriya (one who has finished all actions). This is your glorious divine destiny. Towards that you orient all your thoughts and activities and your life and become a perfected divine being. Attain victory and be blessed! God bless you to succeed in this task!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

