



'THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER'—GURUDEV'S GIFT TO YOU

All life is sacred. Therefore, deal reverentially with all being

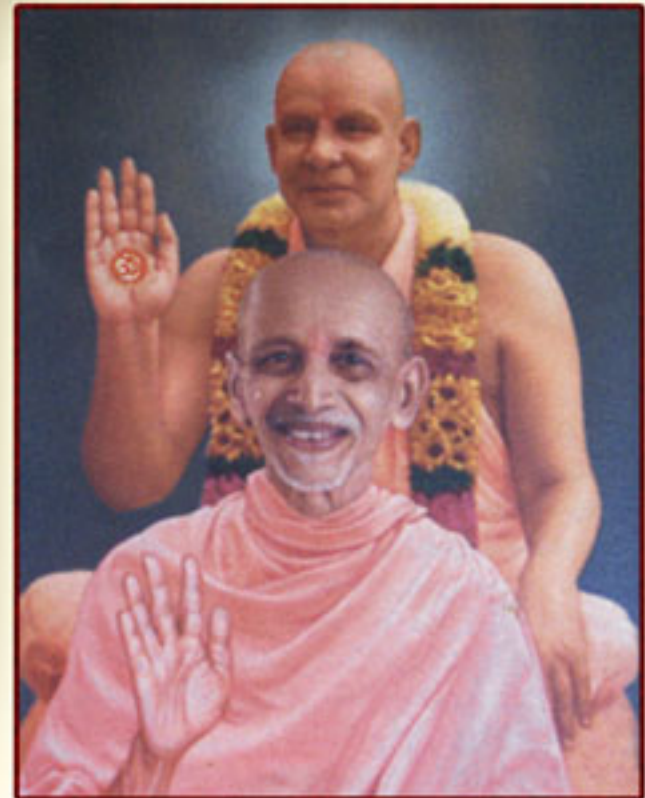
Let compassion fill your heart. Let truthfulness rule your life and actions

Always let these be enshrined within you—faith in the Supreme, hope for yourself and charity towards all.

Swami Chidananda
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SRI SWAMI CHIDANANDA

‘THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER’—GURUDEV’S GIFT TO YOU

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We are immensely happy to bring out some of his hitherto unpublished lectures in booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary.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 **'The Universal Prayer'—Gurudev's Gift to You'** is a compilation of his letter of 1st January 1968 and two inspiring talks at the sacred Samadhi Shrine.

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

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UNIVERSAL PRAYER

1. THE GLORY OF GURUDEV'S UNIVERSAL PRAYER

(Swami Chidananda's Letter of 1st January 1968)

Radiant Immortal Atman!

Blessed Beloved Divinity!

Adorations and homage unto the supreme Universal Being! Salutations to you in the holy name of our worshipful Guru Sri Swami Sivananda. At the dawn of the New Year, I send you through this letter my sincere greetings and good wishes for long life, health, happiness, prosperity and highest spiritual blessedness. May God shower upon you His divine grace and fill all your days with joy, peace, plenty and spiritual beauty. May all obstacles be overcome, may all difficulties depart, may all problems be solved and may discord give place to harmony. May the music of Divine Life fill your life with melody and sweetness.

Upon this solemn and auspicious moment of the conclusion of the old year and the commencement of the New Year, I wish to proclaim to you briefly Gurudev's Message of Divine Life. Resolve to live a life of selflessness and service unto all beings. Worship God with

devotion and develop divine love. Meditate upon the Supreme Being each day without fail. Ever aspire to realise the eternal Reality (God) through right enquiry, discrimination, metaphysical reflection and spiritual contemplation. Strive to lead a pure life of noble good conduct and holiness in thought, word and deed. Be a doer of good action. Develop the vision of the One in the spirit of Unity. Practise the presence of the divine and dedicate all the actions to the divine. Life is meant to manifest the highest divine nature that is inherent within you. Utilise life towards this sublime end here and now. Start living the Divine Life today. Waste not time. Postpone not. Do not hesitate. Do not worry. Be bold and cheerful. You will have a glorious future. Strive with fullest hope. You are bound to succeed. You will succeed, I assure you, my beloved friend! God speed you upon this bright path to divine perfection and eternal blessedness.

Today at the threshold of the New Year, I call upon all and appeal to and urge you to exert ceaselessly and do your best to give a positive touch and constructive turn to the atmosphere and mood of negativity, vandalism and arrogance that appear to be prevailing on all sides. Live and work to uphold the name and honour of your Motherland, of your culture. Work for love and unity. Do everything you can to save the integrity

of your country and its worthy way of life. By every means strive to safeguard the ideals and values you have inherited from the life and labour of numerous noble dedicated sons and daughters of our country.

The two great needs of humanity as a whole are being neglected everywhere, and this is resulting in gloom and confusion. These vital needs are to live with idealism and to adhere to virtue. Social ills, economical ills and political ills, all result out of the degradation of the human nature and character through loss of faith in idealism and the development of selfishness. Consequently virtue has become rare and unhappiness and confusion are the direct results. The law of life cannot be ignored and broken, nor its consequences escaped. The Law is that virtue and goodness ultimately lead to welfare and happiness. Misery and misfortune are the inevitable results of evil ways of living. This is a fact. And when will man be wise and realise this? There is great urgency to do so now. Do all that you can to practise and uphold these two great principles, idealism in life and adherence to virtue. Man must be guided by them; otherwise there is no way out of conflict, calamity and suffering. Why court sorrow and needlessly invite sufferings upon yourself when you behold the gateway that leads to joy and blessedness, to

peace and stability? I ceaselessly pray that wisdom may prevail and mankind will invite joy and well-being through the Good Life. Blessed Atman, join me in my prayers. Let us pray ceaselessly for universal welfare, prosperity and happiness.

Let me remind you of worshipful Gurudev’s admonition. He said, “Watch and pray. Pray and work. Work and wait”. This then must you do to achieve any worthwhile goal before this life passes and you have to quit this stage of the eternal drama of life. Be watchful. Be prayerful. Be active and be patient. Activity without prayer will lead you to great bondage. Prayer without watchfulness will be assailed by temptations too strong to overcome. Work without patience will lead to frustration and pessimism. Prayer when not backed up by corresponding work to express itself runs the risk of evaporating into unrealistic sentimentalism. Be watchful. Pray and diligently labour to make the prayer come true. Work and patiently wait upon the will of God. For: to work is your duty and is the part that you have to play. The bringing about the result of work you should leave in the hands of God.

In the meanwhile chill winter has closed upon these northern parts. Yet despite the cold there are always some earnest souls braving the winter

and seeking the peace and spiritual inspiration of this abode of Gurudev Sivananda at the bank of the Ganga. The special Forest Satsanga at the Dattatreya Temple on the 20th December on holy Dattatreya Jayanti day was reminiscent of the holy function during Sri Gurudev’s time. The Forest resounded with the Kirtan of the Lord’s Name and the devotees partook of the Prasad squatting under the trees upon the bare earth in the jungle. Holy Christmas was solemn and inspiring and actively assisted by a number of seekers from abroad who happened to be present on that Great Day. The midnight worship of the great Yogi of Nazareth, the divine incarnation Jesus, was celebrated with devotion as well as gaiety and joy. It gave the seekers from foreign lands a touch of homely spirit of their holiest and most important festival. They were made to feel that this too was their home and that they were truly in the midst of their family – their spiritual family. The 24th Pratishtha Anniversary of Lord Sri Viswanath was celebrated at the Sri Viswanath Mandir on the 31st of December. That night the Satsanga went beyond midnight and concluded with the solemn midnight meditation in the last portion of the departing year and carried into the first quarter of the New Year. All the devotees arising from the meditation took

leave of one another after exchanging New Year Greetings.

Beloved friends, a New Year lies before you. Look forward and move into this period ahead with faith and hope and in charity. The past has passed. Forgive and forget your erring friends or offenders. Enter into a new life of divine compassion, goodness and magnanimity. Now, this day, take God into your home and make Him a member of your family. Learn to live with God, in God, for God. Establish Him in your heart. Express Him through your life. Let your home radiate with the living presence of the divine. May the entire family grow into a divine household. Strive to achieve this and this will be your greatest contribution to contemporary society as well as to Bharatavarsha, your Mother Country. This would constitute the really wise, sane and rational process of bringing about a true Welfare State.

The goodness of man is the key to the happiness of mankind. Individual character and conduct is the root of social and national welfare. Character is the greatest wealth. Sadachara is divine. In character lies the secret of successful planning and of enduring attainments. Our culture stands for character. I commend to you the UNIVERSAL PRAYER by Sri Gurudev as the unfailing formula for happiness, prosperity and

success. Peace and progress will result from this great prayer. The sublime essence of all the scriptures and the teachings of all the saints and men of wisdom are contained in this wonderful prayer. Make it your life-breath. Beloved Friend, try earnestly to live this prayer. During this year propagate this prayer far and wide. It is of priceless worth. Each line of it is more worth than its weight in gold! I request all of you to read this, to try to get the prayer printed (in any size, big or small, and on any paper, fine or coarse) and distribute it widely and freely. Print it on one side only so that people can paste it on a board or frame it. Translate it into your vernacular language. Get it published in monthly or weekly magazines or daily papers. Introduce it in schools, clubs and groups. It is universal. It belongs to the whole world. It is above religion. Let this world-saving prayer reach every home. Make this prayer circulate throughout the universe. Teach it to your children. Recite it daily at dawn and eventide. **MAKE THIS YEAR A PRAYER YEAR!** Great good will come from it. It will bless your home. It will take you towards divine perfection. It shows the path of Divine Life. May God bless you. May this New Year be a glorious year for you. You have my best wishes for long life, health, happiness, prosperity and success. I send you my love, regards and salutations in the name of God

and in the name of Gurudev Sri Swami Sivananda, the light of our life. You are divine. Therefore live divinely. Abide in God and walk in Light.

Yours in Sri Gurudev,

Swami Sivananda
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2. THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER

Worshipful homage to the eternal, transcendental Reality, the Parabrahman of the Upanishads, That which always was, is and ever shall be, unchanging and all-pervading, immanent in all things, beginningless and endless. To That our worshipful homage. May divine grace from that source of infinite grace be upon us all.

Loving adorations to revered and beloved Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji in whose spiritual presence we are all gathered here. And who taught us how to pray, even as nearly 2000 years ago the divine Master Jesus taught His followers how to pray.

He lifted up His eyes towards Heaven and said, "Our Father", thereby declaring the nearness of that great Reality and us human beings on earth. The closest relationship in the human world is that of the child to the parents. There cannot be anything more protecting, more caring and more loving than the parents' relationship with their offspring, looking after it, protecting it unceasingly, supplying it with every need and responding to every call. Day and night the mother takes care of the child. If need be, she

foregoes her sleep and walks about carrying the child in her arms. With a strange sixth sense which only the mother can invoke from within her, she seems to understand what the crying indicates, what the child needs, whether it is hungry or feeling some discomfort or pain somewhere. It cannot express it, but the mother intuitively is able to grasp.

Even so is the caring of the Supreme Being towards humanity. And it also brings out how close our relationship is. If we are God’s offspring, Godliness is our spontaneous, effortless real nature. That which is God is within us. That which is of God is really our true being. Forgetfulness of this knowledge, alienation from this true relationship has led us to our present state. There is no need for me to comment upon it. You know what the state of humanity in the world of today is, at the close of the last year of the last decade of the 20th century. You know. You keep in touch with current affairs, so you know it.

How to reverse this situation, how to put an end to this alienation, how to restore that lost closeness to God and grow in God-nature, God-awareness? How to do all this is the message of Holy Master Gurudev to modern humanity, to each and every one of us here. And though he has put this message in his almost 300 books and

many gramophone records, though he has done all this, he has also presented the message in a concise, compact form. He composed His Universal Prayer. It contains everything.

The words of the opening line are very significant, most significant. They immediately tell us what God is for us and what we are to God. God is adorable. We should adore Him, worship Him, love and revere Him. And God is full of love for us and ever forgiving, ever forgiving, full of mercy. 'Adorable Lord of mercy and love!' That is important to us.

We are His children, therefore He loves us. We are beloved of Him. And also He is ever merciful towards us. Because of our closeness, our relation to Him as His children, He is willing to forgive and forget, ever keeps on giving us a fresh chance.

And then what follows is most significant, most important; what follows this first line is a pattern of living to take us near to God. To take us near to God, Gurudev says what we should do, what we should not do, how we should live; so that we begin to move and keep moving towards Him right up until the ultimate moment when we realise Him, enter into Him and we abide in Him forever and ever. The entire method is spelt-out from the second line of the prayer until the last line of the prayer. If you look at it in this way, you

will see that it may well contain the essence of all the 300 books, and by following it you can attain God. That is its purpose. The Universal Prayer is Holy Master Swami Sivanandaji’s message to mankind in a nutshell. May it be your guide, the light of your life and the light on the path to God.

Adorable Lord of mercy and love! Let us abide in Thee for ever and ever!

May the grace of the Supreme and the benedictions of Holy Master enable us to attain this supreme consummation in this very life and make us forever blessed. God bless you all.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

3. 'THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER'— GURUDEV'S GIFT TO YOU

Life is the journey to the immortal. Life is itself a progress towards the perennial experience. Life is itself a way as well as the movement that takes you every day to the fulfilment that is your birthright. This is the message from him whom we worship and call Gurudev. He stood for this path. He has embodied and put this entire path in his wonderful "Universal Prayer". That prayer contains the essence of holy, lofty life, the spiritual life, the divine life, the life unto perfection, the life of awakening and enfoldment, the life of rejecting the undivine and going unto the Divine and ultimately abiding for ever in the Divine. Upon this wonderful day let all of you,—fortunate and blessed ones who have either come into direct contact with him, who have seen him face to face or those into whose life he has appeared as light through his radiant teachings, as the wakening touch of his spiritual message,—reflect and contemplate upon this universal prayer. May this prayer become to you a gospel in a nutshell! May this prayer be to you in days that are ahead your constant companion and guide, the yardstick to measure up yourself in all your thoughts and feelings that you harbour in

your heart, and the words and deeds that you express and manifest in an active way in your life!! May this be the measuring rod, the yardstick, the touchstone, that standard and criterion by which you make an impartial estimate of yourself!!! Accept this today from Satgurudev as the touchstone upon which to test your life and activities.

Contemplate upon this prayer and make it your constant companion. In this prayer you have the spirit of Gurudev Sivananda. In this prayer you have the essence of divine life. In this prayer you have Yoga and Vedanta. In this prayer verily you have both his benedictions as well as his message to you. The essence of all Dharma is to recognise the immanence or the presence of the divine in all beings. This fact, this recognition, this awareness, this inner knowledge that the divine indwells in all beings, will guide your footsteps along the path of righteousness, guide your foot-steps along the path of holy, it will even take you along the shining radiant path that invests you with the divine virtues and transforms your nature into godliness and brings down to you God’s grace.

Every aspect of Yoga or Vedanta—the beginning, the middle and the end, the foundation, progress and the culmination—is in

that wonderful little prayer. That Universal Prayer gives, in Gurudev’s inimitable way, the gospel and doctrine of Divine Life. You are all assembled here to offer your prayers to him and to express your eternal gratitude to this Great Soul, the Guru of universal life, Guru of simple living, Guru of kindness and compassion, Guru intent upon your welfare, fulfilling the great description of the Shrimad Bhagavad Gita *Sarvabhutahite ratah*—(one intent upon the welfare of all beings). While you worship him, renew your spiritual relationship with him and accept from him this prayer, the Universal Prayer!



THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER

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

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

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