

Sadhana is the technique of rooting ourselves completely in God and requesting God to be completely on our side.

If you see a nice picture, you are reminded of its artist; if you hear a very melodious Bhajan, you become aware of its singer. Should God be made the sole exception that when you are looking at His handiwork—this world, you forget Him?

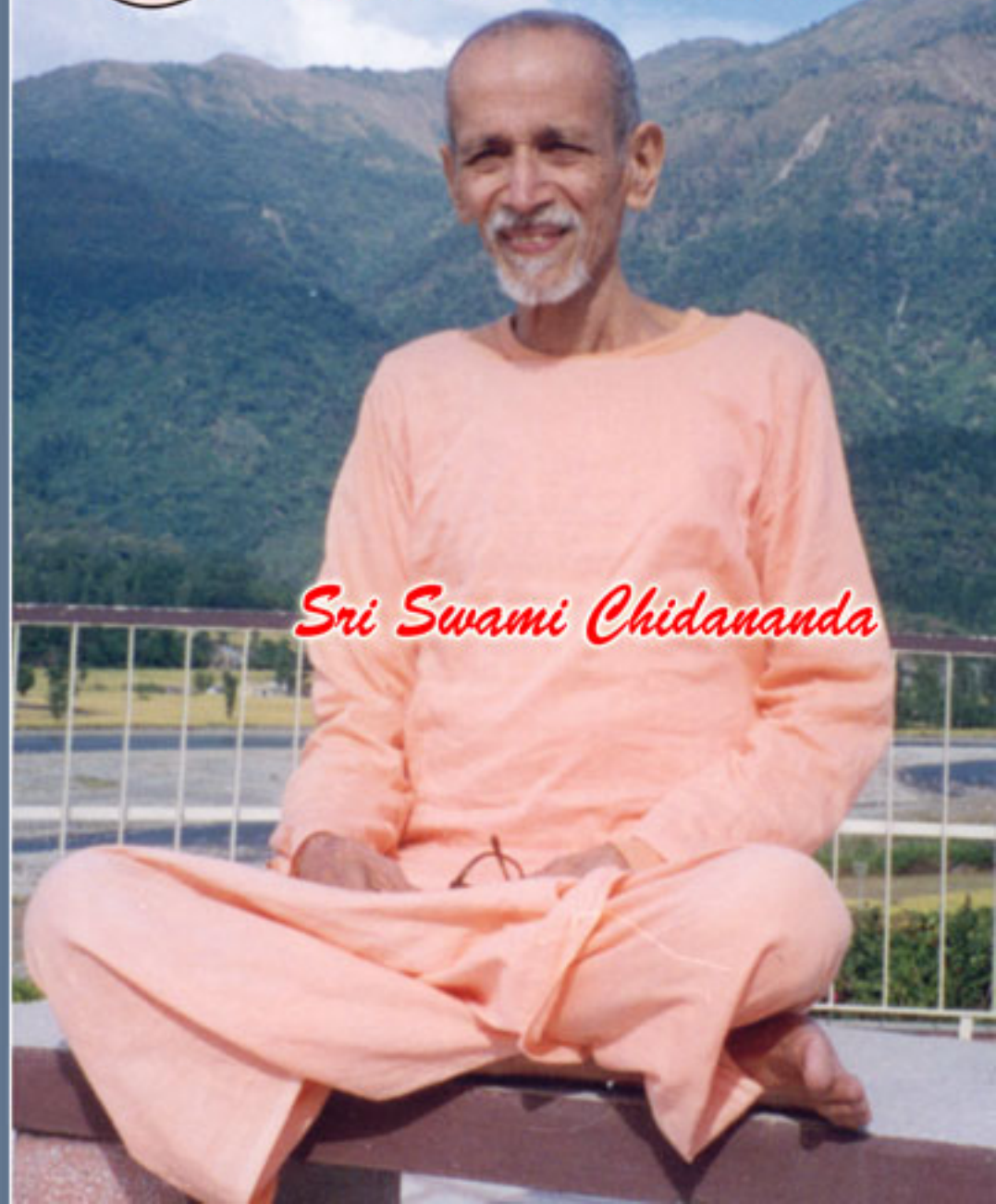
Swami Chidananda
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A DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY PUBLICATION



FIRST KNOW WHAT YOU SEEK

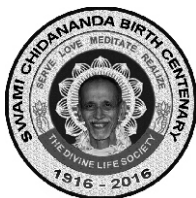


Sri Swami Chidananda

**FIRST KNOW
WHAT YOU SEEK**

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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We are immensely happy to bring out some of his hitherto unpublished lectures in a booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary. The present booklet **'FIRST KNOW WHAT YOU SEEK'** is a compilation of his six inspiring talks, given at the sacred Samadhi Mandir during the year 1993 and 1994.

We express our heartfelt gratitude towards 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

CONTENTS

1. First Know What You Seek 8
2. Move in the Right Direction 13
3. Be Wakeful and Vigilant 17
4. What Does Each Dawn Mean to You? . . 25
5. The Significance of the
Pratah Smarami Stotras 32
6. Life is Sadhana 37

1

FIRST KNOW WHAT YOU SEEK¹

Worshipful homage to Thee, O Supreme eternal Divine Reality, Thou who art beginning-less, endless, infinite and boundless, Thou who art the Ishwara-tattva permeating and indwelling all existence. Thou art tinier than an atom, Thou art mightier and greater than the universe. Countless millions and billions of universes exist in your vast infinitude even as grains of sand exist upon the shores of the ocean stretching as far as the eye can reach. Like tiny grains of sand exist in the vastness of the seashore, millions of universes exist in Your infinitude. Thou who art the indweller of the atom and the electron and the enveloper and the container of millions of universes, worshipful adorations to Thee! At this moment sincere seeking souls are gathered together in the spiritual presence of one whom you sent to remind mankind that it is not only the seen that is real; but the great Reality is the unseen. The seen is limited in time and in space. The unseen is

1 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 18/10/94

timeless and is beyond the limits of conceived space. You sent this great voice of Thine, this great awakener, to make the human society aware that what is seen is only a passing appearance, but that which is unseen is the Eternal Reality. May your divine grace enable all sincere seeking souls to pursue the quest after this hidden Reality. May you inspire them to pursue the quest for this unseen Reality which shines in the midst of the ever-changing and vanishing appearance of names and forms. May their life have its lofty and sublime aim to behold that which eyes cannot see, to experience that which is not the object of senses. '*Yato vacho nivartante aprapya manasa saha*' (Whence all speech turn back with the mind, not reaching It). The ultimate goal of human existence is to attain and experience that which human language cannot define, where speech and mind and thought process fall back, unable to comprehend it, unable to reach it. May that Reality reveal Itself to all those who sincerely seek It.

That is within the possibility of experience in that dimension of our inner reality which is one with it; the spirit can enter into and experience the spirit. Divinity can recognize and realise divinity. And knowing that man is essentially Divine Spirit, our ancients declared: "That is to be known

through your own innermost reality. To that end may life be gloriously utilised.”

Loving adorations to you O worshipful and beloved Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji. All humanity is under a deep debt of gratitude, for you have brought about a global awakening to the lofty divine mission of every individual human being. You have awakened mankind to its divine destiny. “You are not here to live for a little while and be snuffed out of existence by death. You are deathless. You have come here to make use of this earth existence and to realise that divine destiny and to know:

*Ahameva avyayo anantah
shuddhaviijnanavigraha,
Sukham duhkham na janami
katham kasyapi vartate.*

(I am That, the Infinite Being, Avyaya Ananta, of the nature of purest wisdom consciousness *shuddhaviijnanavigraha*, I have neither pleasure nor pain, neither joy nor grief, for I transcend both.) I shine in my own eternal blissful, self-awareness. These, all the pairs of opposites have no access to my transcendence. They cease to exist. I transcend them, I am above them. So neither joy nor grief can touch me. I am ever centred in the non-dual experience of absolute bliss.

Anandam brahmeti vyajanat. Aham brahmasmi. Sarvam khalvidam brahma. Ekamevadvitiyam brahma. Put these together and work out its conclusion, see what it results in. This human status is given to awaken mankind to this great attainment.

Yesterday in the night Satsanga they have read the 16th chapter of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita. It tells, one who wishes to know this birthright of yours, this great experience of an untrammelled state of consciousness, free yourself from every limiting factor, become unlimited and attain that state of Moksha Samrajya. The 16th chapter gives a hint; all that is positive, all that is creative, all that is beneficial and auspicious will help you attain this state of eternal freedom. *Daivi sampad vimokshaya* (Divine nature is conducive to liberation.)

Gurudev wrote a book expounding this concept, this vision. 'How to Cultivate Virtues and Eradicate Vices'. It is nothing but an extension, an elaboration of the 16th chapter of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita.

In a recent issue of the Divine Life, as filler in one of the pages, Gurudev says, "First know what you seek and then seek it. Unless you know clearly what you are seeking, your seeking will be a wandering through various experiments of what you think to be spiritual life." Then alone your

quest will be effective. It will move in a right direction. Thus says Gurudev, “O seeker, first know clearly what you seek. Then your quest will be very purposeful and clear”. That all this is relevant, that all this is of value and significance, is very clearly stated by the Teacher who said, “Ask and it shall be given. Knock and it shall be opened unto you. Seek and you shall find.”

What more categorical assurance would any sincere seeking soul require to know, to be absolutely certain that his quest is not in vain? It is within the bounds of possibility of each and every sincere seeker for the simple reason that Divinity is your birth-right. You are already what you are seeking, and this human status has been given in order that you may seek and find and forever crown yourself with the highest blessedness. That is your purpose on earth. This is God’s plan for man and to this end one should live.

Thus may God grace each one of you that you may live for this lofty end. May God bless you with success in this quest. May Gurudev, beloved and worshipful Holy Master Swami Sivanandaji, make it possible through his ever-present help, his ever-present guiding light upon your path. May God speed you upon this glorious journey. And the prayers of this servant shall ever be with you. So be it.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

2

MOVE IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION²

Worshipful homage unto the eternal, beginning-less and endless, Cosmic Spirit Divine, the one source of all existence. May divine grace flow from that Divine Origin upon all beings. Loving adorations to revered and beloved Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji in whose presence you have all gathered. May his benedictions, may his glance of grace be upon all in general and be upon you in particular who are participating in this early morning spiritual fellowship in his Presence.

Bhagawan is Anugraha Swarupa; the Sadguru is Kripa Swarupa. The well does not withhold its waters to anyone. But then, we have to take the trouble of lowering a vessel tied to a rope and drawing it up again when it has been filled. They call this right exertion, they call this Purushartha. The flowing water tap does not withdraw or withhold its water from anyone. But then, one has to bend low, cup one's hand in order to drink. If you are unbending, your thirst will

.....
2 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 30/12/94

remain unquenched. The fire does not withhold its comforting and life-giving warmth from anyone. But we have to draw near to it and remain near. It is also Purushartha, right exertion in the right direction.

The ancient Masters exhorted the seeker, “Arise, awake and attain illumination”. They exhorted the seeker to put forth right exertion, Purushartha. Therefore, the divine teacher of the Middle East said, “Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” It shall be opened, but on condition that you knock. Seek, and you shall find. Ask, and you will get. This is again an indication that we have to put forth right effort. Right effort implies exercising the power which God has given us, the power to think, to feel, to reason, the power to discriminate, to enter into a proper enquiry, the power to control the sense organs and to govern ourselves, the power to restrain the senses, restrain the mind, and the power to direct them in finite directions, self-chosen direction.

All these imply the exercise of a certain Shakti and exercising it in the right direction. The right direction is always positive, creative, progressive and constructive. The wrong direction is destructive, not creative, not upward, not Godward, not towards Divinity or spirituality, but in the opposite direction. In various ways the great wisdom teachings try to bring home to us the need

to exercise caution and direct our being in the right direction. The Srimad Bhagavad Gita hints at this process in the 16th chapter. The Kathopanishad tells us about the one that is good and the other which is merely pleasant. Here are two paths, the one that leads to your own highest welfare, Shreya Marga, and there is the one that will entrap you, entangle you, enslave you, the Preya Marga, which is merely pleasant and attracts you. Shreya Marg, Preya Marg.

Thus the wisdom of the ages, of all faiths and all the great religious traditions, they have this direction—think well, choose and move in that direction which leads to your own highest good. But keep moving. Always be positive, always be spiritual, always see that Divinity manifests through your thoughts, feelings, words and actions, through your sentiments and your motivations. To do this, educate yourself. To do this, take up a firm stand, ask direction from God within, exercise your will-power, think, reason, be wise, discriminate. This is the way to attain progress towards the Goal Supreme. Engage your entire being in a constructive, creative manner. Keep the goal before your vision, and make your life day after day a firm, committed movement towards that great consummation. Put forth right effort and let it take you in the right direction. And to this end ever be awake and alert. Enquire,

discriminate between that which takes you in the right direction and that which takes you away from the goal in the wrong direction.

This is continuous Sadhana in order to make a steady process of moving towards your divine destiny. Be awake to this fact and arise in response and move in the right direction from darkness towards Light, from the unrealities towards Reality. Thus should be your interior. See that it is a natural movement towards your highest good, towards your ultimate divine destiny, to your spiritual goal of life. This is wisdom. Therefore, may God grant that wisdom prevails in a pervasive manner in your entire life at all times and may Gurudev's blessing grant you success in this life propelled by awareness and wakefulness, propelled by wisdom and discrimination. God bless you all.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

3

BE WAKEFUL AND VIGILANT!³

Worshipful homage to the great eternal Reality, that transcendental pristine, universal consciousness whom you call God or That which is beyond this ever-changing universal appearance of names and forms Not this, but That is the Reality. 'Om Tat Sat' thus the ancient ones declared, having known the Eternal. To that all-pervading Supreme Divine we bow in reverential homage at this moment when you have gathered in spiritual fellowship in the spiritual presence of worshipful and beloved Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj.

Loving adorations to him who is the light of our life, who has shown us the path that leads to supreme blessedness. May his hand of benedictions always be upon you. May divine grace accompany you all the days of your life.

Radiant Atman! Beloved blessed children of Light, Sadhaks, Jijnasus and Mumukshus, seekers after the Reality, devotees of God, Bhagavad-bhaktas, Dharma-premis, Satsangis!

³ Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 5/11/94

At this morning hour, what is your state? What is your condition, outer and inner? For a while, total non-awareness had overtaken you. You were in a state, where the world did not exist for you, neither, Sivananda Ashram, nor your physical dwelling place which you call the body. All these were non-existent. There was no time, there was no space, there was no name, there was no yourself. You were not aware of anything. From that state of non-awareness, you emerge into a state of awareness. In that state of awareness you are present here in this moment. You are aware of other spiritual seekers. You are aware of a spiritual presence, you are aware of Light, and more than anything else you are aware of yourself. "I am here in the presence of divine Master. I am here in this hall. I am here in the company of fellow seekers." And each and every one of you was a little while back in a state of non-awareness, and now you are in a state of awareness. There is within you consciousness, awareness and they say, "You were asleep and now you are awake". But then, the power that kept you unaware, oblivious even of your own self, that is inherent within you unless you shake it off thoroughly by taking a bath or a dip in the Ganga or do some Pranayama, some Surya Namaskara; it still persists and can overpower you. That state tries to overcome you unless you are watchful to

ward it off, unless you are consciously making an effort to ward it off. You sit straight, then you bend without being aware, then you nod, then you go into a state of semi-awareness, which is also semi non-awareness.

Therefore you have not only to be awake, you have also to be alert; you are vigilant, watchful, that you may not go back into a state of slumber, even while sitting in this morning fellowship of the Spirit. So, there is a saying that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. Anything worthwhile does not come unless you are prepared to pay a price, forego something in return to something else. If you want to be free from slumber, from ignorance, from bondage of darkness, you have to be alert, you have to be vigilant. Wakefulness must characterise your mind, your intellect, your moral consciousness, your ethical sense and your relationship with your senses. Unless you are wakeful and watchful, senses become uncontrolled. You have to keep them under control by being alert and vigilant. This is the price of liberty. Know that this non-awareness is part and parcel of your nature, because Prakriti is Trigunatmika.

There is Sattva Guna in Prakriti, there is also Rajo Guna and Tamo Guna. Our ancients said, *Uttishthata jagrata prapya varan nibhodhata* (Arise, awake, having reached the wise, be enlightened!)

Attain illumination by ever being awake and alert, vigilant and active. No activity is possible in a state of slumber. Activity becomes possible only in a state of wakefulness. This is indicated in every scripture. Shankaracharya says in Vairagya Dindima, *Kamah krodhascha lobhascha dehe tishthanti taskarah, Jnanaratnapaharaya tasmata jagrata, jagrata* (Lust, anger and greed are the dacoits residing within the body to plunder the pearl of wisdom; therefore, awake, awake!)

O individual soul, you can guard yourself from thieves and dacoits and robbers that come from outside and try to come inside, but if they are already within your own house you cannot do anything but be vigilant.

In many hotels and lodging houses there are instructions in the room, "Take care of your own valuables. Do not leave your valuables unprotected. The Hotel management is not responsible for loss of your valuables." In a big hotel there may be 500 employees. They do not know who is what. Their only concern is that the person is active and dutiful and can do a job well; they do not make any deep study of the personality. And also they say, "An open door tempts even a saint." So one may succumb to a temptation and take away something valuable because it attracts. Therefore, they say, "We have to employ many people, but we cannot guarantee

the right conduct of each and every person. Therefore you better be careful. Take care of your valuables. We will not be responsible.”

Perhaps God says the same thing to us. I have endowed you with many faculties. You better be on the lookout. Be aware, be alert, be watchful. Within you there is hidden God, but within you also is the opposite. Light and darkness both exist within us. The potential for positive and negative exist within us. Both Kauravas and Pandavas of the Mahabharata field dwell within us. Shubha, Ashubha are within you, because you have got Tamo Guna as well as Sattva Guna. Therefore all scriptures, all saints say, “O man, be watchful!”

If you are slumbering and you are not alert and vigilant, then you lose this wonderful God-given opportunity of attaining highest blessedness. God is awake within you and you are slumbering, O man. Is this the way to show your devotion to God? Wake up! Even as God is awake within you, you too must be alert and awake.

The moment you have attained the state of a human being, the day has dawned for you. You are in a special state of awareness as no other species of living beings. You are consciously, intelligently aware of your existence. You are aware of so many factors around you and their meaning and your relationship to them. Animals are aware only of food, drink, what is safe for

them, what is unsafe for them; the instinct of survival alone prompts the action pattern of lower living beings. To think, to reason, to discriminate, to know the difference to select or to reject and consciously making an effort in a specific self-chosen direction—all these are the uniqueness of the human individual.

They say, “Man is a rational animal”. Other parts of our being, the biological, physical, sensuous part are part of the animal world. We have hunger, thirst, sleep, fatigue, sense urges. We share them with all animals. But then, the rational part is that which makes you a human being. The moment you attain the status, you are already awake, you are no longer in a state of slumber.

Human status means wakefulness. Therefore keep the wakefulness intact and be alert and vigilant, be active. *Uttishthata jagrata prapya varan nibhodatha*. That is the eternal message. Responding to this call and being alert, vigilant and moving towards a goal is the essence of the human status. It is the essence of life. Buddha Bhagawan says, “Who attains liberation, the great peace? That being who is awake among the slumbering, who is alert and watchful among the careless, who is active among the lethargic, to such a one indeed is Nirvana, liberation and to no other”. This is the exercise of the human status in

the right-manner. And Upanishads call you to do so.

Arjuna was downhearted, sunk in deep despair. Krishna says, “Get up, fulfill your great duty of overcoming unrighteousness and establishing righteousness within your own self, the kingdom of your heart”. This call to alertness, vigilance and active effort to attain the goal is the message of all scriptures to mankind on earth. It is the message of all saints, sages, and mystics through generations in this world of men upon planet earth. Those who respond to this call and live their life with alertness, vigilance and actively engage in pursuing this great quest of moving towards the Goal, they become liberated, they are the fortunate. Those who do not do so, even having attained the great good fortune but fail to make use of it, they lose and bemoan. You have to decide to which category you belong. That becomes your destiny. God has given to you the golden keys to your future. It is for you to turn it either in the right direction or in the wrong direction. If the key is turned in one direction it locks you and makes you a prisoner. If the key is turned in the correct direction, it opens the door and lets you into the daylight. You become free. What you will do with it will decide your future, and to make the right choice is the essence of

wisdom in human life. *Yathechchhasi tatha kuru*
(act as you wish -B.G. 18/63)

God bless us all to take the right decision,
move in the right direction and turn this golden
key of life in the right way and thus become
claimants of our divine destiny. God bless you all.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

4

WHAT DOES EACH DAWN MEAN TO YOU?⁴

Worshipful homage unto the Spirit Divine! Thou art beginningless and endless, eternal and infinite. Thou art the ever present Reality behind these ever changing and perishable names and forms that go to make up the phenomenal appearance we call this world. We bow to Thee in reverence. May Thy divine grace descend into the lives of those who mornings after morning come together with sincerity in the spiritual presence of their Holy Master, Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. May your grace lift them up from the darkness and slumber of self-forgetfulness and bring them into the radiant light, into the dazzling effulgence of their eternal spiritual nature. May thy grace divine bestow unto them Self-realisation. This is the humble prayer of this servant of yours at this moment.

Loving adorations to the silent source of benedictions and benign Guru-Kripa! May it remove the darkness of ignorance in the hearts of those who are in discipleship at thy feet. *Ajnana*

4 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 12/12/93

timirandhasya jnananjana shalakaya, Chakshur-unmilitam yena tasmai sri gurave namah—Thy benign grace as a Guru removes from their vision any obstructing curtain and grants to them the true vision, spiritual vision to behold. *Samam sarveshu bhuteshu tishthantam paramesvaram*. May this great grace be granted unto all who live in sincere discipleship to thee. This is the humble supplication of thy disciple and servant at this moment on behalf of all sincere seeking souls who tread the path of divine life that you have shown, who seek to fulfil the 20 Important Spiritual Instructions which you have left for the whole world as your legacy. Grant to them the inner spiritual strength to resist temptations, overcome obstacles; grant to them the needed will power to adhere to these important spiritual instructions that you have given to the Sadhaka world as the quintessence of the teachings in the 300 books that you have written.

Radiant Atman! Blessed seekers! Where does God reside? Does He reside in the Murtis? Does God reside in wood or metal alloy or the fine white marble shrines of the North Indian temples, or in shrines of black granite stone of South Indian temples, or in shrines of void, nothingness, of our Parsi brethren? For they have only a blazing altar of fire. So where does God reside? : *Ye yatha mam prapadyante tanstathaiva bhajamyaham* (In

whatever way men approach Me, even so do I go to them) That is a very significant Shloka. As you conceive of Him so the Being is to you. God is to you what you feel in your heart, your Bhava, your attitude, your vision of Him, your feeling for Him.

He is a non-principle. He does not exist in any manner that you know of, in anything of this universe; because everything that you know is only what is perceived through the senses and thought of by your mind.

He is beyond the subtlest of the subtle elements. Earth can be touched, water can be felt, fire can be seen, air can be breathed. Ether you do not know. You only know that there is something in which all things exist. There is something in which you move from here to there. There is something in which concord jet planes flying faster than the speed of light. So there is some element in which all things exist and move and they call it ether. You cannot touch it, you cannot smell it, you cannot feel it, you cannot see it, you cannot hear it. It is the vast silence of the outer space.

The Shloka that you repeat a hundred times says, *Vyomateetam niranjanam* You are that which is beyond space. Vyoma is space, void, emptiness of what you call sky. Because you look up, you call it sky. And the space inside the depths of the earth has some other name. And if you look all around,

you are surrounded by space from all the ten point of the compass. Vyomateetam, God is beyond space. What is He then? Nirguna, Gunateetam—One, non-dual, beyond and devoid of all qualities. Where does then He reside? It is what you feel, your Bhava.

Even so, as you live, what does each day mean to you? As it dawns, you wake up from sleep and stand up and start moving, what does it mean to you? Does it mean the start of a new activity, taking up pending work which you could not finish yesterday? Is it for doing work that God has given you for the day? God has given to man a day and a night—A night to rest and sleep and a day to get up and do what? Is it to continue yesterday's work? Or is it to take a bath, so that you may take breakfast, or is it to go to the toilet, or is it to continue to quarrel and to nurse the grudge that you have been nursing before you went to bed yesterday? Or is it to resume the folly of rushing into temptation and making a fool of yourself, the same folly that has been characterising your yesterday, your day before yesterday, the day before your day before yesterday? And so it will also be your folly today and tomorrow and the day after tomorrow and the day after the day after tomorrow. Or is it to continue the quarrel which you have not finished yesterday? Or is it to think, "One more day has been given to me so that I may

make my ego felt. See what I am, let the world know. I will show them what I am?" Is it to further continue in your folly and heedlessness, or is it to work for the Divine Life Society, for Sivananda Ashram, for Sivananda? If you do not work, Sivananda's work will come to a stop? Is Sivananda sitting in heaven, thinking, "Will they continue my work?" Is he concerned about his work, about the structure of the Ashram?

What exactly does a new dawn and a new awakening mean to you? Does it mean to you another round of eating, drinking and reading newspapers and gossiping and going to Rishikesh? What does it mean to you? Another 12 hours period of day-light where I can indulge in my senses, fulfill my desires, satisfy my sense appetites, my passions? What does each day that dawns mean to you? What do you see in it, how do you feel about it? How do you enter into it? What it means to the person sitting beside you to the right, the person sitting to your left, the person sitting behind you or the person sitting in front of you is not the point. Sivananda is not interested in that, he is interested in telling you what it should mean to you, what it should be for you - And how it should be lived, utilised. He is interested in that. And, therefore, he says, "A day has dawned, a gift of God is now before you. Therefore sit on Padmasana, Siddhasana, Swastikasana and do

Japa, meditate on God”, because you cannot do it once you start getting busy with your work, with your daily duties, with your Karma Yoga”.

Therefore, create for yourself a time when no duty, no Karma Yoga is present, when everyone is slumbering, there is no activity, the day has not begun. Create that time by getting up early. Then no one can ask you, “Why are you meditating, why are you doing Japa?” Because it is your time; you have created it. You have carved it out of your sleep hours. So you are the master of it. So first he is telling you how to create your own time, so that you can live your own life.

What is your own life, if it is not a life of seeking, of Sadhana, devotion, prayer, a life of God-thought and of meditation? Therefore, the great Master, your loving father and mother, your Guru, your God, Swami Sivananda, tells you, “I will tell you how you can make your own time. Get up early. The world has no claim upon this hour. You have created this time out of your own night”. And what does this awakening mean to you? Does it mean a fresh opportunity for Sadhana, of sitting in Asana and directing your mind and heart to God, a fresh opportunity to do Yoga-abhyasa, to do Brahma-vichara, a fresh opportunity to do meditation, Smarana?

If the day means this to you, then you are a seeker, then you are a Sadhaka, a devotee and a

disciple. You will go a long way, and you will become God. If it does not mean this to you, if it means anything else, then there is serious need for waking up and starting to take a second look at your life, probing your inside. That is a very, very serious situation.

He tells you what an awakening should mean to each sincere seeking soul, true Sadhaka. It should mean one more day given to sit in Padmasana, Siddhasana, Swastikasana and do Japa, do meditation, think of God, move towards God, engage in spiritual Sadhana. Each day should mean to you an onward progress, a Godward progress, an ascent into spiritual life. This he has said and we have it before us in his 20 important spiritual instructions, the ladder to illumination and enlightenment, a blueprint for an ascent unto divine perfection and Moksha. We have his precious 20 important spiritual instructions. This is your hope and your sure guarantee that your life will not go waste, your life will not end up in distress and confusion. It is your hope and guarantee that life will merge into light, into supreme peace, joy, fulfilment, exaltation, glory. Now you know. Do something about it!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

5

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRATAH SMARAMI STOTRAS⁵

Worshipful homage to the Eternal Reality, the beginningless and endless Cosmic Spirit Divine! That Being pervades and envelopes within its infinite magnitude countless billions of universes and has been addressed by our ancients as 'Anantakoti Brahmanda Nayaka'. May His divine grace be upon you all and grant you success in your inner life! Loving adorations to worshipful and beloved Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in whose spiritual presence and proximity we have gathered here. That we are gathered together here is a proof of his Guru-kripa working in your individual lives. It is a proof that his hand of benediction is upon you. It prompts you from within to start your day with this hour of silent spiritual fellowship so that you may enter into a day not wrapped up in the covering of Ajnana, Avichara or Aviveka, but with an awakened spiritual awareness, Sakriya Vichara. Even as the physical body emerges from sleep into

5 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 13/7/94

wakefulness of the Jagrata Avastha, even so your psyche should do likewise and keep up with the physical state of awareness and wakefulness. Your Antahkarana, your Sharira, your Koshas also should come into state of being spiritually awakened, Sakriya Viveka and Vichara; For this alone will guard you against the lure and attraction of the passing appearances that make up this world of Prakriti, the world of Maya.

In this world names and forms drag the attention of the Jivatma outside and hold it in a state of bondage. Everything attracts and the Jiva succumbs, the mind and the Indriyas succumb to the attraction of Prakriti outside. The Kathopanishad explains this situation of the Jivatma in the midst of the world appearance. The great Teacher, Yamadharmaraja who has the secret of the state of the Jivatma beyond physical death, clearly tells Nachiketas, the ideal Jijnasu and Mumukshu, that the vast majority of heedless human beings regard this external world as being the sole Reality. Thinking thus, taking the appearance to be real and not being aware of the presence of a greater Reality, they rush headlong into this world of Nama, Rupa, Rasa, Shabda, Sparsha and Gandha and get caught in the net of Maya. They are of little understanding, O Nachiketas, they are childish and puerile in their behaviour. That would not be serious, O

Nachiketas, but due to this childishness they come again and again into my widespread net. Regarding this alone to be real, due to this Avidya and Aviveka, they get caught into my widespread noose and weep and wail and come again and again in endless reincarnations into this Samsara of Janma, Mrityu, Jara, Vyadhi, Duhkha (birth, death, old age, illness and suffering).

Therefore, for the one who is awake, alert and vigilant, who does not slumber, it is not enough if body awakes into Jagrata-avastha, it is indeed necessary that the Antahkarana also must awake day after day as long as there is breath in the body. You must wake up to the Truth each dawn, and this is being achieved by your spiritual fellowship and proximity to this centre of knowledge, this centre of '*Uttishthata jagrata prapya varan nibodhata*'.

Come, come be a Yogi! Life is short, time is fleeting. The goal of life is God Realisation. Be up and doing upon the path of Yoga, and crown yourself with eternal blessedness. That is the admonition, the central teaching, the great call to divine living by Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. And you fortunate souls respond to this call and gather together here each morning, not only in a state of physical wakefulness, but also in a state of spiritual wakefulness.

*Pratah smarami hridi samsphurad atma tattvam,
 Satchit sukham paramahamsa gatim turiyam,
 Yat svapna jagara sushuptamavaiti nityam,
 Tad brahma nishkalamaham na cha bhuta
 sanghah.*

I am the witness of the three states, the ever aware Sakshi-Chaitanya-Svarupa-Atma-Tattva, behind the three states Jagrati (waking), Swapna (dream) and Sushupti (deep sleep). Thus you waken yourself up to the Pratahsmarami Stotra day after day. In this state of wakefulness you commence your silent meditation at 5:15. The three Pratahsmarami Stotras bring to you an inkling of your inner state, and in this state of awakened spiritual awareness you go into meditation.

There is a Nachiketas in each one of you, and these great verses are like the ever present Upadesha of the great World Teacher. You are that Being who knows every day, three Shlokas—the three states, waking, dreaming and deep sleep. Every day you know the three states, you are neither waking, nor dreaming, nor sleeping, you are the *nitya-buddha nitya-mukta atma-tattva, nitya-shuddha nitya-buddha nitya mukta atma-tattva*. It is an indication of how our ancients wanted us to be—not only in a state of physical Jagrati, but inwardly also in a state of spiritual Jagrati—For that is your birth-right, and that is the great call to lead the divine life.

Live with divine awareness and be effective and successful in bringing a divine quality to prevail and pervade your daily thoughts, words and actions day after day, to the very end of your life. This is the only true life. We are more dead than living if we go through each day in a state of inner slumber. The slumber of Avidya is spiritual death. And the great call of the Upanishad is Jagrata. May we respond to this call and crown ourselves with the supreme blessedness of Kaivalya-moksha-samrajya, not in some distant future but in this very life, through this very body. That is the prayer of this servant at the feet of the Supreme Reality as well as at the feet of beloved and worshipful Holy Master on behalf of each and every one of you. May this prayer also continuously arise in your own hearts and go to the feet of Guru and God, so that your life becomes a journey an ascent unto liberation and everlasting bliss, peace, freedom and the fearless state of Kaivalya-moksha. May God and Guru enable you to succeed in this sincere endeavour. God bless you all.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

6

LIFE IS SADHANA⁶

Worshipful homage unto Thee, Thou eternal all-pervading Reality, Thou who art the Cosmic Spirit Divine, the Universal Soul Supreme, Thou who art the one unchanging Reality behind and beyond these ever-changing names and forms that appear before us as this world, to Thee who art the source, substratum and the centre of all things, who pervadest and indwells all. May Thy grace be upon all who seek Thee with sincerity and make earnest efforts for attaining Thy vision in this rare and golden opportunity called life.

Loving adorations to worshipful and beloved Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in whose spiritual presence we have gathered together at this early morning hour. May his glance of grace and hand of benediction bestow success to all your endeavours to lead a good life, to help yourselves and to help others, to be a true representative of the spiritual ideal that the ancient sages and seers have placed before us.

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6 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 17/8/94

We are here to worship God and do good unto His creation. We are here to fulfill the divine destiny of our life, to attain divine perfection in and through a process of manifesting Divinity in all our thoughts, words and actions day by day. From the moment we wake up in the morning until we retire again into sleep, our great privilege, our great Sadhana is to be what we are; our Sadhana is to know that life is our great Sadhana and to make it a continuous process of manifesting the truth of our real being.

When the person has not clearly seen or clearly understood that life and Sadhana are not only co-existent but they are co-extensive, it is in vain. The whole of life is to be known and recognized as Sadhana. And Sadhana is something that pertains to the whole of your life from morning till night. One who knows this, his Sadhana will be devoid of any conflict, any self-contradiction, and it will move forward smoothly to its fulfillment.

Where this central truth is not recognized, and life is regarded as something and Sadhana as something else, as only constituting some part of life, their life will run into rough weather. It is ever in danger, because some parts of life will be with Sadhana, some parts of life will be devoid of Sadhana. Then all those parts of life that you regard as non-Sadhana, they will become like so

many holes in a pot or vessel. Anything you try to fill into the vessel will drain away; it will become empty. Even as you try to fill it, it will go on getting empty.

Thus it is a very wrong conception that Sadhana is only part of life; this wrong notion will be a great risk, for all that is carefully accumulated during our so-called special time of Sadhana will be draining away. If Sadhana is to be unhampered and progressive, then it should be not only co-existent with, but co-extensive with life. There should be no part of life from waking up till going to sleep devoid of Sadhana or different from Sadhana. This is a central truth of life and has to be understood and applied, and in this light you must make your total life a process of Sadhana.

All life should move towards God. It should be engaged in one process. Any part of life which is not moving in that direction will be a hindrance, will create a dichotomy. That is why Gurudev said: "Live a divine life. Let no part of your life be devoid of Divinity, contrary to Divinity, other than Divinity." This then is to be deeply reflected upon, grasped and applied, so that Sadhana and life should mean to you the same thing. They are co-existent. They are co-extensive. They are identical; life should be lived as Sadhana, and Sadhana should pervade the entire life. This is the

great fact. All places are places of Sadhana, all moments are moments of Sadhana. Everything that is engaged in is part and parcel of spirituality, of Yoga and Sadhana.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

