



DEEPAVALI THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

That Light of lights beyond all darkness shines where the sun does not shine, neither the moon, nor the stars, nor lightening, nor fire. It is that supreme, eternal effulgence that enables these shining bodies to shine.

Swami Chidananda
ॐ



A DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY PUBLICATION



SRI SWAMI CHIDANANDA

**DEEPAVALI,
THE FESTIVAL OF
LIGHTS**

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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We are immensely happy to bring out some of his hitherto unpublished lectures in booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary.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 **'DEEPAVALI, THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS'** is a compilation of his five inspiring

talks at the sacred Samadhi Shrine during the year 1992 and 1994.

We express our heartfelt gratitude towards Shri Mukund Jere, Mrs. Moo Briddell , Mrs. Mary Dean, Minoti Mataji 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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1. DEEPAVALI, THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS¹

Worshipful homage unto the imperishable Cosmic Reality, the universal Spirit Divine that pervades everywhere and indwells all existence from the tiniest atom to mightiest solar system and the galaxies. Worshipful homage to that being who is the light shining within the innermost chambers of your heart—‘*Jyotisham api tad jyotih tamasah paramuchyate, jnanam jneyam jnanagamyam hridi sarvasya vishthitam*’. It is that Light of lights beyond all darkness that shines in the innermost core of your being. May its divine grace enable you to recognise and to know that you live in perpetual light, that if you have eyes to see you will not behold darkness anywhere either within or without. Why this is so, we shall see.

Loving adorations to revered and beloved Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, into whose presence we have come as Sadhaks for spiritual fellowship so that we may be blessed by his glance of grace and we may be blessed by his benedictions here and everywhere

¹ Morning Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir

in the Ashram. The Ashram is the manifestation of his penance and his prayers, of his deep meditation and of his lofty realisation. May his benedictions follow you all the days of your life.

Ages ago in the Vedic age beyond known human history, the illumined seers of the Upanishads lit a lamp in Bharat Varsha, the lamp of Brahma-Jnana, and that has forever banished the darkness in this land of Himalayas and Ganga. They have forever banished the darkness of night in the spiritual sense, and that light of the transcendental wisdom experience has burned through millennia, through countless centuries, ever enhanced by successive sages and seers, yogis and spiritual masters in each century; it has been augmented and ever brightened, so that even now the light burns brightly in India. They thus created a Nitya-Deepavali, an eternal festival of light, banishing the darkness of Avidya and Ajnana in this land. Those who turn towards this light become filled with it. Those who turn their back towards the light, their lives are benighted, they move about in darkness. Thus, it is for us to turn and walk towards the Light and become filled with the Light or to choose the other direction and live in darkness, deprived of the Light which is ever-present. The light shines brightly during the daytime, but for dungeons and burrows, for life beneath the earth, for them it is deep darkness.

Rodents and rats have their life below the surface of the earth. The sun that shines upon the surface of the earth does not mean anything to them. So, in the midst of light they live in darkness.

Even so, the plane we decide to live in decides whether we shall live in the Light that is ever-present or whether we shall live in darkness in spite of ever-present Light. Long ago the sages realised:

*Na tatra suryo bhati na chandratarakam
Nema vidyuto bhati kutoyam agnih
Tameva bhantam anubhati sarvam
Tasya bhasa sarvamidam vibhati*

(That Light of lights beyond all darkness shines where the sun does not shine, neither the moon, nor the stars, nor lightening, nor fire. It is that supreme, eternal effulgence that enables these shining bodies to shine.)

They shine with a light borrowed from that eternal Light of lights beyond all darkness; and our ancient sages of the Upanisadic era ascended, reached and established themselves in that great Light; they became illumined beings, and thus they gave that perpetual light of their experience to posterity. That is the wealth of India, and that luminous spiritual India is the real India, Adhyatma Bharata, Yathartha Bharata.

Outer India may die and pass away. Political India may keep changing every now and then. Economic India may go up and down. Social India may be in a chaos. But spiritual India persists and prevails at the very basis of all things as a silent, unbroken river flowing ever towards Satchidananda. She is a river of light. Eternally India celebrates this festival of Light. It is a permanent spiritual Deepavali for the real India. And those who are willing and dare to step into that innermost hidden depth of the spiritual life of India, they enter into a life filled with light, and they are able to declare, "I live in the light. The light lives in me. I am the Light." That indeed is the divine significance of Deepavali, celebrated not by a brief illumination of fireworks, after which darkness will continue to prevail.

May that light be your real dimension of living, so that you will be yourself a light in the darkness. That was the last message of the great sage Sakhya Muni, the enlightened Buddha, "O ye Bhikkus, be a light unto yourselves and be a lamp unto the feet of others that walk the highway of life." As long as this message keeps ringing down the corridors of centuries, how can there be darkness in Buddha's India? How can there be darkness in Veda Vyasa's India? When the Vedas are there, there is no darkness, there is only Light.

Vedas are the effulgence of wisdom. They are a mass of radiant effulgent wisdom.

Light alone therefore prevails; there is perpetual Deepavali for him who has eyes to see. We live in that never failing eternal light lit by the illumined experience of the ancient sages. There is no darkness in the land where you adore the Guru and where you live in the light of the Gurus, where you adore all these great illumined sages and seers from Narayana downward to the Acharyas and the modern teachers. The very principle or the very concept of a Guru is the one who removes the darkness of Avidya or Ajnana:

*Gukarascha andhakaro hi
Rukaara tannirodhakah
Andhakaar nirodhaya
gururityabhidhiyate;*

(the syllable 'gu' stands for darkness, and the syllable 'ru' stands for the annihilation of darkness.)

If the Guru abides in your heart, if the Guru abides in your life as the dynamic, practical application of his wisdom teaching in thoughts, words and actions, then you live in perpetual light, you cannot live in darkness. So if the Guru lives in you as his divine message, as the following of his teachings in every thought that you think, every word that you speak and every action that

you perform, then you are yourself a Deepavali to illumine the lives of everyone. A sincere disciple is a shining lamp, a radiant light in whom the light of Gurudev's wisdom teachings and his idealism shine forth brightly. He is a messenger of Light.

Long ago the sages lit lamps that are burning forever. Gurudev added his own light, the light of truthfulness, the light of purity in conduct and character, the light of compassion towards all creatures, the light of destroying selfishness within, the light of the lofty spirit of service, the light of devotion and adoration of God. He lit the lamp, he kindled the light of discipline, control of the senses, conquest of the mind, concentration and meditation. He lit the lamp of the light of right enquiry, of spiritual and philosophical discrimination, ethical and moral discrimination and ceaseless analysis and investigation into the Reality that shines within us as our own Self. He lit the lamp of Jnana, of Bhakti, of Dhyana and the noble selfless spirit of service. He lit all these lamps.

If you shine with these lights, then the divine life abides in you. If truth, purity and compassion abides in you, you are a source of eternal light, you are a radiant being. Wherever you go, you banish darkness and you bring light. Such indeed is the great privilege, the supreme good fortune of each and every one whom providence has brought

into contact with this blazing lamp, the light of divine life whom we call Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji.

May you become conscious that you are living in this state of perpetual light of true spiritual India to give to a world that loves to hug darkness, the darkness of material things, of atheism, hedonism, the pursuit of pleasure, the darkness of an unspiritual way of life, of egoism, of arrogance and haughtiness, of clash and conflict, of love and hate. This is what we see when we cast our light around us. But in the midst of this ocean of darkness you be an island of light! Cardinal Newman wrote a poem, 'Lead kindly light'. In the encircling gloom you are an answer to his poem. You are an implementation of Buddha's advice to his Bhikkus. "Oh ye Bhikkus, be a light unto yourself and be a lamp unto the feet of others who tread the highway of life." You have that potential, and Gurudev has made this possible for you, and upon this Deepavali recognise that you are the living lamps of spiritual radiance, of lofty moral and ethical idealism, the living lamps of divine life.

May you realise your true identity, and live your life in this lofty way. Then you will recognise what Deepavali really is and must be. God bless you all to see the truth and live the truth.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

2. LIVE IN THE LIGHT²

Radiant Immortal Atman!

Beloved children of the Divine!

Worshipful homage to that Great Spirit, the eternal Reality! It is the eternal amidst the non-eternal, the imperishable amidst the perishable, the never changing amidst the ever-changing, the beginningless and endless, the source, constant support and the ultimate destination and fulfillment. The ancient Vedic seers realised that eternal Being in their highest flight of spiritual illumination and declared, "That alone is real!" They attained It by dint of great renunciation, great aspiration and constant inner meditation and declared: "I have seen That Supreme Being by knowing Whom the mortal becomes immortal!" To That Being worshipful homage and adorations. May the grace of That Being be upon all of you!

Loving adorations to revered and beloved Holy Master Sivananda Maharaj, whose whole life was dedicated to bring about an awareness of the central fact that there is the immortal amidst the

2 Morning Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir

mortal, the unchanging amidst changing things, the eternal amidst the non-eternal, that there is the imperishable dwelling within the perishable. '*Vinashyatsu avinashyantam*'...... Behold that, O man!

There is a vision that beholds the eternal shining within this non-eternal name and form façade, the seemingly human, which covers and hides the divine indwelling. That quest is here and now, because the seemingly human surrounds you everywhere. Every day, the moment you wake up until you go to sleep again, you have to live and move in this human environment, in this human world. And in such a situation you are to perceive and dwell upon and ultimately experience the eternal One, the divine hidden in the human, the eternal within the non-eternal. Therefore, this great consummation of human existence, this great divine mission is not to be worked out at any other place or any other time, but you have to realise that it has to be worked out in the living present. It is to be worked out where you are and each day of your existence. Therefore, bondage and liberation co- exist and dwell together.

We have to recognise that what we think we do not have is right here. In this passing phenomenal appearance there shines with the splendour of a million suns the eternal, never changing, permanent reality. This was the great

truth Yajnavalkya tried to make his aspiring partner in life, Maitreyi, to understand. "Listen, O Maitreyi! All this is verily that Atman. Everything here constitutes what you think to be the realm beyond which you have to attain." The realm beyond is nowhere else than right here. We dwell in that great Brahman. If we grasp this subtle truth about ourselves, we will understand that it is the central fact of our life. That we have again and again to recollect, constantly to dwell and reflect upon, and by constantly dwelling, reflecting and deeply meditating upon it, we must transform the seemingly passing phenomenal appearance into what it is.

The ore contains the gold. It is the question of knowing this and setting to work upon the crude ore and sifting the gold out of the crude ore, because it is always there. One who discards the ore will lose the gold. That is not wisdom. But to focus upon the gold even while gazing at the ore, that is wisdom. Ignoring the unreality, seeing the reality, dwelling upon it constantly, one begins to know that one dwells in reality. Reality is the only fact. That is the only tremendous fact. God alone is. This is living in the truth; this is living in the light. And this living in the truth here and now and this living in the light always is your birthright. Should you not claim your birthright? That is why you are here, this is the opportunity!

In fact, this is the occasion given to us for claiming and getting what is ours. Thus life becomes glorified as it ought to be. Here is the time, here is the place, here indeed is the proffered opportunity by the Divine to the human. May we realise this and be free.

That was the one great aspiration, the longing, the wish of Holy Master Sivananda for all those who approached him. "Realise this and be free!" Do it, and become forever blessed. God and Guru have already blessed you.

Om Namo Narayana—Om Namo
Narayana—Om Namo Narayana!

3. MOVE TOWARDS THE GREAT GOAL!³

Worshipful homage unto the Supreme Eternal Reality, the source and the origin, the support and the substratum, the goal ultimate and fulfillment of all existence; especially human existence, particularly our existence and specifically your existence. Each one of you is rooted in the Divine. You originate from that great cosmic source of infinite existence, luminous wisdom-consciousness and bliss. Whether you know it or not, you are based and supported in and by that Being. He is your Adhishthana (support). If you have been supremely endowed with many positive Karmas from the past, if you have obtained the grace of the Divine and if you have been fortunate to come within the orbit of the enlightening teachings of a liberated Master, then not only are you supported and sustained by That, but you make your life a conscious, purposeful process of the ascent of your spirit from its present state of limited human consciousness into a glorious state of infinite cosmic consciousness.

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3 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 7/1/92

If you are in a state of awakening, of inner determination and purposefulness—you move towards that great goal of God-realisation. You initiate and engage in this process, you carry it forward to its culminating point of attainment and enter into an experience of that eternal consciousness. In this vast sea of earth-existence many flounder and sink; they never make it across. But there are a few fortunate ones who are called, who are chosen, and they make a choice themselves through this vocation.

Your life is geared to this steady upward ascent unto Divinity. And now, in the presence of Holy Master, you are among the chosen few - one among thousands.

*Manushyanam sahasreshu
kashchidyatati siddhaye. (Gita 7:3)*

(Among thousands of men one perchance strives for perfection.)

Thus Lord Krishna has remarked about you. Among countless individual souls, blessed with a human birth, only a few strive for the attainment of perfection. You can count yourself among the fortunate few who are striving towards this great achievable goal, Sadhya Lakshya. Therefore, this life, being the glorious process of an upward ascent unto Divinity should be lived as such. Each

day should be a movement of your entire being towards that shining goal.

Life is what you make it. Things do not happen just by themselves. They are prepared by divine will, which manifests in the human individual as willpower or Atma Bala, as Sankalpa Shakti and Vichara Shakti. Therefore, the power to determine and resolutely move towards the goal is the working of the divine power inherent in man. That part of one's Sattvic being is more than human—it is God within us. The mind within man is looked upon as the Cosmic Power, the Divine Mother, Shakti. In the Devi Sukta one salutes the great Divine Mother as follows:

*Ya Devi sarva bhuteshu
buddhirupena samsthita
Namastasyai namastasyai
Namastasyai namo namah*

(Thou who art within us as our mind,
We bow unto Thee, we bow unto Thee, we salute
Thee.)

*Mana eva manushyanam karanam
bandhamokshayoh*

(Mind itself is the main cause of bondage and
liberation.)

It is based upon this knowledge, this truth.
Mind is the instrument given to us for attaining
liberation, propelling us towards this great goal.

Thus fortunately endowed, you should rejoice and move towards this goal, determined not to be diverted by anything. You determine, "Under no circumstance shall I lose my direction, I shall not miss my goal. I shall not fritter away my energies in any other pursuit. But gathering all power, all my strength, all my energies, I shall move forward in this one direction in a continuous movement."

In what direction? For what? You should be a compass to human society, like our ancient illumined teachers were a compass to us and showed us the direction. To keep us always in the right direction, they gave us this ancient prayer. Your life should move from passing unrealities towards the eternal Supreme Reality, the Sat Tattva. It should be a determined, resolute, unswerving movement from passing names and forms towards that great Eternal Reality. It should be an ascent from darkness or ignorance, non-discrimination, lack of right enquiry, into the light of divine wisdom. It should be an ascent from darkness unto the light of awareness. It should ever be a purposeful and resolute pushing forward to attain that realm, attaining which one does not return into this wheel of ever-recurring birth and death and rebirth. One attains immortality, going beyond death and rebirth. It should ever be a purposeful pushing forward towards that great goal where one becomes a partaker of everlasting

life, the realm of eternal sunshine beyond all darkness.

That is what the ancestors gave to us as the sure direction that life should take, ever towards the great Reality, ever towards the light of wisdom-consciousness, towards the transcendence of death and limitation - emerging into a state of eternal existence. Let us keep this prayer ever in our heart. Let us live by this prayer. Let this prayer be the sure, unfailing, compass needle within our heart.

Asato ma sadgamaya

Tamaso ma jyotirgamaya

Mrityor ma amritam gamaya

May this be your life. May this be your striving. May this be your direction.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

4. THE COSMIC PROCESS OF DIVINE GRACE⁴

Radiant Atman! May we all pay worshipful homage to the Divine Presence that is immanent in all existence. His presence has prompted us to lift up our thoughts from gross, temporary objects and direct it towards the Divine, at this very moment when we commence a new day. May we pay worshipful homage to that Being, who draws our consciousness towards Itself, day after day. The Lord calls us, the Almighty invites us, the supreme Cosmic Being draws us near to It each dawn out of spontaneous, motiveless grace!

To turn away from the Divine and lose oneself in the intricate maze of the phenomenal world and its processes is very easy. There are a dozen different reasons for it, a dozen different ways. The eyes draw us outside towards sights, shapes, colors, things. The ears draw us outside towards various sounds. All these signify and provide something to the senses—all draw us out to the inherent attraction of the illusory objects in the world. Their power to attract is inexplicable. It is

⁴ Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 8/1/92

the outgoing tendency of the mind to think of things other than the Thing. All these draw our mind, our attention and our sentiments towards this great Mayajal, this widespread net of delusion and death. Everything in this universe draws us outside towards the many appearances, towards the temporary, the evanescent: sights, sounds, taste, smell, touch, memory, imagination, fancies, desires, cravings. All of them turn us away from the One and take us towards the many.

Therefore the individual soul is restless, tossed about here and there, pulled outside. Object after object is demanding attention, so the mind becomes restless or Chanchala, moving from object to object, jumping from one thing to another. It is in this context that at each dawn comes this great grace, drawing us towards Itself, calling us, lifting our mind up towards Itself. What more could one desire? What is grace if not this? The Universal Soul is drawing the individual soul - Paramatma is drawing the Jivatma towards Itself, out of great compassion, great kindness, Ahetuki Kripa (unconditional grace), *Akarana Karuna* (compassion without cause).

Let us recognize this for what it is—this spiritual fellowship, this coming together at dawn, this presence in the hour of prayer and meditation. It is not an event that happens in an Ashram, it is a cosmic process between you and

the source of your being. Know this dimension, the inner mystical cosmic dimension of your presence here each morning. Respond to it in essence and dwell in the Divine. Give thanks in the heart, and centre yourself in the Supreme Self. That day is a glorious day. That day is well begun. Commence your day by centering yourself in the Self, establishing yourself in the Divine, thus giving the right direction.

Equally great is Guru Kripa, the compassionate grace of the Master that has made this possible. Consider the world as it is today. What do you find everywhere? Throughout the world in all countries, east, west, north and south, there is restlessness, conflict, clash, upheavals, struggle, deception, scandals, concerning top government authorities and administrators, world within a world, the criminal world, mafia, trying to enslave people through addictions, bad habits, drugs, narcotics, prostitution, through all manner of destructive, diabolical processes. Everywhere there is chaos, restlessness, confusion, there is conflict, clash and denial of higher values. We see a picture that is distressing, troublesome, and in the midst of this scene that prevails in all countries and seems to be on the increase, even well established governments are helpless to stem this tide of negativity, of non-divinity, which is

enveloping global human society in a pervasive manner.

And yet in the midst of this we find these great centers of light, various groups and various organisations aiming in the right direction, sublime in their idealism. Though small, they are like oases in the desert, like light in the darkness, divinity in the midst of demoniacal perversion. The presence of these centers of grace constitute the hope for humanity.

Let us move towards the twenty first century: these centers of grace are manifestations of the supreme compassion of the Divine, of divine grace and benediction. They constitute positive hope, giving assurance in the turmoil that is present. Out of this turmoil will emerge something auspicious, something blessed and grand. Knowingly or unknowingly you are contributing towards this movement, towards awakening, towards enlightenment, towards a new beginning, towards an era of spirituality and the re-establishment of higher values. In your own way, in your individual life, in holy Sivananda Ashram on the banks of Ganga, you are contributing towards this subtle wave that is gathering force throughout the world. There are groups diligently striving, like Noah and his ark in the deluge, to keep alive and preserve sublime higher values, so that when the time comes, they

will be the basis of a new civilisation; they will be the foundation for the new era. Thus, girdling and enveloping the globe, these spiritual movements and groups are silently working to prepare for the advent of a new century.

The Divine Life movement, Sivananda Ashram and the spiritual fraternity were created by Gurudev 56 years ago in this place. On the 13th of January, the auspicious day of Makara Sankranti, this Ashram of yours and your society will complete 56 years of its existence in this modern world. Your coming together here morning after morning is an act that goes to strengthen these centers of divine force, divine grace and divine light. You may be moving about in Sivananda Ashram, but you are serving humanity, you are serving global mankind. You may think, "I am living an Ashram life within the narrow confines of Muni-ki-Reti, Sivananda Nagar and Sivananda Ashram", but what it constitutes in reality, in its global dimensions, in its impact and implication, its significance is more than you can fathom and know. Time alone can reveal what your life here, based upon divine principles, is to mankind. If you take a vaster view of what this life in this Ashram constitutes, then you will know.

Because of this we have seekers, spiritual aspirants, Jijnasus, Mumukshus, sincere souls

coming to this center of Yoga and Vedanta, of divine living, from all over the world. Like a great magnet it attracts such sincere seeking and aspiring souls. What is here? What is that hidden something? Ponder this. Try to know what you are surrounded by, what you are living in the midst of. Those from a distance are able to feel it; therefore they come. When we are in it, we sometimes are not able to come into full awareness of what this is, for which people come from all over the world to stay and absorb it, benefit, purify, sanctify and elevate themselves; but you are living in it 365 days a year from early dawn till late night.

It is in divine grace that we are living, and in grace our life is unfolding. We are breathing in grace. We are living, moving and having our being in grace. That cannot be evaluated. There is no price—it is invaluable, supreme, indescribable divine grace.

Let us recognize this fact and give praise to God and live in gratitude, accepting and utilising this grace to its very maximum and blessing ourselves by the manner in which we receive this grace and live it. We can raise ourselves by recognising what we are receiving, what we have received and what we are continuously receiving. Great is our good fortune indeed! Let us give thanks to God and recognise the value of what He is bestowing upon us and make our life the fullest

wise utilisation of this great grace. Our grace-filled lives are the result of Holy Master's supreme love, compassion and desire to serve all sincere seeking souls to cross this great ocean of existence and reach the far shore of eternal sunshine.

*Na tatra suryo bhati na chandratarakam
Nema vidyuto bhati kutah ayam agnih
Tameva bhantam anubhati sarvam
Tasya bhasa sarvamidam vibhati*

(The sun does not shine there, neither the moon, nor the stars. There this lightening does not shine, nor this fire. When He shines, everything shines after Him. By His light all this is shining.)

*Yadgatva na nivartante taddham paramam
mama*

(Having gone where they return not; that is My supreme Abode.)

*Tatah padam tat parimargitavyam yasmin gata
na nivartanti bhooyah*

(Then that goal should be sought for, from where none returns.)

That path has to be adhered to. Your whole life should constitute a sincere, nevertheless resolute and determined progress along this shining path of spirituality, of ideal morality, the radiant path of God-seeking. Casting away all

other thoughts, setting aside all lesser considerations, let us be intent upon utilising this grace that is so abundantly being given to us. No other proof is necessary except our present situation. Our immediate moment is proof beyond a shadow of a doubt about the richness of our sublime endowment.

Therefore, let us answer the call of the Upanishads, '*uttishthata jagrata prapya varan nibodhata*', Arise, awake and attain illumination! Attain enlightenment! Crown yourself with supreme blessedness. Become liberated. Become a partaker of that indescribable freedom and fearlessness, that state of Kaivalya Samrajya (transcendental state of absolute independence). May God bless you on this glorious path to perfection!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

5. THE TWO IDEALS OF ALL RELIGIONS⁵

Worshipful homage unto Thee, O Eternal Universal Being! Thou who art the beginning, the middle and the end of all existence. We offer unto Thee our gratitude at this moment when You draw us together into Your all-pervading eternal presence in this sacred Samadhi Hall in the spiritual presence of our beloved and worshipful Holy Master. We bow to Thee and thank Thee for this spiritual fellowship bestowed upon us as Your spontaneous gift of grace this morning. We offer our gratitude and pray to enable us to live in such a manner that this grace would be partaken continuously as long as we exist. We pray for thy grace of drawing near to Thy presence each morning, thus sanctifying the day at its very start and entering into it with Thy benedictions.

Adorable salutations to your spiritual presence, Gurudev, who are the light and guide of our life! We ask you to grant us the inner strength to resolutely choose the way of the Shreya (good), not the mere Preya (pleasant). Each moment

.....
5 Talk given at Sri Samadhi Mandir on 4/3/92

during this earth journey grant us the strength, wisdom and determination to choose Shreya. Your teachings have been to us the rousing call to a higher life. Your personal example has been to us the inspiration to adhere to a noble ideal. Your Ashram and your spiritual presence in it is enabling us to live in the light of your teachings and to emulate the lofty ideal of your own being.

Radiant and fortunate seeking souls! Spiritual aspirants, Sadhaks, Yogis engaged in Yoga-abhyasa according to your chosen path of Yoga, devotees of the Lord, lovers of righteousness and Satsangis assembled in the morning after Maha Sivaratri! We live here in this holy Ashram of Gurudev under the gracious benedictions of Lord Viswanath, the choicest blessings of Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya and the perennial inspiration of the spiritual presence of Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji.

The view of the Supreme is revealed through the scriptures and through His divine messengers, prophets and messiahs like Buddha, Mahavir, Zoroaster, Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, Guru Nanak, Sri Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Ramatirtha, Aurobindo Ghosh, Ramana Maharshi, Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji, Papa Ramdas, Anandamayee Ma, Nityananda Avadhut, Jnanananda. And all these great ones whom He keeps sending from time to time come to us with a

message that reveals the will of God for man. What is the divine will for the pilgrim soul upon earth? Their teachings put before us in simple and unmistakable terms God's plan for each one of us and also demonstrate in a practical way how we should live so that God's will becomes fulfilled. They keep before us a sublime noble ideal for fulfilling God's plan. They tell us what kind of life truly makes us a devotee, a follower of God and His saints. By walking in their footsteps, we fulfill our divine destiny. By living in accordance with their teachings and the teachings of the great scriptures, we become true to our calling. We become true children of the Divine. We become true Amsa's of Paramatma.

What is it that these messengers, divinely sent by God, have to tell us? What do the various scriptures of the world have to teach us? What is the message of the Vedas, Zend-Avesta, Old Testament, the Gospels, Koran, Guru Granth Sahib? If you go to the essence and the heart of the teachings of all the world religions, whether Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Zoroastrian, Judaic, Christian, Islamic or any creed or religion, they reveal the will of God. They present before us only two great ideals. Life means that and nothing else.

By including these ideals life becomes worth living. By excluding these ideals, life becomes worthless, a dreary waste, a meaningless nothing.

Life becomes a parody, a big joke. Life becomes a cipher, a zero, a nothing. It becomes but a pitiable demonstration of idiocy and foolishness. If these two ideals are taken away from it, life is not worth living. It becomes the mere filling of your bellies, sleeping and snoring, loving and hating, fighting and quarreling, strutting about with petty egos. Life becomes a poor show.

What are the two ideals which all religions exist to proclaim, all scriptures exist to keep alive, and all the great ones have shown us? The first great ideal is that as long as we live, we become benefactors to God's creation. And the second great ideal is that with every step and with every breath we take, we must strive our utmost to move towards God, to experience that great Reality. Being content to get enmeshed and deluded by false appearances and getting caught in the net of the temporary and perishable would be the greatest tragedy. It would be a tragedy to live in such darkness, bondage and ignorance, in such an abject state of slavery and delusion. There is no greater tragedy than wasting away God's precious gift by running after shadows and leaving the substance.

Therefore the clarion call of the Upanishads: Arise, Awake, open your eyes. See the truth and realise the Reality! Pursuit of that supreme experience is the only thing that endows life with

meaning and significance. Otherwise it is like an animal life or mere biological processes. Life can be degenerate. Criminals carefully think, using their shrewd intelligence for nefarious activities, ever keeping the police engaged, filling prisons, outraging normal citizens, keeping law courts busy. They make use of modern technology like electronics. But like worms that crawl in the gutter, they operate in a darkened plane of existence. They are drug-traffickers, smugglers, flesh-traders, poachers who destroy wild life in order to fill their pockets with wealth. They are those who kill elephants for their ivory tusks and batter to death innocent animals in the arctic regions in order to get fur for deluded fashionable people. They may be clever, but they are like despicable worms. The life of man is no guarantee of culture, goodness, lofty idealism and a high moral status. There is no such guarantee.

But fired with idealism, answering the call of the scriptures, following the footsteps of these great mystics and saints, you move towards this great ideal. You become a blessing to God's creation. You become a blessing by leading a divine life, full of compassion, kindness, wishing to serve, to do good; wishing to benefit and be useful to God's creation. As long as you live, Paropakara is the highest ideal placed before mankind by all the scriptures and all the

messengers of God. It is the great ideal, Paropakara.

If anything that belongs to you is mistreated or harmed, it arouses your displeasure. If someone damages your house, your car, or your property, you are displeased. If someone harms your family, your children, you are angry. But if someone benefits and does good to you and yours, you are very pleased. You must apply this to cosmic standards. This entire universe, all creatures, all things are God's creation, they belong to Him. He brought them into being. God is the supreme owner of the three worlds. If a soul that has been sent here is good to the handiwork of God, God's grace spontaneously flows towards that being. If you harm His handiwork and become destructive and negative towards His creation, you cut yourself off from divine grace, depriving yourself of divine blessings.

Therefore, the great ideal placed before us is to do all the good we can, living to benefit God's creation in all its aspects. This is the central teaching of all the scriptures. This is the Adesha, the order. Be a friend, the same way as you wish God to be a friend to you, to be gracious to you.

The second great ideal is to move ceaselessly towards God, worship Him, think of Him. Never forget Him. Link your life up to God; give your life to Him. Let your life be a progressive relationship

with God, ending in supreme God-experience. That is the only life worth living.

All other things are mere commentaries. If you know these two ideals, even if you know nothing else, you know all that is worth knowing. If you do not know these two things, even if you know all the scriptures by heart, your knowledge is husk, you know nothing. You are still in deep delusion.

Therefore, radiant Atman, beloved seekers and Sadhakas, keep these two vital ideals enshrined in your heart always. Live as ordained by God. Live to benefit His creation. Without these ideals life becomes a burden and a trap, and we are the losers. God has thrown wide open the gate to supreme idealism, supreme blessedness. If we turn away and imprison ourselves, we cannot blame God or providence, but the blame is squarely at our feet.

Life is short! Time is fleeting! The priceless gift of God is for you to take with both hands and utilise. May God grant you the insight, the understanding and the determination to live this one and only authentic life. May the gracious benedictions of saints like Gurudev enable you to successfully live towards these two sublime ideals and thus crown yourself with blessedness. I pray for God's divine grace to be upon you all. I pray for the choicest blessings of worshipful Gurudev to be

upon you all. May we live for some ideal purpose. Before departing live a life of shining light, and after departing may there be only good spoken about you. Live in the present so that in departing you remain as a light in the hearts of countless beings and one hears only that which is auspicious and good about the life you have lived and left behind. Thus may we live! God bless you all.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

