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Gurudev
Sri Swami Sivananda**

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THE INSCRUTABLE GURUDEV SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA

*Aum sa ha nāv avatu, saha nau bhunaktu, saha vīryam
karavāvahai, tejasvi nav adhītam astu: mā vidviṣāvahai;
aum śāntih, śāntih, śāntih.*

Inasmuch as spiritual life is a process of soul-making and not an academic education, it was necessary for the ancient masters to discipline their students in entirely novel ways. These techniques cannot be easily understood, much less appreciated by modern man with his matter-of-fact outlook of life because he has lost his soul. He lives like a skeleton, like a machine, a dead vehicle that moves without a motivating spirit. Hence, it is practically impossible to get into the spirit of the ancient Upanishadic discipline, for instance, when those few chosen disciples were trained from the very core of their being. That is what is meant by ‘soul-making’. The very root of ourselves has to be purified.

This process of purification is exactly what sadhana is. But these days we are mostly gatherers of information or scientists—curiosity mongers,

experimenters, observers. This unfortunate way of visualising life has landed us in this ostensible state of affairs where we seem to have reduced ourselves to the condition of a dried-up leaf, sustained by watering from external sources and maintained by factors entirely outside us. The materialist experiment which originated as a philosophy sometime in the eighteenth century has practically become the be-all and end-all of existence in modern times. Today materialism is no more just a philosophy; it is we ourselves. We have turned into matter—balls of earth and lifeless automatons.

Hence, it is difficult to understand the teachings of Christ, Mohammad Paigambar, Sri Krishna, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa or Swami Sivananda. We can understand as teachings only that which we gather in conferences, round-table sessions, through exchanges of ideas and a sort of easy manoeuvring of social adjustment, which need not necessarily mean the action of the spirit of man, or the soul of the individual.

We would be startled out of our wits if we hear the various techniques adopted by a Tibetan master called Marpa, who disciplined his would-be great disciple Milarepa. We cannot understand; we may even stoop down in our assumed importance to judge

such great teachers as crude, primitive employers of methods of educational training, unacquainted with either the Montessori system or modern educational psychology, which we consider as refined forms of teaching. But such an assumption of superiority on our part would be totally missing the point because while Christianity is well acquainted with the doctrine of sin—the evil nature into which human beings are automatically born as descendants of Adam and Eve—there is much to say about the hard-boiled, inveterate irreconcilability of human nature in respect of the calls of spiritual discipline, because the extent to which the spirit has entered into involvements in matter in the case of people like us is hard to comprehend. The depth of involvement in material vestures is something breathtaking indeed. So much is the involvement that we may practically say, as I mentioned, that we have become just shapes taken by matter. We are bodies, rather than minds and souls. We seem to be applying our mind as a sort of associate for the calls of the body, and how many can even find time to believe that there is a soul inside, what to speak of the reason and the mental processes?

But saints and sages are not professors or teachers in kindergartens. They are not the promulgators of

empirical arts and sciences—civics, political science, mathematics, and whatnot. A saint or a sage is a perfected soul, and therefore the discipline he underwent to become what he was, and what he is, is also that which he would be eager to impart to the receptive student. The lives of saints are perhaps greater instructors to us than the textbooks on science and the volumes on the usual modern stuff that are served to the brain of the student these days.

The spiritual seeker, called the *sadhaka*, is a soul in the making. He is not like a schoolboy or a student studying in a college or university. He is not after some qualification for getting on in this world of human society either socially, materially or economically. The purpose of spiritual education is not to make one fit for getting on in this world of social arrangements and political manoeuvres. The purpose is altogether different.

To repeat once again, the percentage of our descent into materialistic ways of thinking, which includes the economic way of thinking, is such that when we are told that spiritual education is a Godward movement we may laugh in our sleeves, again with a little contempt for the ancient primitive methods, as we call them. What was the education which earnest seekers received from Sri Ramakrishna

Paramahansa? They were completely thrown out of gear when they came in contact with him. They were no more the same persons; they were turned upside down, as it were, in their whole makeup, and this is what one can expect from great teachers.

The world has passed through various phases of history, and it is difficult to know what phase it is passing through at this moment because for all outward appearances, we do not seem to be placed in such blessed conditions and circumstances where we can come in contact with such great masters. Perhaps the world today cannot contain such great souls, and has freed itself from them practically in a wholesale measure. It would not be far from the truth if we say that today humanity is a large multitude of those inhabitants of Lilliput which Gulliver seems to have visited in his travels—little ant-like creatures with mountain-like egos wanting to use a ladder to climb the foot of Gulliver.

The pygmy-like stature of human understanding today has assumed such atrocious dimensions of self-complacency and forgetfulness of the ultimate values of life that the ancient system of spiritual education has not only been totally lost sight of in the curricula of modern systems of teaching, but these values are not even remembered.

The first disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, the apostles who rallied around Christ, and perhaps the early associates of prophets and Incarnations can alone stand witness to the glory of the spirit that manifests in a multifarious way in different saints and sages. One saint does not necessarily behave in the same way as another. We have the Nayanars and the Alvars, the famous spiritual heroes born in southern India. Our hair would stand on end in rapture of unimaginable ecstasy and consternation if we read the lives of these Nayanars and Alvars, Vaishnava and Saiva saints. They were not merely believers in God; they were not merely devotees worshipping as any religious person worships. It is difficult to say what relationship they maintained with God. Words are not adequate to explain the attitude of these Nayanars and Alvars towards God. We may satisfy ourselves by saying God had entered every cell of their body. Perhaps God was dancing through every particle of their nature. The power that they wielded was godlike, and they would treat God as they would treat anybody. They could summon Him as we would summon a servant. There was no difficulty at all. The inundation of God-being in respect of their own personalities can be considered as an apotheosis of saintly life.

Gauranga Mahaprabhu, Krishna Chaitanya, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa are names we adore, no doubt. We adore Krishna, Rama and Christ, and we adore these masters, saints and sages, but we cannot, in our heart of hearts, enter into what they were, what they thought, what they felt, and how they lived.

A disciple is supposed to be one who not merely obeys the orders of the master but participates in his master's own nature. This is important. The obedience spoken of is not merely a 'yes sir' attitude for everything that the Guru says, though that also is implied; it is a submission of the soul, the very spirit of the disciple, to the magnitude of the spirit of the Guru. It is a 'yes' that is said by the soul of the disciple, not by the tongue. As saints participate in God, disciples participate in the Guru. This is one way we may understand how the disciple has to maintain his relationship with the Guru.

The great master Sivananda demonstrated to the world in his own unostentatious way the life divine which he embodied in himself. In his own peculiar ways he was a replica of the ancient Upanishadic teachers such as Yajnavalkya or Marpa, to whom I made reference. The reason is that he was inscrutable in his behaviour. It was not a logical development

that we could see in his life. We cannot deduce something from something. For our naked vision, his behaviour was unpredictable, and sometimes un-understandable. He was a thorough-going and out-and-out embodiment of the principle that the more we give of ourselves, the more does God enter into us. Giving is, again, to be understood in a purely spiritual way. People used to humorously call him Givananda, not Sivananda. Give.

I remember even today a little incident which shocked me, and yet I endearingly remember it as a mark of his greatness. Those were hard days when there was not much financial strength in the Ashram. Nobody in the Ashram saw the colour of a fruit, or could have one. A few fruits used to be purchased for Sri Gurudev—only for him. He was a fairly aged person, and everyone was eager that he should be taken care of. A few fruits used to be purchased every day and kept in the little kitchen in what is now called Gurudev's Kutir on the bank of the Ganga. One day some visitors came and prostrated themselves before him, and Swamiji wanted to offer them one or two fruits. He asked the cook, "Have you some fruits?"

"No, Swamiji. There are no fruits here," replied the cook, because from where could he give the

fruits except from those kept for Swamiji himself? And they were so few—maybe two or three apples, a few oranges. “There are no fruits, Swamiji.”

“Go and see,” Gurudev said. “There may be some.”

“No,” he said. “There are no fruits.”

The visitors did their namaskar and took leave, and afterwards Swamiji asked the cook, “There are no fruits?”

“No, Swamiji. There are no fruits,” he replied.

Gurudev went straight to the kitchen. It was not a large kitchen, just a corner in the kutir itself, and he found a small basket of fruits there—some apples, some oranges. “There are fruits here. Why did you say there are no fruits? I wanted to give them some fruits.”

“No, Swamiji. These fruits are for Swamiji only.”

“I see.” He took the basket and threw it out to the monkeys. The entire thing was thrown. What would you say for this behaviour? He threw out the entire basket. You would not know whether to cry, beat your breast, or try to understand.

I have always felt that no scripture, not even the Upanishads, can equal the lives of saints. We hear these thrilling, touching, heart-rending and stimulating incidents in the *Maha Bhakta Vijaya*,

for instance, which records the lives of many of the Maharashtrian and Karnatakan saints, little nobodies that they appeared to be. Ekanath, Namdev, Purandaradas and Tukaram were not children of rich zamindars or millionaires. Poverty was their only wealth. They owned nothing but poverty—utter poverty. But they could handle God, and one of them handled God as a servant. It was Namdev who was actually being served by Bhagavan Sri Krishna in the form of a little servant boy called Kandiya Krishna. He was washing his clothes, sweeping his floor and cleaning his vessels. The story goes that when another saint went to Pandharpur and had occasion to pay his obeisance, he was told in a vision that the Lord was in the house of Namdev. He ran to have darshan, wondering how the Lord has left Pandharpur and gone to the house of a poor man. It is said that the boy then vanished. Nobody knew where he was. He did not want to be detected.

You will not be able to understand how the apparently painful hardships which early disciples of great masters underwent were also balming in their nature. Some of us are able to keep in mind some direct information about the most recent of saints, Swami Sivananda. Such a stature is hard to find, and that expandedness which can be seen

only in a Christ—the breadth of heart that gave away everything—could be seen only in such masters. Suddenly Gurudev would get an idea of indoctrinating his students, and announce it. His announcements were always on the spot. There was no previous intimation.

There was one young boy from Calcutta. He was a compounder who worked in the small room that was the dispensary. One day this young man was taken by surprise by Sri Gurudev. In the morning at about 9:00 or earlier, Gurudev suddenly came and locked the door from outside, and went back to his kutir. Nobody knew what the matter was.

That boy had not taken his bath, and had no lunch, but nobody bothered. It was nearing sunset, but there was no sign of Gurudev opening the door. The boy had not eaten anything, and could not understand what was happening to him. He was peeping through the window when I happened to pass that way, and he told me what had happened. What could anybody say? We didn't know anything. We were all startled. He had no water to wash and was miserable, misery incarnate. Still, nobody knew what the matter was. Like that he passed the whole day and night in utter grief, and he was weeping, "What is this?"

The next day Sri Gurudev came with an orange in his hand, and opened the door. "What were you thinking the whole day and night?" he asked. You can imagine what the boy was thinking. "Were you thinking of God throughout the day and night?"

"Anything but that," said the boy.

"Anyway, you are a good boy. You have done a great *tapas*, and here is a present for you." Gurudev gave him the orange, and went away.

None of us were exempt from such types of hard behaviour on his part, not even the best among the workers and associates in the Ashram. I remember that one day, for some reason, he told me to go into seclusion somewhere near Brahmapuri and stay in a cottage in the forest which someone wanted to offer. In those days I was very busy with some kind of work. Gurudev said, "Go and stay there. Do meditation." As I mentioned, it was sudden. These announcements were all on the spot, without any previous notice. He would not tell us, "Tomorrow I would like you to go there." He would tell us, "Go just now."

I said, "There is some work."

Gurudev was annoyed when I said there was work. "Work? Whose work?" he said. "And what for is the work? There is no world." These are the words

that he uttered. “There is no world before you, so where is work?” he said, and went away. He did not speak to me again on that subject. Anyway, that program did not work out, for some other reason.

Gurudev was a tremendous believer in the golden mean or the *via media* of approach. He would condemn a person who was intensely active throughout the day, and condemn a person who was doing nothing. Either way, no one would escape Gurudev’s notice. There were people doing *japa*, rolling beads, who would not participate in any activity. They would read the Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana, the Ramayana, or roll the beads. He would criticise them. “This kind of *bhakti* will not lead you anywhere. Work hard. Work, work!” he would say. He used to call it the Brindavan method of devotion. “This Brindavan method will not work,” he said. “It will not be adequate.” He would mimic their way of rolling the beads and tell them that the concealed movement of their hands under their upper cloth is a greater demonstration of hypocrisy than the open showing of it, and so on. But if a person was very hardworking, he would say, “You are attached to work. This attachment is very bad. Attachment to work is also very bad. Do *japa*, do some study. Take some rest.” But if a person did

japa and did not take part in work, he would say, “You are an idler. You must do karma yoga. Work hard. You must sweat and work.”

That is, the path of God which the saints followed was the recognition of God in the world, which means to say, they blended their experience of the transcendent presence with the world in which the human personality is involved, in whatever percentage it be.

I previously told you the earlier part of the great saga of Gurudev’s life, which was, by today’s thinking, more a Purana or an epic, an Arabian Nights tale, and far from the conditions in which we are living today. Those were hard days in many respects, not only from the point of view of diet and clothing and the usual creature comforts, but even in intellectual and emotional satisfactions.

In the earlier days, Gurudev would never permit a person to read books. Nobody read anything. They would only work and serve, and do whatever he wanted them to do. One day, one swami secretly went to Kailash Ashram, but Gurudev came to know that he had gone there.

“Where did you go?” Gurudev asked.

“I went to Kailash Ashram,” said the swami.

“What for?” asked Gurudev.

“I was attending *Vivekachudamani* class,” replied the swami.

“Horns will grow on you,” Gurudev said, and went away. It means that pride will increase. “You started reading *Vivekachudamani*. Very learned man indeed.”

Gurudev would not permit reading, not because he was averse to any attempt at intellectual purification, but because he was cautious to guard these little ones from assuming any kind of position in their minds, and he would remove it immediately by some means or the other.

He would never give discourses or lectures, and often people complained that he would not instruct or teach. “Swamiji, we want instructions.” He would be annoyed when he heard such complaints.

“You want instructions? See what I do. That is my instruction.” The way in which he conducted himself he regarded as an instruction. He would not sit and harangue before audiences. But he had a systematic routine of studying scriptures—scriptures which he used to have people read in the satsanga that was conducted for several hours every evening, until 11:00 at night, and sometimes even later. These satsangas used to be held on the veranda of his kutir in summer and in the Bhajan Hall in winter. At

sunset it would start. Every evening he came up via the zigzag footpath because there was no road or steps that we have now. It was just a hill, with a very rugged path.

I had a little taste of conducting satsangas and Sadhana Weeks in those days, which were quite different from the Sadhana Weeks we hold nowadays. I was in charge of the satsangas for years and years, ever since he somehow felt that I should be involved in that kind of work, though I also did *akhanda kirtana* for one year continuously. The satsanga in those days was also of a different type. My duty was to spread the carpet, put the seats, keep the photograph of the different deities on different days, light a lamp, keep the book suitable for reading on that particular day, and commence the satsanga. After the initial recitation of the prayers and the mantras, and the reading from a scripture—it may be the Yoga Vasishtha or the Srimad Bhagavata—a very novel policy was adopted of seeing that everyone seated there would chant the name of God. Many people used to absent themselves because of the fear of chanting, and some people used to complain that they had a cold or a hoarse throat and that they were not able to chant the name. He would say, “Let the hoarse

throat chant, no exemption.” Everybody had to chant. It was not just one or two persons chanting and the others following, merely listening. Everyone had to recite the Mahamantra, or whatever it was.

It is a very peculiar feature of the human mind that even if a person is healthy and vociferous and capable of shouting at other times, when the time for chanting the Divine Name comes, his throat will not operate. No voice will come. He will be fumbling to find a word, and will not know what to say. He utterly fails in that particular hard predicament, whatever be his activity and importance at other times. But Gurudev used to drive that diffidence and discomfiture out of people.

We were all unacquainted with the art of speaking, especially public speaking. We would shiver to think of it. How could we speak before three people? But Swami Sivananda was a hard taskmaster. He would see that we had to speak. I was not at all acquainted with public speaking. I could not speak even one sentence, and he knew this, so he wanted to see that this problem of mine was removed. Suddenly Gurudev would say, in the middle of satsanga and in the presence of all people, “Go and speak.”

“I cannot speak,” I would say.

“Then say, ‘I cannot speak.’ Can you not say even this much? You are saying that you cannot speak. Go there and sit on the dais and say that you cannot speak.” Somehow we would sit there and blabber something. “Wonderful! Wonderful!” he would say. “Wonderful lecture.” And one banana would be given as a present.

Gurudev was an encourager of every potentiality in a person. That was his grandness, that was his insight, and that was his greatness. If a musician came, he would see that the potentiality of music is given the freest measure of expression. If a danseuse came, he would encourage that person. If a professor came, he would say, “Professor Sahib, today only your speech will be there, and no one else’s.” And the professor would give a series of lectures. Even little children would be encouraged to give performances.

The goodness of Gurudev’s heart was actually a testimony to the greatness of God, and as days passed he became more and more attractive to people around him. His little office was a *darbar*, as people used to call it. In Hindi a *darbar* is a colossal royal session that is being held. Devotees used to sing about the glories of the *darbar*, or the session of Gurudev. This *darbar*, this session of Gurudev, was

considered as a means of taking people across the ocean of *samsara*.

Charity was an unbounded expression of himself. There was no management then. Gurudev was himself everything. Even then there was some person called a secretary who was managing the whole Ashram with very few resources, and it was difficult to make ends meet. In those days Gurudev's charities increased. Even to a snake charmer he would offer 75 rupees. That snake charmer was startled. He did not know whether he was seeing properly or he had become blind: 75 rupees! Nobody would give him 10 paise, but Gurudev gave 75 rupees to him. People could not understand this.

The economic principle that Gurudev maintained was a defeat to all modern economists. He had no arithmetic and no mathematics. Once he shockingly announced that he would not allow any remnant of finances to be kept for tomorrow. Everything had to be spent on that day only, and tomorrow shall take care of itself. This cannot be the word of an expert manager or economist, but that is the word of a saint: Keep not for the morrow. No one can ever accept this philosophy that we should not keep for the morrow. We can accept anything—any teaching can be accepted—but this we cannot accept because our

hearts, our spirits, our mortal frames revolt against our needs being refuted by topsy-turvy calculations.

I began by saying that Godmen are inundated by the being of God. That we cannot accept this, that we have to keep a pause for the morrow, and that we feel it is absolutely essential—not merely essential, but absolutely essential—will show to what extent we are able to face the fire of the Almighty. Nobody will touch that, but Swami Sivananda was warning people of the possibility of sinking down into the complacencies and comforts we call needs, while there are no needs.

I am not recounting incidents chronologically, but ideas as they occur. “Will anybody come to Brahmaloaka?” was his announcement one night after satsanga. “Does anybody want to come to Brahmaloaka?” It appeared that when the second announcement was made a drum was beaten, which was done at the time of the ascent of Sri Rama. People say it was also done at the time of the passing of Krishna. The Brahmaloaka that Gurudev was referring to, to which he invited everybody, was his direction at that moment. He wanted to take us, but nobody could understand.

Miraculous transformations and changes took place in the entire structure of the Ashram after

Gurudev's Mahasamadhi. I call it miraculous because when he left this world, the Ashram was in debt. You know what debt is, worse than which nothing can be. In that condition the Ashram was. But sixteen days after Sri Gurudev's passing we held one of the grandest of celebrations here, one of the largest feedings ever conducted in the Ashram, and one of the most enthusiastic of functions, which must have cost us any amount of money. From where did we get it? You will be surprised. The people who were being pinched by the thorns of debt had not the least difficulty in conducting this wondrous and beautiful function on the sixteenth day, and for a few days after Gurudev's passing. It was something like the touch which the divine hands of Sri Krishna gave to remove the poverty of Sudama, a story well known to you all. Invisibly he blessed us. And today we know how many people eat in this kitchen; we cannot count them. They may be visitors, guests, and persons whom we have not seen.

Gurudev has spread himself throughout the world. There is no country where Swami Sivananda's name is not known or heard, though he never went out of India. He never went anywhere, except once around different parts of the country. The room he lived in was more a hovel than a room; minus

ventilation, minus any facility, in that he stayed. It was a building which did not even belong to the Ashram; in that he stayed throughout his life. He never lived in the beautiful buildings of the Ashram.

Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji became an embodiment of *tapasya*, austerity for us all. He lived a meagre life, wearing only a strip of cloth except in winter, but he is showering upon us this blessing that we are enjoying today. In what ways we are enjoying, let each one deeply contemplate.

THE MESSAGE OF SAGE AUROBINDO

It is very few in the world, even in our own country, who have been able to appreciate or understand the great message of Sage Aurobindo, partly because of the lofty style of his writing and the elevated form of his thinking, which is lifted above the common man's thinking in terms of objects of sense.

Aurobindo's presence, his birth, his life, his career and his message have all been a great pride to our country, a matter of immortal memorial for the whole nation because his life and teachings were directed to the integration of the nation as a whole and, much more, the integration of the human personality and the universe in its proper perspective.

May I be permitted to take a few minutes to give an outline of what I have enshrined in my heart as the eternal message of this great sage, which I believe should become an object of contemplation for every one of us.

The great Aurobindo was a nation builder, as he was well known to everyone in our land. He was

a vigorous thinker right from his early childhood, a dynamic yogi, a power in himself who wished to bring together the political forces of our country for the liberation of its spirit. We have to underline this word 'spirit'; Aurobindo wished to liberate the spirit of India from the clutches of alien forces, and in this attempt, God opened up a new path to him.

Many of you might have read his maiden speech, known as the Uttarpara Speech, which proclaimed the first word of his mission to mankind. After he was released from the Alipur jail in Calcutta, he spoke the words of a Godman; it was not a politician that spoke. The humanity in him had been transformed into the divinity which was his spirit. Aurobindo the politician and the leader of the nation became Aurobindo the sage of Bharatavarsha and the liberator of the spirit of India, not merely the political liberator.

What miraculous and surprising experiences he had during the legal processes he had to pass through in the jail, and out of the jail, and through the jail was the content of his marvellous speech. He was locked up behind the bars of the jail, and the liberated spirit of Aurobindo spoke. "What did I see? I saw Krishna guarding me. They were not human guards who kept watch over me. Krishna was there. I saw

Narayana parading in the jail. When I was brought before the magistrate, what did I see? Narayana was there to judge me. It was not the prosecutor that was in front of me. It was Bhagavan Sri Krishna that was arguing.” In this strain Aurobindo spoke, stirring the soul of his audience—not merely the audience that was there, but stirring the spirit of India as a whole, and sowing the seed of human liberation in its spiritual connotation.

Aurobindo made up his mind, as you all know who have read his biography and his life, to dedicate his life to the higher cause of the cosmos as a whole rather than to a part of it, a footprint of it which is Bharatavarsha merely or even this Earth, so to say. He became an ideal and an example to lead us. Then he deliberately shut himself up in a cave in Pondicherry, and this had no political background, though historically and chronologically we may say it had a political background. But I would say that apart from the chronological meaning of his going to Pondicherry as a historical event, there was a logical sequence in the working of his thought, his ideas, as a leader of the spirit of the nation and of the world.

There is no need to introduce Aurobindo to the intelligentsia of the world. There is no need to

introduce his thought to the seekers of Truth, the austere saints and sages of our country. He came as an eye-opener to the slumbering souls of our country. As Tilak and Gokhale and Gandhi, in their own spheres, came to open the eyes of the nation in a particular field of activity and duty, Sage Aurobindo came to open our inner eye of wisdom and illumination to see the truth of things as they are in themselves, and not as they appear to be.

As I began at the very outset, Aurobindo came to integrate the nation, and then to integrate the personality of mankind. Because his very watchword was 'integration', his yoga is known as integral yoga, or *purna* yoga. What is this integration that he was after, and what was he to teach mankind? It is the blending of the personality of man.

Aurobindo is a stalwart with tremendous distinction. He is not like other teachers of spirit, or spirituality. There is a marked difference in his teachings, which is his greatness and grandeur. The word 'integral' is known to everyone. It is in the dictionary and in the encyclopaedias of philosophy, and learned men know what integration is. But a new meaning was introduced into this word 'integration', or 'integrality', by Aurobindo in his novel yoga that he taught to all people in the world, not merely to

recluses. It was not meant merely for the ascetic, not for those who have dedicated themselves in a segregated manner. Aurobindo was opposed to all forms of isolation and segregation of spirit, which is the very meaning of integration, which absorbs, includes and takes into consideration every aspect of life rather than excluding any reality of life as undeserving of consideration. Aurobindo's great message is that there is nothing untrue in this world. We do not rise from falsehood, or unreality, to reality, or truth; we rise from lesser reality to higher reality, from lesser truth to higher truth, so that we live in a world of truth alone, and not of untruth or unreality.

According to his masterpiece *Life Divine*, which is a modern gospel of integral yoga, we may say, the world, the cosmos, is the expression of the superabundance of the *ananda* of the spirit, of Brahman or Ishvara. Where can be unreality or untruth in the creation of the Supreme Being? Can God, the Supreme Reality, create unreality, or anything untrue, meaningless, absurd, that we can shun, abandon or abnegate? Nothing of the kind. God, the Perfect, created the world that is perfect. But there are degrees of perfection, there are degrees of reality, and the message to us is that we rise from a lesser integration to a higher form of integration.

We do not live an integrated life. We are sick in spirit. The whole nation, the whole world, the whole mankind, we may say, is sick in its spirit because of a lack in the perspective of life. This lack in the perspective of life is a lack of integration of consciousness. We take ourselves to be one thing and the world to be another thing, and we take God to be one thing and the world to be another thing, which is what Aurobindo was opposed to. We see there is something to be abandoned and condemned, and given up as ugly and undesirable, which was what Aurobindo was opposed to. He was a messenger of the Spirit, a messenger of the Absolute. He came to tell us what God is, what Truth is. And naturally, in this vast panorama of God's creation, the manifestation of the Spirit, there cannot be anything wholly untrue or undesirable. There is an element of reality even in that which we regard as despicable and lowly. But it is a lower form of integration, and therefore we regard it as something undesirable. We regard it as undesirable from the point of view of a higher integration. We always make comparisons. When we say something is undesirable, we are taking the point of view of a higher form of life and understanding. Well, even that which we regard as desirable becomes

undesirable from the point of view of a still higher integration.

But why not take the standpoint of everything from its own position? Then we will find nothing undesirable in this world. When we look at a child, we take the standpoint of the child only. Why should we take the standpoint of a genius, of Einstein or Kant or Plato, and judge a small baby? It is an undesirable and unjustifiable comparison. We cannot judge any person without taking into consideration the historical, biological and personal associations involved.

If I am to be honest to you, I should judge you from your own historical perspective. That would be justice. I cannot compare you with somebody better than you economically, intellectually or spiritually, and then say you are good for nothing. This is not proper. This is injustice. I have to take you for what you are, and everything has to be taken for what it is. Even inanimate matter, even the subhuman kingdom, everything in creation has to be taken from its own point of view. Then it becomes God smiling as this vast cosmos. This is wonderful, soul-elevating and energising, not only to the spirit in us but also to our intellect, the psychological organ the mind, and the very cells of our physical body. We become

healthy not only personally but also socially and nationally, politically, internationally. We become cosmic citizens. We become part and parcel of this wondrous creation of the Supreme Being.

We have to live a life of this spirit not only in ourselves, but inculcate it into the minds of other people also, not forgetting that they are all values in themselves. They are sparks of divinity. They are a worth and significance and meaning in themselves. God speaks to Himself, as it were, in this majesty of creation. It is Ishvara beholding himself in this *ananda*, in this superabundance which is the quintessence, as it were, of the great masterpiece of Aurobindo, *Life Divine*.

The great master Sivananda demonstrated to the world in his own unostentatious way the life divine which he embodied in himself. In his own peculiar ways he was a replica of the ancient Upanishadic teachers such as Yajnavalkya or Marpa, to whom I made reference. The reason is that he was inscrutable in his behaviour. It was not a logical development that we could see in his life. We cannot deduce something from something. For our naked vision, his behaviour was unpredictable, and sometimes un-understandable. He was a thorough-going and out-and-out embodiment of the principle that the more we give of ourselves, the more does God enter into us. Giving is, again, to be understood in a purely spiritual way. People used to humorously call him Givananda, not Sivananda. Give.

Shamirishnananda
95



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