

With God even if you have nothing, your life is full. Minus God even if you have everything, your life is empty.

If you want fullness in your life, if you want ultimately your life to stand firm and unassailed by the vicissitudes of life, then be rooted in God.

Swami Chidananda
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A DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY PUBLICATION



HOW TO PROPITIATE DIVINE MOTHER

Swami Chidananda



**HOW TO PROPITIATE
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Sri Swami Chidananda



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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

24th September 2016 marks the auspicious occasion of Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out one hundred booklets comprising illuminating talks of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

To propagate Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's gospel of Divine Life, Worshipful Sri Swamiji Maharaj travelled extensively in India and abroad and showed the path of divine life to countless seekers through his spontaneous and highly inspiring lectures. His lectures, in Sadgurudev's words, are the outpourings of his saintly heart, the revelations of intuitive wisdom.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of his hitherto unpublished lectures in a booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary. The present booklet **How to Propitiate Divine Mother** is a compilation of his five inspiring talks, given at the sacred Samadhi Shrine.

We express our heartfelt gratitude towards Sarita 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

CONTENTS

1. How to Propitiate Divine Mother 9
2. The Great Cosmic Power 21
3. Transform Yourself 28
4. Parashakti—The Source of all Powers . . . 34
5. Life as Yoga. 40

1. HOW TO PROPITIATE DIVINE MOTHER¹

Radiant immortal Atman!

Beloved children of the Divine, devotees of the Divine Mother, Sadhaks and seekers, disciples of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, all of you are gathered here on the occasion of this auspicious annual worship of nine nights. May the divine grace of Mother be upon you all! May Anugraha (grace) of Bhagavati grant you good health, prosperity, happiness, success and inner peace! May Divine Mother bless you with Shraddha, Bhakti, Sadhana Shakti and Dhyana and crown your life with the supreme blessedness of Bhagavad-sakshatkar! Bhagavati can do anything!

Kartumakartum anyathakartum shakya

She can do this or not do this and can do something else, because She is the Achintya Shakti (inconceivable power) of the Supreme. Bhagavan Himself says, “Mama maya durtyaya—My Maya is invincible.” She keeps the whole world deluded and under the play of the

¹ Morning Talk given in sacred Samadhi Mandir

three Gunas. She is indescribable, invincible and omnipotent.

She can do everything. She has Pasha (net) and Ankusha (whip) both. With Pasha, She can bind you if you are foolish and do not recognise Her greatness. But if you surrender, if you pray, take shelter, then with Her Ankusha, She can help you to attain victory over the mind, go beyond the mind and attain Atma Jnana, Moksha. She is both—one who binds as well as one who releases from bondage and liberates. As Avidya Maya, the whole world is under Her grip, completely deluded, but as Vidya Maya She bestows supreme wisdom, brings about spiritual awakening and liberates you. Therefore, we worship Bhagavati in order to attain Her grace so that She may cast Her Kripa Kataksha—glance of compassion—upon all Jivatmas and manifest in us as Vidya, as awakening. If She smiles, then darkness turns into light, slumber gives place to awakening, bondage ends in liberation. Therefore, every year we come to Her with humility, in a prayerful mood, and taking shelter at Her feet we pray to Her—“O Mother! Manifest as Vidya and liberate us. Help us to attain the goal of life.”

*Anityamasukham lokamimam prapya
bhajasva mam (B.G. 9/33)*

Having obtained this impermanent and unhappy world, do thou worship Me.

*Mamaiva ye prapadyante mayametam
taranti te (B.G. 7/14)*

Those who take shelter in Me alone cross over this illusion.

You put together both this Adesha (command) and this Sandesha (message) of Bhagavan. Adesha is 'Bhajasva mam' and Sandesha is 'Mamaiva ye prapadyante mayametam taranti te.' If you put them together, then you know the way. Take shelter at the feet of the Lord and Maya becomes your friend, benefactor, She smiles. And if you want to obtain the grace of the Divine Mother, you must know in what ways you have to please Her, in what ways She is manifest before you and how to pay homage and reverence to Her in all these various manifestations.

Of course everything is Mother. *Sarvam shaktimayam jagat*—the entire universe is nothing but the play of Para Shakti. Without Para Shakti, nothing would have been manifested at all, because Para Brahman, Param Shiva is static, Achala (immovable), Paripurna (all-full), purely absolute and transcendental, beyond name and form. There is no creation, no dissolution, nothing is there. He is *Ekameva Advitiam*—one without second. But when Para Shakti manifests as *Adya Spandana*—the first vibration or the primal movement upon the bosom of the motionless

all-full Siva Tattva or Para Brahman Tattva, then arises within a mysterious cosmic principle—there arises the Divine Will: “I am one. Let me become many.” This is what our scriptures say.

It is not something that Swami Sivananda or Swami Chidananda is telling. This is what the scriptures say in order to explain how out of One many came into being, how the Ekam (One) became Anekam (many). The scriptures say, “In that cosmic mind, in that Supreme Being arose one primal Iccha (desire)—“Let me become many”. And this Iccha itself is the manifestation of Bhagavati Mahamaya, the primal movement of Para Shakti. Para Shakti means She is one with the Absolute Being, She is inherent in Him because the word ‘Para’ denotes transcendence, beyond relativity, the plane of the Absolute—the plane of Para Brahman. So She is Para Shakti—one with Para Brahman. And as Para Shakti, She manifests as an Iccha in that great Silence, in that profound deep stillness. They say, that is how the entire cosmic process started.

Therefore, from that point of view, whatever exists here is nothing but the manifestation of Para Shakti Mahamaya—*Mayamayamakhiljagat*. But then, She is also manifest in a special way, on our own level, in our pragmatic day-to-day world. Recognising Her in that way and paying reverence to Her in these manifest forms, we obtain Her

grace. She is pleased, She is propitiated. She casts a glance of compassion upon us and brings about light and awakening in us. What are those special forms? There are many. In the Devi Sukta it is said:

*Ya devi sarvabhuteshu Chetanetyabhidhiyate
Namastasyei namastasyei namastasyei
namo namah*

Salutations again and again to Devi, who is called among all beings as Consciousness.

*Ya devi sarvabhuteshu Medharupena
samsthita
Namastasyei namastasyei namastasyei namo
namah*

Salutations again and again to Devi, who dwells among all beings as Intellect.

If you ponder this, you will understand how Mother is manifest in this Vyavaharic Jagat. And in Chandi Path also it is said, "Thou art manifest as all women." All women are the manifestation of Para Shakti, Bhagavati Mahamaya. Therefore, all women should be regarded with worshipful attitude, reverential attitude, then alone you will prosper in spiritual life, your Sadhana will become successful. If you don't have this attitude, you will not obtain the grace of Divine Mother.

Yatra naryastu pujiyante ramante tatra devatah

Where women are regarded with worshipful attitude, there the gods are pleased—Indra, Varuna, Yama, Agni, Ashvini Devatas, all are pleased.

And if women are not treated with reverence, the gods become displeased which is not good for anyone.

Tulsidas gives a challenge: “If a person looks upon another woman, other than his lawfully wedded wife, as his mother, regards the wealth of another person as dust, that is, he does not cast his greedy glance upon that which does not belong to him, and regards all other beings as his own self, feeling compassion at the suffering of others, rejoicing in the happiness and prosperity of others, identifying with others; if such a person does not attain God, then Tulsi says—“I am responsible, I will see that he attains God’s Darshan. Such a person will attain God’s Darshan, Bhagavad-Sakshatkar.” The same Bhava is expressed in this Sanskrit Sloka:

*Martrivat paradareshu paradravyeshu
loshthavat
Atmavatsarvabhuteshu ya pashyati sa
panditah*

He is indeed wise and virtuous who regards other women as mother, others’ wealth as dust and considers other beings as his own self.

So to regard all women as veritable mothers has been given an important place in the ideal of Indian culture; a Nari (woman) occupies a great place in the vision of Bharatiya Sanskriti.

To show this great ideal, Maryada Purushottam Sri Ramchandra Bhagavan in his householder life abided by the vow of Ekapatnivrata (vow of having only one wife). We all think of the Pativrata Dharma of Anasuya or Savitri, but we never speak of the reciprocal Dharma which a husband owes his wife. That is because most of the Shastrakaras (writers of the scriptures) must have been men, so they did not speak about their duties, only about their rights, and they only spoke about the duties of women. A woman should serve her husband as God etc. But to be impartial and correct, we must equally say that if a woman has to be a Pativrata Nari (virtuous woman), a man also is expected to be Ekapatnivrata Purusha – regarding his wife as the only woman in the universe, and all others as Matrivat (like mother) or Sakshat Bhagavati. Therefore, when Shurpanakha said, “O Rama, I want to marry you.” He said, “I am sorry, madam, I cannot oblige you. I have already taken the vow of Ekapatnivrata.” This was the basis for refusing Shurpanakha—he was Ekapatnivrata Purusha. Maryada Purushottam Sri Rama showed the attitude a householder should have.

If you look upon all women with reverence, if you have this sublime Bhava in your heart towards women, then Maya cannot touch you or bind you; you cannot get entangled by Maya. Then Mother will manifest as Vidya to you, and your spiritual path will become free of all obstacles. That is the important reason why you have to adopt this vision. Your life will be free from so many complications and problems which mess up a man's life if he does not have this vision.

And the second important thing is something which Ramakrishana Paramhansa Dev as well as Gurudev have made quite clear: woman is Chaitanya (sentient) Maya, and money is Jada (insentient) Maya. Equally, the Divine Mother holds the whole universe in Her grip, completely under Her control through Her form of money. So with great reverence one should approach money. Money should not be trifled with; money should be recognised as the great power of Mahamaya Herself in this world. It can make or mar your life. It can take you to sublime heights or hurl you down into the abyss of perdition, depending upon how you relate yourself with this other manifestation of Bhagavati—Jada Maya. If you treat money with reverence and have the Bhava of divinity in money, then money cannot entangle you. With this Bhava use it with wisdom, use it carefully, and save a little; do not squander and do

not be a spendthrift. Do not misuse it in smoking or drinking or gambling or any other vicious way of squandering money. But use it wisely to fulfill your duty and obligations towards your dependents, towards your family, towards society, towards poor people, suffering people. Your money is meant to be used for all these things. Paropakara (doing good to others) is as much as a Kartavya (duty) as your obligations towards those who are your dependents. That is higher Kartavya. If thus money is spent, and it is also saved a little, then money will not become an obstacle, it will not bind you. When you recognise the divinity of money and have a reverential attitude, you will never lack the necessities of life through the grace of Bhagavati. She will always keep you above want. But if you look upon it as something worldly, then you will always be in trouble.

Thirdly, Mother is manifest as Vani—the great power of speech. The tongue is a peculiar Indriya which has a dual function; it is Karmendriya (organ of action) as well as Jnanendriya (organ of perception). It has got Jnana of Rasa (knowledge of taste) and it has got Karma of Vak (action of speaking). As Vani Mother is in your tongue and therefore, through this you must always fulfil the Supreme Dharma of Satya (truth) and Prema (love).

‘Satyannasti paro dharma’ and *‘Ahimsa paramo dharma’*

there is no greater Dharma than truthfulness and non-injury is the greatest Dharma.

These two great injunctions are the two great guiding lights for us. We have two duties towards Vani as Mother’s power in us. Our speech should be reverentially utilised by observing truthfulness and should never be used in a negative way by hurting or harming others, injuring others or causing unhappiness to others. It should be speech that brings peace, that brings solace, speech that encourages and uplifts, speech that gives hope and that consoles.

Speech should be used as an instrument for human welfare, for kindness and compassion, as an instrument of Paropakara and Seva. If this is done, then Mother is propitiated, you obtain Her grace, and you never come to any harm. God will be on your side if you adhere to truthfulness; and the whole world will befriend you if you adhere to Ahimsa, kindness, compassion, sweet speech. Gurudev always used to say: “Speak little, speak truthfully, speak softly, speak sweetly.” That is our duty towards Mother’s manifestation in us as Vak Shakti—Vani.

I shall conclude by merely mentioning the fourth manifestation of Mother as books, because

She is Jnana, and Jnana is to be found in books. We worship books during the Saraswati Puja. But in modern times we have called upon ourselves the displeasure of Mother by making use of the printing medium in spreading all sorts of impure, corrupting ideas, by publishing books that are not pure, that are not elevating and inspiring; on the contrary they are demeaning, and therefore we are paying a terrible price. There is chaos and demoralisation in human society; people are in great confusion. The fruit of demoralisation is suffering—because Dharma alone upholds.

There is great misuse of media worldwide. The written word was meant to awaken, to elevate, to inspire, to instruct, to give guidance, to enlighten, to illumine—whereas we spread darkness through the wrong type of literature, and human society of the 20th Century is paying a very bitter price. Therefore, we should carefully ameliorate this great negative aspect of the printed and written word, and we should completely focus our mind and consciousness upon elevating and sublime scriptures. Gurudev said:

*“Do not study Govinda,
Herbert Spencer Govinda.
Do not read atheist literature,
Negative type of literature.”*

They are very harmful. Study only Gita, Bhagavata, Upanishad, Bible, Koran, Zend Avesta, Dhamma Pada—elevating, life transforming, sanctifying spiritual literature. This is must; then you will obtain the grace of Bhagavati, because then you reverentially approach Her.

That is why Patanjali insists upon Swadhyaya in his Niyamas; that is why the Vedas insist upon Swadhyaya; that is why even Sankaracharya in his Sadhana Panchakam says: “Never neglect Swadhyaya, always study elevating spiritual literature.” That is the way to bring light and banish darkness. Where there is Ajnana, you must bring light in the form of study. So this is the fourth manifestation of Mother.

May we have the attitude of reverence and worshipfulness towards these four special manifestations of Mahamaya as Vidya in our day-to-day life, and through this may we obtain the grace of Mahamaya Bhagavati. She will help us to cross this ocean of Samsara and attain supreme liberation.

With these words, I offer my worship to Divine Mother upon this third day of the annual worship of Navaratri Durga Puja. May She be pleased by accepting this worship in the form of this sharing. May Her blessings and divine grace shower upon you all. May She grant you illumination!

Om Sri Parashakti Maharani ki jai!

2. THE GREAT COSMIC POWER²

Worshipful homage to that Supreme Eternal Reality, the non-dual transcendental Cosmic Spirit Divine, beginningless, endless, infinite, immeasurable, all-full and perfect – Nitya Paripurna Tattva! To that Supreme Reality, the source, sustenance and the goal ultimate of countless universes, encompassing all that exists and immanent in every atom of matter of this created universe, we pay worshipful homage! At the same time It shines in the very centre of each one of you as the indwelling presence divine, making your interior a dazzling radiance of divinity where darkness dare not exist.

Jyotisham api tajjyotih tamasah

paramuchyate

Jnanam jneyam jnanagamyam hridi sarvasya

vishthitam

Loving adorations to revered and beloved Holy Master, Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in whose spiritual presence we are gathered together in this early morning hour of chanting, silent meditation and prayer. May His

.....
2 Morning Talk given in sacred Samadhi Mandir

Gurukripa be upon each and every one of you!
May His glance of grace be upon all of you who are
present at this moment in this hall!

Radiant Divinities! There is a Cosmic Power that brings into being all these millions of universes, this universe of ours and all the innumerable beings that exist therein, supports and sustains them, protects them, provides for them, looks after them and ultimately helps them to return to their original source and merge in the Unmanifest. That Great Power is vibrantly present in every atom, every electron, every proton, every neutron. And within you, from head to foot, there is a constant activity going on, never ceasing, even when you are seemingly inactive and in deep sleep. There is a constant process of cells breaking down in the cellular structure of your body and creating new cells—the anabolic and metabolic activity. In every cell of your being, from your toenails to the top of your head, silent dynamism is going on. This silent dynamism makes you live, breathe, move about, speak, think, reason and express yourself in various moods and emotions.

The whole universe is kept up by this mysterious, unseen force or Shakti. The physical Shakti is going on in your biological structure, and the unseen, psychological Shakti is working in your mind and thoughts. What works upon the third plane, the spiritual plane that also is Shakti.

All the Shakti you need for concentrating upon God, for meditating upon Him, for prayer and remembrance of God, for study of the sacred texts, understanding them and absorbing their inner meaning comes through the great Cosmic Force. All the power you need to pray, to do Japa, to meditate, worship or think of Him, to dwell and reflect upon Him, to do Shravana, Manana, Nidhidhyasana, or to express your devotion in the nine forms: Shravanam, Kirtanam, Smaranam, Archanam, Pada-Sevanam, Vandanam, Dasyam, Sakhyam, Atmanivedanam—in all these things that Shakti alone is the main factor.

All that you do according to Patanjali Maharshi: Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, Samadhi—the spiritual dynamism for all these activities of Patanjali Yoga is that same Shakti. All the Shakti you need for serving humanity, serving your Guru, serving the sick, serving those who are in need of your service in the sublime noble field of Nishkama Karma Yoga, that also is made possible through the power of this mysterious Cosmic Force pervading all and pervading all the cells of your body. Without It not a blade of grass moves, wind cannot blow, fire cannot burn, water cannot flow, the sun cannot shine, the moon and the stars cannot shine. It is the primal Cosmic Force, the transcendental Para Shakti. It is the Adya

Shakti. It is the great Power of powers. It is the power that works through all the Mantras: Om Namah Sivaya, Om Namo Narayanaya, Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya, Om Sri Ram, Gayatri, Mrityunjaya Mantra, Rudri, Rudradhyayi, Srisukta, Purushasukta, all these Mantras derive that spiritual power through this great Cosmic Force—Shakti.

Therefore it would not be in exaggeration to say that the Shakti is all in all. But you could ask the question: “Swamiji, we have heard that God is omnipotent. He is all powerful. Now Swamiji is speaking of some Cosmic Force. There seems to be a paradox. How can two such forces exist? Two cannot be omnipotent.”

This question is quite valid and the answer to it is: There are not two forces. This great Cosmic Power or this great primal transcendental force is God’s power. It is He who manifests in the form of this great Cosmic Power. He Himself becomes the Cosmic Power and Cosmic Power is no other than Him. There is a non-difference and non-duality between the two. There is an Abheda and Advaita between Shakti and the one from whom It originates and in whose vastness and all-pervasiveness this Shakti manifests. The countless millions of universes exist in God, and all the power that manifests within these universes exists in God. They are coexisting, a

strange duality in non-duality, like the obverse and reverse of one coin. There is only one coin, but there is an obverse and a reverse, two sides, not contradicting the unity. There is a seeming duality.

This mysterious force, co-existing with God, is worshipped in India once a year for nine nights. It is a way of our recognising the supreme importance of this Force of the very existence of innumerable forms, because He manifests in countless ways in this cosmic world of ours.

But three salient manifestations have been adopted for the special worship during these nine days: they are in the form of Power, in the form of all that is auspicious, beautiful, indispensable in this life process, and ultimately in the form of supreme spiritual wisdom, Jnana. They are in the form of Power, of Auspiciousness, Beauty and Blessedness and of Illumination or Enlightenment. Durga represents the Power; Lakshmi represents the radiant auspiciousness of the Divine Mother, and Saraswati, pure and white as the untouched snows of the Himalayas, is the bestower of knowledge and the wisdom that liberates—Knowledge that is necessary to progress in the secular life and illumination to ultimately put an end to the whirling wheel of birth and death and rebirth and death, *Punarapi jananam punarapi maranam punarapi janani*

jathare shayanam to put an end to this coming back into this world of pain and death and attain that state of liberation which ultimately bestows upon you freedom and eternal satisfaction. That state of liberated consciousness is characterised as Sarvadhukhanivritti, Paramanandaprapti Nityatripti. It is the cessation of all sorrows, the attainment of supreme bliss divine and the establishment of the state of eternal satisfaction. All these come to the children of the Divine Mother when She manifests in their hearts as Jnanadayini Saraswati Mata.

What a beautiful understanding of these salient aspects of the Cosmic Power, what a great insight! What an in-depth knowledge our ancestors obtained by their personal transcendental realisation and illumination. When all these things came to them, the in-depth knowledge, the insight into the reality of things, they shared it with us. The unbroken line of teachers that come generation after generation in this great spiritual land of India and the unbroken succession of Master and disciple have enabled us to receive it.

In our own times the great representative of this unbroken succession of perfected Masters, was our beloved Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. Due to Him we have attained this light, we have attained this

knowledge and understanding, due to His lucid and illuminating teachings we can grasp the subtleties of spiritual realities that prevail in this world, even today, even as we are in the last month of the last year of the twentieth century, of the second millennium. Even at this time that ancient wisdom, that wealth and that treasure is still within our grasp; if we but ask for it, if we but seek for it, go after it, it is at hand.

Therefore, 'Arise, awake and attain that wisdom!' Otherwise days, months, years will pass away. Life will go away if you are heedless, if you are forgetful, if you allow yourself to be beguiled by other pursuits, then before you know it, you will be at the moment of departure. Then regret will be of no avail. Therefore, right now, from this very moment, arise, awake and attain blessedness! Do not postpone it for an uncertain tomorrow. Do it now! May God bless you and Gurudev also!

Om Namo Narayanaya—Om Namo Narayanaya—Om Namo Narayanaya!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

3. TRANSFORM YOURSELF³

Worshipful homage to the supreme, eternal, all pervading Cosmic Spirit Divine. Worshipful homage to that Being who transcends all manifest modes, the infinite variety of names and forms that go to make up the universe, who is beginningless and endless, immeasurable and boundless. May the divine grace of the Supreme Being be upon you all!

Loving adorations to revered and beloved Holy Master, Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in whose holy, sacred spiritual presence we have the good fortune to gather together, especially in the auspicious half of this month. Paksha means half a month, one lunar fortnight—it may be the bright fortnight leading to the full moon or it may be the dark fortnight leading to the new moon. We have gathered here upon this very auspicious fortnight, during the annual nine nights of special worship of the Cosmic Power. The divine indescribable, incomprehensible, inexpressible power of the Supreme Being is no other than the Supreme Being, is one with the Supreme Being, but at the same time manifests as

3 Morning Talk given in sacred Samadhi Mandir

duality within this non-duality, as we mentioned yesterday.

We said it is like the obverse and reverse of the same coin. It is like the back of your hand and the inside portion of your hand with which you grasp things—they are two different things. The inside portion does not have the nails, the outside portion has nails. The inside portion does not have any hair growing upon it; the outside portion has got hair growing upon it. Seemingly they are of two different natures, but you cannot separate the backside of your hand and the inside of your hand. They are inseparably one, and yet they manifest as a distinct, perceivable duality. When such a paradoxical state can exist even in the gross physical anatomy of a person, what to say of that supreme, invisible, unmanifest spiritual essence! A hundred thousand times more it is a great and a grand mystery.

She is everything, and She is beyond all things. If you constantly feel Her all-pervading presence, that becomes a sort of an unbroken dwelling in the Divine. It is like the Sahaja state of the self-realised sage. In the beginning that state comes and goes; there is experience of duality and non-duality at the same time. In Samadhi he is in a state of non-duality and when he comes down from the Samadhi state, he opens his eyes and beholds the many also, he deals with the many, he

speaks to them, moves with them according to the situation. He is respectful towards elders, and he is kind and compassionate towards younger people, and he manifests friendliness towards those of his own status. So apparently he does see difference, and his behaviour is oriented according to these different phases. But when he goes into the Samadhi state, he is in a state of non-duality. And they say when this Samadhi state becomes his normal natural state, he apparently perceives duality, indwells duality and deals with duality, nevertheless he is firmly established in non-dual consciousness. When this becomes natural, they refer to it as Sahaja Samadhi, a spontaneous state of being, a state of total union in the Spirit.

To constantly remain in Her all-pervading presence, perceiving Her in all things and feeling that you are living and moving in Her Being just like the fish in the ocean, a constant practice of this state must be acquired by deliberately cultivating this vision: whatever we behold is Divine Mother in ever so many forms. The portion that is recited every evening after the main reading of the scripture 'Devi Mahatmya' or 'Durga Saptashati' in Sanskrit language, the Devi Sukta, there, adoration is offered thrice in every verse: "*Namastasyei, Namastasyei, Namastasyei*

Namo Namah—Adoration offered to the Divine Mother as manifest in ever so many variegated forms.”

It is subjective, it is within yourself: “I bow down again and again to that Being who dwells within me as intellect, intelligence. I bow down again and again to Her who dwells within me as memory. I bow down to Her again and again who dwells within me as sleep. I bow down to that Devi again and again who dwells within me as Consciousness: *Buddhirupena samstitha, Smrtirupena samstitha, Nidrarupena samstitha, Chetanetyabhidyate*. I bow down again and again to Her who dwells within me as Peace, *Shantirupena samstitha*. I bow down to Her who dwells within me as hunger, *Kshudharupena samstitha, Namastasyei, namastasyei, namastasyei namo namah*. I bow down to Her who is manifest within me as the ceaseless rising of thoughts, ‘*Ya Devi sarvabhuteshu vrittirupena samstitha, Namastasyei namastasyei namastasyei namo namah*’.

Thus, She is within us as Knowledge, as Intelligence, but also as Delusion, *Ya Devi sarvabhuteshu bhrantirupena samstitha Namastasyei namastasyei namastasyei namo namah*. In all ways She dwells within us. There is nothing which She is not, and later on, we begin to

behold Her as Mother, *Ya Devi sarvabhuteshu matrirupena samstitha, Namastasyei namastasyei namastasyei namo namah.*

We are therefore surrounded by Her, encompassed completely, enwrapped and filled with Her. From head to toe you are completely filled with Divine Shakti, filled with Mother's omnipresent, extraordinary, inexpressible Power. And similarly you begin to feel Her presence in all beings, in all names and forms – birds, beasts and trees, leaves and grass, sky, clouds, wind that blows, breath that you take—you feel Her presence in everything around you—all in all.

Thus within you and in all beings, as all beings, invoke Her Presence. Then your consciousness will gradually become a Divinity-filled-consciousness and petty small things will have no place. They dare not enter into this consciousness that has been created within you, a Divinity-filled-consciousness. This is a potent way of transforming yourself, transmuting your consciousness from the human to the Divine—a divine alchemy as it were.

May the grace of the Supreme and the benedictions and blessings of Holy Master enable you to bring about this inner transmutation and thus bless you that even though you are in this world, nevertheless, within yourself you are in a

spiritual world, a divine world. May this good fortune be bestowed upon you! God bless you all. Divine Mother's special grace be upon you!

Om Namo Narayanaya—Om Namo Narayanaya—Om Namo Narayanaya!

4. PARASHAKTI—THE SOURCE OF ALL POWERS⁴

Worshipful adorations and prostrations to the Supreme Divine Mother of the universe, the indescribable divine power of the Almighty—Achintya Shakti of Parabrahman—whose special worship of nine nights we have the good fortune to observe in this sacred Ashram of our beloved and worshipful holy Master Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. Again and again, worshipful adorations at the feet of Mahamaya who is manifest as Mahasaraswati, Mahalakshmi and Mahaparvati Durga. May Her divine grace be upon each one of you. May She graciously grant you good health, long life, happiness, prosperity, success, inner peace of mind and spiritual joy! I earnestly pray to Divine Mother to bestow upon you all the spiritual treasures of faith, devotion, Sadhana-Shakti—the power of spiritual practices and meditation. May She crown your life with supreme blessedness, divine perfection and liberation! This is my sincere prayer at Her feet upon this first night of the nine days' worship of Bhagavati.

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⁴ *Morning Talk given in sacred Samadhi Mandir*

May you all observe these nine days and nine nights as a period of special spiritual practice, introspection, spiritual renewal and as a period of once again re-affirming your dedication to the great ideal of spiritual realisation and to the path of righteous living. Our beloved Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj is the power of the Divine Mother in manifestation, the visible expression of Vidya Maya, of Jnana that banishes the darkness of Ajnana and confers upon us liberation and blessedness. May his choicest benedictions grant you your heart's aspirations and success in spiritual life. This is my humble prayer at the feet of Gurudev who is no other than the embodiment and personification of the Divine Mother's benign power.

Each individual soul comes into this life endowed with certain divinely bestowed powers in varying proportions, but no one comes without endowments. The physical body has got its own dynamism—Kriya Shakti. We have got the power of mind to think, we have got the power of feeling, sentiment—Bhavana Shakti. We have the power of reasoning, of logic, intelligence – Buddhi Shakti. For what purpose have all these powers been given to the individual soul by the Supreme Being? Does anyone ponder this question while starting life? Do the students, young people, Brahmacharins ever think: "I have come into this

life; God has given me these various powers –what am I expected to do with them? Why have they been given? What is the right use of these powers?” Does anyone ponder? Does anyone first of all try to decide this question? Very few do it. Therefore, in spite of being richly endowed with these powers, we make a miserable failure of our life. We go in wrong directions, we create complications; we create our own difficulties and these powers become sometimes negatively channelised in useless pursuits, in wrong ways or they are frittered away in various directions.

It is important to recognise that these powers constitute manifestations of Mother’s great Shakti. Parashakti is the source of all powers. Whatever powers are in the universe, whether they are elemental, individual or cosmic – they all are from Her. Therefore, they are divine, they are sacred. It may be the power of wind; it may be the power of ocean waves, the terrible power of a volcano or the power of fire. It may be the power of your mind, your limbs, the power of your speech, thought, feeling, reasoning—they all are sacred because they originate from Mother who is the universal source of all cosmic powers. Therefore, they have to be recognised as sacred and reverentially used. If we do not do it, then we invite sorrow, misery, suffering, pain.

These powers, in the ultimate analysis, have been given to help us to liberate ourselves from all sorrow, pain and suffering and to attain supreme blessedness. Through upholding Dharma, the first Purushartha, by channelising and utilising these powers in a Dharmic way, we pave the way to utilise them in a spiritual way to attain Param Purushartha – Moksha. Utilising these powers for earning money, for having a career, having a job and getting prosperity and building a house and having a motor car and a bank balance – these all are the lesser uses of these powers, not the primary great use.

Nevertheless, the Artha and Kama are the secondary Purushartha; if these powers are applied towards the gaining of Artha and Kama – alright, you may utilise them for some advantage, but it is not for the supreme advantage, the supreme good. May be in some degree these powers are being used for our Abhyudaya (progress), but then it is not the ultimate use of these powers, because we are not using them for attaining the highest welfare. This has to be deeply pondered and well understood right at the very beginning. These God-given faculties are not merely for making a success of life in the secular sense, having mere material prosperity in terms of wealth and things, in fulfilment of your desires and success in all your plans and projects. This is

the secondary applications of these Shaktis. The highest application is for attaining our supreme good in the form of God-realisation and Moksha.

This is possible only if we make use of these powers in fulfilling the great ideal of Dharma, fulfilling the ethical norms against all odds, all difficulties and all obstacles, adhering firmly to morality, being truthful, compassionate, unselfish, kind, pure in conduct and character, controlling anger and passion, hatred and jealousy and manifesting only Daivi Sampada. If we make use of our powers—the power of will, of mind, of discrimination to thus exercise self-control and to adhere to righteousness, then we will succeed in applying these powers for attaining Moksha. Applying these powers for Sadhana, Yogabhyasa, Bhakti, Bhajan, Dhyana upon the rock foundation of Dharma, we will be able to build the edifice of Adhyatmic Jivan (spiritual life) and attain Moksha. Then we worship Bhagavati through our life and conduct through utilising Her Shakti in the right way.

This is only an indication as to how we must recognise Her presence in us, in our life, in our body, mind, intellect and heart and in what way She should be honoured by right and sublime application of Her Shakti. Thus we carry out a living adoration of Mother's divine power through

the manner of living our life, through the manner of putting to use Her powers manifest in us.

This is only like a signpost on the way; you are all intelligent people endowed with Buddhi, therefore you have to pursue this line of thought and reflect over what has been offered at this sacred moment of our first night's adoration of the Divine Mother. Reflect over it; because for an intelligent person even a single hint is enough to make a world of meaning by reflecting again and again—not once, not ten times but a hundred times—what this truth should signify to you. Thus we adore our most worshipful and beloved Divine Mother through our very life and the way we live it. I offer these thoughts and ideas with my reverence and my highest regard and love to each one of you – the souls upon the path to perfection, the souls upon the ascending path to God-realisation and liberation. Glory be to the Divine Mother! May Her blessings ever be with you all!

Om Sri Parashakti Maharani ki jai!

5. Life as Yoga

Worshipful homage to the supreme, eternal Reality! The great transcendental Cosmic Spirit is beginningless and endless, infinite and limitless, supreme, non-dual; it is the source, the substratum, the support and the goal ultimate of all existence. We offer our worshipful homage to that great Reality. May Its grace be upon you all! Loving adorations to revered and beloved Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in whose spiritual presence we are all gathered here. May His glance of grace and His blessings and benedictions be upon you all!

Radiant Immortal Atman!
Beloved Sadhaks and seekers!

The purpose of life has been said to be God-realisation. The method of attaining this ultimate goal and fulfilling life's supreme purpose is known as the science of Yoga. The word 'Yoga' can be used in two senses. First of all, Yoga means the ultimate supreme state of being forever established in unity with the Divine, to immerse in the Divine. Yoga means to be established in a state

of God-realisation. Also, the word 'Yoga' means all the various practices you engage in, all the efforts you put forth in order to attain this supreme state which liberates you forever from all the imperfections and limitations imposed upon you by your coming in contact with this temporary little life circumscribed by birth and death and qualified by various afflictions. To be liberated from this and to become established in a supernal state is the purpose for which you have come here, and all that you do in order to fulfil this purpose is Yoga. Therefore the significant word 'Yoga Abhyasa', practice of Yoga. 'Yoga Sadhana', the effort put forth to attain the object of Yoga is Sadhana; that object of attainment is called the 'Sadhya Vastu'. 'Sadhya' means possible; 'Asadhya' means impossible. It is 'Sadhya', 'Sadhya Vastu'. And this assertion and affirmation is made upon the personal experience of our ancient sages and seers. They had attained it, and they issued forth a clarion call: "What we have attained, this great blissful state of Godhead, you also can attain. It is the birthright of all individual souls. You are a part of God, you are children of God. What belongs to the father belongs to the child by right of being the father's child." You are heir apparent to the glories of God.

Thus they called in this blessed land, and thus proclaimed Gurudev in our own lifetime. So Yoga also implies everything that you do, every effort you put forth, all the practices you engage in. Life itself is the supreme Yoga, because it was given to us in order to be utilised for attaining that supreme state of blessedness. Therefore, the gift of life is God's throwing open the doors to this eternal, all-perfect Self and opening wide his arms and saying, "Come, come to Me. I welcome you with my all-embracing Divine Love!" The gift of life thus understood becomes to us the greatest endowment. Life must be made the supreme Yoga. Every part of life: eating, drinking, speaking, sitting, standing, running, waking, sleeping, thinking, every movement of your hands and feet, of your thoughts and feelings and sentiments, all should be God-oriented. Everything that you do should mean to you only one thing: God—God-realisation, God-experience, God-consciousness. You are the chosen, favoured ones.

You have a vertical vertebral column, whereas all other species have a horizontal vertebral column. They are always upon the same level as the earth. But you have got a vertical vertebral column. And this is not your only

uniqueness. Inwardly, psychologically also, you are endowed with something that is unique. You are made in the image of God, and naturally the faculties of thinking, feeling, reasoning, analysing, investigating—the glorious impress of the Supreme—should be utilised for the purpose for which it is given. Therefore, that faculty, that inner instrument of mind and intellect should be endowed with spiritual tendencies and auspicious divine qualities.

But if by your heedlessness you allow your mind to become a field for the play of unspiritual, undivine objects, just consider what a great fault it would constitute. Then, despite the uniqueness of your physical being, despite your uniqueness of the psychological higher environment, your life will not be God-oriented, it will move on the same horizontal line, it will be an animalistic life of sense indulgence, a field for the play of anger, passion and grossness. The only thing you can do is to invoke the grace of God: “Please put an end to this dire calamity and rescue me!”

This truth is brought out again and again when the celestials approach Divine Mother and pray to Her: “Please rescue us from the torment of the demonical forces, represented by the demons of various names: Mahishasura, Chanda, Munda,

and so many other names. The name of Mahishasura is significant. He has a powerful human body, but his head is of one of the grossest, most lethargic, Tamasic animals. It represents the human state where everything is fair and wonderful as long as divinity and spirituality prevail; where Tamas, grossness and bestiality prevail—that is Mahishasura. And it will become a torment! Therefore, the Devas prayed to Bhagavati to compassionately come to their rescue, and She did this by engaging Mahishasura in war and decapitating him, removing that which stood in the way of attaining supreme liberation, divinity.

There is a certain interpretation of the Scripture Devi Mahatmya with a very significant meaning. The Maharishis, celestials and Rishis ask Mother, “Mother! You are the Divine Goddess of infinite prowess! By merely the frowning of Your brow, the entire demonical force will become destroyed. By merely uttering a single sound of displeasure and anger, looking at them and saying, ‘Hum!’ they would all be destroyed forever, beyond all resurrection. Why did You struggle in warfare and in order to engage these Devatas get endowed with the weapons of the various Gods—Shankha, Chakra, Gada from Vishnu and Trishul

from Lord Siva and Vajrayudha from Indra and so many others—You became specially invested with all these powers. So, engaging these great demons in warfare, You hurled these weapons at them and battled and pierced them. We are not able to understand this peculiar Leela of Yours, the mystery of doing things which are not necessary?” The Devi answers them, “Apparently it was not necessary. But I am the compassionate Mother of all creatures including the Asuras, not only of good people, but also for the other side, for people of the other variety.

There is a beautiful hymn composed by the great Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya. In that hymn each verse ends with the fourth line:

Kuputro jayate kwachidapi kumata na bhavati

‘In this creation of God bad sons there may be many, but God has never created a bad Mother.’

A Mother is always the very embodiment of love, compassion, protection, goodness to her offspring. It is possible that in this creation of God there may be bad sons, but nowhere have we ever heard of there being a bad mother.

Therefore, “O Maharishis, because of My love for these erring children of Mine I engage them in battle and hurl these weapons. So by the very

contact with these divine weapons they become purified and liberated from their demonical nature. That way of killing them is actually My way of liberating them. I want them also to be liberated, therefore I hurl these divine weapons. I achieve this purpose of Mine in two ways: One is, the very contact with the divine weapons of Indra and Lord Siva and Lord Vishnu is enough to liberate them. And the second fact, that they are slain by Me, that also becomes the immediate cause of their liberation. Therefore, even to be slain by God is a good fortune. The moment base metal comes into contact with the philosopher's stone, immediately it is transmuted into pure gold. You may bring base metal in loving contact or you may hit it with the philosopher's stone, the moment it is contacted, the base metal becomes transmuted into pure gold. So this is the reason why I engage them in battle, hurl divine weapons upon them and then destroy them; all these are the manifestations of My motherly love and compassion towards them, so that they become liberated once and for all." Thus is the interpretation.

'Uttama Anga' means the superior part of the human body, the head. Here abides your human nature, your uniqueness, your ability to aspire for

God; therefore it is called 'Uttama Anga'. So the 'Uttama Anga' should always be kept in a superior state. It should not by forgetfulness or inadvertence be transformed into an abode of anything that is not uplifting and elevating, noble and sublime. Then it will become your problem, and you will be creating your own bondage and suffering. So, the special significance of Mahishasura having an animal head should be understood in this way. It means that we should not make this superior portion that of an animal, but it should become a divine portion, having divine thoughts, great spiritual aspirations. Being divinely endowed with this human status, you must realise that it is a divine gift and utilise the whole of it every moment for attaining God-realisation. Then your entire life will become Yoga-oriented—because everything is Yoga!

In giving the Bhagavad-Gita teachings Lord Krishna did not merely mention the four traditional Yogas: Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga, Karma Yoga. He mentioned 18 different Yogas—each chapter is a Yoga. Even the first chapter is Yoga: 'Arjuna Vishada Yoga'—The Yoga of the Dispondency of Arjuna. This conversation between Krishna and Arjuna is a Yoga Shastra, Brahmavidya, and Lord Krishna gave eighteen

Yogas. This is an indication that there are not merely four or eighteen Yogas, they are countless, they are countless. Everything that you do, all the innumerable things that you engage yourself in, everything should be Yoga for you. Everything should be the process of becoming established in that supreme state of God experience.

May the Supreme Cosmic Spirit and Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj shower divine grace and spiritual benedictions upon you, to enable you to realise this implication and live life as a great Yoga and attain the goal in this very incarnation. God bless you all!

Om Namō Narayanaya—Om Namō
Narayanaya—Om Namō Narayanaya!