

KNOW  
YOURSELF  

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KNOW  
GOD



A talk by Her Holiness Sri Sathguru Swami Gnanananda Sarasvathi

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*Her Holiness Sri Sathguru  
Swami Gnanananda Sarasvathi*

Once a Householder, always a Jivan Mukta, Her Holiness Sri Sathguru Swami Gnanananda Sarasvathi received a Divine Command and took Vidwat Sanyasa in 1975. Sri Sathguru has been tirelessly propagating the path of Saranagati, as taught in the Srimad Bhagwad Gita as being the most appropriate for the present age. Sri Sathguru established the Sri Gnana Advaita Peetam in September, 1975. Renovation of old, dilapidated places of worship, reviving ancient traditions, spreading the special message of total detachment and self-surrender to desiring and deserving souls – all are Sri Sathguru's efforts to put humankind onto the path of self-realisation.





***Preface to the first edition published in  
Voice Divine***

*This lecture was delivered at Adyar, Chennai, on November 10, 1974, about six months before Her Holiness took Sanyasa. She had by then renounced Her Grhasta mode of life. As per Her Diksha Guru's command, She accepted occasional public invitations during this period. This discourse was Sri Sathguru's first appearance before an audience in Madras.*

*This speech of Sri Sathguru's, addressed to the affluent elite of the city, was one of Her longer ones and took over three and half hours. The following is a verbatim transcription from the recording. – Vishnu Mohan, Editor*

***Preface to the second edition***

*Since its publication in Voice Divine in the seventies, "Know yourself, Know God" has been a favourite among Sri Sathguru's devotees. It is therefore with great pleasure that we offer this second edition at the Divine Lotus Feet of our Revered Sri Sathguru on the twenty seventh anniversary of Her Sanyasa.*

*Vaishaka Purnima, 2002*



## *CONTENTS*

Self realisation	8
The need for awareness	10
A simple life	13
How to become an image of God	17
Renounce the fruits of karma, not karma	21
Aspiration and prayer	24
We are the makers of our destinies!	26
This path is for everyone	30
How God looks after His own	33
Aspire for the highest	36
Nobleness enkindles nobleness	40
Draupadi's surrender	43



*We must think. We must try to understand the meaning of life. Life is not an accident. It has great significance. We must try, somehow or the other, to understand it. We should not seek to drown ourselves in maya. This maya or cosmic delusion is very powerful, I admit! But we must remember we are divine sparks emanating from God.*

### **SELF REALISATION**

*The delivery of a divine message, as I understand it, would be to point the way to atma-gnana and nothing short of it. I do not know how to water down the ideal. The ideal must be kept on a very high pedestal. If we are not able to reach it immediately, it does not matter. It should not be lowered just to suit human needs. So, I cannot make a compromise on that. I must show you the highest ideal and that is atma-gnana.*

*To explain atma-gnana is something next to impossible! I never thought that anyone was competent to do it, much less myself! But still it has to be done, under the Divine Command. The message and subject is of infinite magnitude. Just to touch upon a few salient points would take hours. And the worst part of it is that by the time I start warming up to the subject, I stop, because*

*I would have already taken too much time.*

*Now mankind, as we know, has been searching for happiness from time immemorial. True happiness is not of this world. This is something we must come to understand. We keep on searching. It's like looking for happiness among thorns! This is, to say the least, extremely foolish.*

*God has given us all the fantastic, wonderful contraption called the brain. That is to be used by everyone, is it not? We must think. We must try to understand the meaning of life. Life is not an accident. It has great significance. We must try, somehow or the other, to understand it. We should not seek to drown ourselves in maya. This maya or cosmic delusion is very powerful, I admit! But we must remember we are divine sparks emanating from God.*

## *The need for awareness*

*Deep inside us lies the most powerful intuitive knowledge of God. Perhaps we can call it the voice of conscience. It is always there, for everybody; but we still it by not listening to it at all. When we want to do something, which the voice tells us not to do, we smother it, go ahead, and do what we want. When we repeatedly do this, the voice ceases to talk with us. And there we are—we have lost even the little guidance we had.*

*We must be always aware of what is right and what is wrong. As long as we have not reached the highest stage of perfection, we must remember that right and wrong are very real for us in this world. We must think before we act. Even our very feelings, we must learn to control them. Try to question yourself “Is this right or wrong? What am I doing? Is it good or bad? Is it selfish or unselfish?” If the voice of your conscience gives you the O.K for all these, then you can go ahead and do it. Otherwise think! Stop! It is best not to do it. Do not unnecessarily break a status quo.*

*We have kama, krodha, madha, moha, lobha, matsarya, raga, dvesha and bhaya. These things dominate our mental makeup. We must not give in to them. Try to understand that we have a higher nature*

*also. Virtues like charity, purity, kindness, truthfulness and integrity are also in us. Man can rise to sublime heights, if he will only think for a moment. He can think before every act of his, every deed and word of his. For this, he must be aware and alert.*

*If we gaze around us, we see births, marriages and deaths. These are supposed to be the most important milestones in a human being's life. Now, everyone is happy when there is a birth! When there is a marriage, people are even happier. There is a lot of time for grandeur, show and ostentation. Now, the last part called death, nobody wants to even think about. But by hiding our heads, like the ostrich, by not coming to terms with reality, does not mean that we are going to get out of it. We all have to die. If we are born, we have to die. So why not come to terms with death?*

*We live haphazard lives! Butterfly lives! We accumulate money and possessions. We think that happiness comes out of these. Let me tell you that the more the possessions, the more unhappiness a person has. Be sure of it. When you go out, you have to see that a thief does not rob your house. You have to lock it up and tell your neighbours. Why do you desire to accumulate so much? We must have exactly what we need and no more. If we were not accumulating in this manner, there would not be the*

*imbalance that is there in this world today. There is a set of haves and another of have-nots. The have-nots have increased, therefore there is a revolution. Even if one person eats more than he should eat, somewhere in the world, there is a person dying for want of food. Don't take more than your share. This law is very important. Let us ask ourselves "by accumulating so much, what do we get out of it?" We cannot take it with us when we go. Now, new laws have been enacted and we cannot leave much for our children also. Every way we are hemmed in. If we are lucky, perhaps we can escape communism. You can't even call your soul your own after that.*

*These developments arise because we forget that man is not body or mind but soul. Forgetting our ancient heritage, we have come to this condition today. There is so much of corruption and lack of moral integrity in this land today. It is because we have lost our bearings. We will someday reach the stage when India will regain her ancient glory. But we cannot do that as long as we are in the mess that we are in today. Everybody wants to make easy, quick, fast money. It does not matter how we get it! And then what are we going to do with it? That also does not matter. Nowadays, even a smuggler says he is a "self made" man! You see how far we have degenerated! Make the money and call yourself "self made". It does not matter how we make it.*

## *A simple life*

*So there is a crisis of character. It is for those of us who believe in God, or profess to believe in God, to stand up and show by example, the right way of living. Those of us who are educated and call ourselves civilized 20th century people, must be cultured and refined. And what is education? It is not a string of degrees. You must have heard of Dr. Alexis Carell, who next to Einstein was one of the greatest scientists of the world. He has said, "A university degree is not proof of mental intelligence!" How many people just memorise the texts, take the examination and somehow get through. Some of them may not have even secured the minimum marks, but they can always bribe their way out. But that is not true, good education. That is why you have a fall in educational standards today. That is why you have student indiscipline. Children are not well brought up and they are not taught the eternal values of life. They learn from the example of their parents; go out and enjoy themselves! That is all—they have no other aim in life.*

*You see in the villages, the simple people follow the haves of today. It is something very sad to behold. We set the example and they follow. The little money that they get, they do not even spend on food, which is their greatest necessity. In the old days, a labourer knew*

*that he had to work hard the next day. So he went and filled his stomach with rice and went to sleep early. Today, you will find workers are spending money lavishly on cinema and on clothes which they cannot afford. The amount of money that goes into cinemas and clothes is something colossal. The workers spend all their money on clothes and three shows a day. They feel that they are out of the race, if they do not do it.*

*We have got to learn plain living and high thinking. That is what we want. We must learn to live simple lives, otherwise, where is the time to think of God? Where is the time to think of eternal values? We have absolutely no time at all, because we are filled with our foolish, petty desires. And tomorrow, when we are faced with a severe illness, or suffer some blow, then we have all the time in the world to think of God. Otherwise, we have time only to dress, go out and lead some sort of a butterfly existence. Remember, before we can say, 'Jack Robinson' each one would have finished his life. Life is very short. There you find "funeral marches to the grave". Therefore you must sit down and think deeply. The poet says:*

*"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,  
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,  
Awaits alike th' inevitable hour:  
The paths of glory lead but to the grave."*

*There are what we call good and bad deeds, punya and papa. They come with you. So do all your desires. Your strongest desire comes with you. And then, you secure another birth. Endless transmigration results. A million births are not enough for some people to attain atma – gnana! Why? Because we waste our time here. The minute we understand that this is all a dream or an illusion, then we find that we make progress immediately. We must have a longing for Liberation from all this suffering. We must pray to God to get Liberation. Of one thing we can be sure. If we pray to God, we will always get what we ask for. Pray for the right things, not the wrong ones. There is a story—Yudhishtira was asked, “What is the strangest thing in the world?” He said that the strangest thing was that people see all round them so many deaths and yet never understand that they too will have to depart some day. It was true then, in the days of the ‘Mahabharatha’ and it is equally true now, in this century. Mankind has made no progress. We might have made a lot of bombs or gone to the moon, but otherwise, subjectively, man has made no advance. The basic problems are still there. And especially in these years since independence in India, we have sunk lower, lower than*

*the pre-independence level. During those days there was so much of self-sacrifice, so much of bravery and self-discipline, self-restraint. They would wear heavy khadi clothes and buy nothing but swadeshi. However more attractive foreign goods were, they did not and boycotted it totally. It was soul force, spiritual power that carried us forward to swarajya. Mahatma Gandhi was born for that purpose. We have forgotten how we freed ourselves, and see where we have landed! And India is supposed to be the Guru of the world! India is the Guru of the world and will be so forever. There is no doubt about it. But, we Indians have forgotten our heritage. We try to ape the west. There is so much good in them, which we can learn. We are imitating only the foolishness that prevails there. We must know that Indians of old, attained a certain pristine glory, not attained by any other nation. Whatever people say, somehow, in some subtle way, Indians were and are different from others. A certain purity of character marked the Indian. It was written by the Greeks in their histories that an Indian (or Hindu) never told a lie. And what of the Hindu of today? Can we say that the modern Hindu speaks the truth at all? To that extent we have sunk. So those of us, who have belief in God and in spiritual values, must turn our backs upon all that.*

## *How to become an image of God*

*What does religion teach us? All that is elevating and ennobling. It teaches us to practise all these precepts. It is not enough reading about them in books or hearing them from a pulpit. We must practise them sincerely and earnestly, and then we find that we attain all that is described in the books. The books have said that if you follow a certain path, you will get to the state of Self-realization. Now this is perfectly true. When I tell you that you can get it, I am not speaking from mere book-knowledge. I am not speaking merely from study or learning the Shastras by heart! No! I am speaking from perfect, absolutely tried and tested experience; from experiences, which I have had for years and up to this very minute. These experiences tried and tested as they are, I am commanded to hand over and share with the rest of humanity.*

*That is why I am telling you to develop viveka. Leave off this dangerous drowning in maya. I am not asking you to give up everything and turn into a sannyasi. I am only asking you to think. Think well. Ponder deeply. Do some Atma Vichara —"Why am I here? Who am I? Where am I going? What is the purpose of this life?"*

*I find today - a heartening thing - that a lot of young people are interested in the spiritual life, in knowing all about God. Wherever I have been, I have found so many youngsters, studying in colleges and schools, boys and girls, coming to me with questions on God, how to attain Self-realization etc. The younger generation is trying to go on the right path. We elders must set them the proper example by living a glorious life, so that the children can always follow us. Otherwise, we would not have done our primary duty. Money is not going to help them. When they find themselves in trouble, they need strength of character, faith and an anchor somewhere. If they do not have that, they flounder. Some of them get lost. Then, what happens to all the money in the bank? It does not help them. So we must have viveka. God is our greatest friend, our eternal friend. He is always with us. His very presence can be felt at all times, if we wish to feel it. But, the trouble is, that we do not want to feel it! We do not care for it. We do not care; we have no time for Him. That is what I said: No time at all for God. Even if we perform some rituals, it is done in a hurry. We light the lamp and consider our job over. That is not the way to do it. We must do it out of love of God, and true bhakti.*

*We must try to concentrate our minds. The trouble with the present day people is that they have no time to think! All their energies are frittered away, dissipated. They are at a loose end. What you have to do is to gather up yourself and try to get your mind together into a single focus. Even if you are cooking, your dishes will improve, if you have a concentrated mind! If you are singing, your songs will improve! The power of concentration is the greatest power in the world.*

*The mind that is restless, perturbed, and full of turbulence and worry, is a veritable hell! Mind control is the greatest thing we should strive for; to control the mind and not allow it to go to pastures where it should not go. If it strays, bring it back. This is why we must have an anchor somewhere - that is in God.*

*At least look at it from a selfish, common sense point of view, as a plain business proposition. A concentrated mind helps you do your work in the office or at home, far better than a scattered one. A one-pointed mind is what we need. Only then are we fit for anything higher. How can we ever dream of experiences, in the realm of the spirit, when our minds are not controlled or pure? Cleanse the mind, not only the body. Of course, everyone has a bath, but what about mental hygiene? That is equally important. The mind must be cleansed*

*of all impurities and must be controlled. It must be truly calm. Only then can any realisation flash.*

*When we are thinking of God, we need not be bothered about the worries of this world. You might be having terrible worries- I do not say no. Most of us have. Perhaps 99.5 percent of us have them. Very few are without worry. But even if they are without it today, they will get it tomorrow. Nobody is exempted. This is an imperfect world and we are all imperfect creatures. We are born with many faults and imperfections. What we must do is to try and overcome all these, and seek Perfection. We should try to become a true image of God.*

*Now, they say that you grow into the image of the one you love or admire. Suppose it is God Himself that you adore, you grow into His likeness-His image. You have your Ishta Deva or Devatha. You have His or Her picture in front of you and His or Her attributes in your mind. Contemplating and concentrating on it, what happens is that slowly you come to understand, and you get the fervent desire to be like that, to be perfect and pure, to please God. Now, this is the right type of desire. This you must always pray for.*

## ***Renounce the fruits of karma, not karma!***

*Our duty must be done to perfection. We must not try to get out of any duty, just because it is unpleasant. We must not try to differentiate between pleasant and unpleasant duties. All duty is necessary. All duty is a debt, which we have contracted from the last birth, our Prarabdha karma. And these duties we must discharge to the best of our ability. Otherwise the karma will follow us wherever we go and howsoever we try to escape. Therefore, we must steadily do our duty unselfishly, without any thought of repayment or return, without even desiring and hoping for any repayment. We must do karma phala thyagam. We must hand over the results fully to God.*

*There is no need for you to run away from your home or responsibility to attain God! You can stay very much in this world. You can stay in your home, but you must not be attached to it. Attachment brings sorrow, grief and unhappiness. If we are mentally detached and uninvolved with the people, happenings, circumstances and things around us; we can be sure we have made great progress.*

*Now people may think: how can we stay at home and do our duty without getting attached? They think,*

*that, if you give up attachment it is wrong! It is not so. Detachment does not mean irresponsibility, or shirking duty, or selfishness, or anything like that. It means unselfish love. You love your husband, wife, children or relatives, unselfishly. Not because you want to get something out of them; but to give them something of your best. It is giving, not receiving. That is Nishkamy Karma. This is how we must do our duty.*

*Now, as to the Gnana part of it, the Advaita says “Brahma Satyam, Jagath Mithya, Jeevo Brahmaiva Naa Paraha” . That is, God alone is real; the world, from the standpoint of Brahman and a Jeevanmuktha, is unreal. Today it may be very real to you. Very real, because you are bound by it. Therefore, it is real to you. But, in the ultimate analysis, it is unreal. It is a cosmic delusion. It does not exist at all except in our minds. “Jeevo Brahmaiva Naa Paraha” . That is God, Jivathma and Paramatma are one. Because of agnana we feel that they are separate. Names and forms exist only in the mind. For one who has merged with God, there is no difference between the Jivathma and Paramatma . There is the Self-alone and it pervades the whole universe. This is from the highest, most sublime standpoint of the Advaita. Now, this is a goal or ideal, which may not be attained in*

*this birth. Some of us will not attain it for many births-  
this state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi. But this ideal we  
must keep in mind. We should not think, "Oh! This is  
impossible for me. I cannot do it!" If that was the  
spirit, then we could not have attained anything in  
this world at all... If we did not have that spirit of  
adventure, would we have reached the moon today,  
or climbed Mt. Everest? No! What we need is the  
longing or yearning for God. To reach behind the  
shadow to the Truth, the Reality that is behind this  
existence. That yearning must be there. It is that we  
have to strive for. In 'Ulysses' Tennyson says, "To  
strive, to seek, to find and not to yield." Just because  
we cannot get it at once, we should not say "we would  
not try". That is not aspiration at all. That is not right.  
You must be young in spirit even if you are a hundred  
years old.*

*When that is there, we must not look at other  
goals. They are not worth pursuing. What is there in  
the world that you cannot win today? If you have a  
concentrated mind, full of God's power, you can get  
anything. But you must aim at the highest goal. You  
must climb towards that goal, step by step. Understand  
that if you are sincere about it, God will help you at  
all stages.*

## *Aspiration and prayer*

*Now, imperfect as we are, it is not easy to control the mind. We have our small hopes and ambitions. We are not able to wash them out suddenly or quickly. We cannot do it in a minute. Two things are necessary. One, your own yearning and aspiration, and two, prayer to God. If at any time you are in difficulty, pray sincerely for God's help. I always say, "Try to pray for things that are worthwhile. The rest of it will come." We do not have to fight or scramble for it. Prarabdha karma will look after us. If you are destined to become Prime Minister, you will become so! It will happen whether you like it or not! You don't have to worry it. What you have to worry about, is how you live in this world today, and what accounts you have to settle with God at the end of your life. We are going to leave this world. That is definite.*

*If you are not able to meditate - pray. Pray for a calm mind. And then, you must try to clear your mind of castles in the air. We generally build hundreds of castles, especially where our children are concerned. And when the children do not turn out as we plan, we get disappointed, dejected and depressed. Who asked you to build those castles in the air in the first place? Every*

*child has got its own Prarabdha karma. Just because, the child is born to you, it does not mean that you must put tentacles on it and bind it. The child has got its own life and soul. You are born as its father or mother, simply because of your karma in the past birth. A child is like a plant! You can pour water and put a hedge around it, so that animals do not eat it. And you can wait and watch; that is all you can do for your child too. Your karma is different from its karma.*

*Understand that detachment is necessary. If you get so selfishly involved in your family, what happens is you bring unhappiness upon yourself and them also. You can never change the Prarabdha karma of others because you cannot even change your own. So, this kind of brooding brings only unhappiness.*

*We must cease to have unnecessary worries. Throw them out. Clean your mind, purify it, and then present it to God. Now, if you are not able to do it, I always tell you—“ask God!” Help will come if you ask. I tell you, I can give it to you in writing. Such a prayer is always answered. I would advise you to ask for nishkamyā, nishchanchalatvam, viveka, vairagya and things like that. Because these are the things a person should strive for. The rest will come of their own accord.*

## ***We are the makers of our destinies!***

***You should practise total Sharanagati where God is concerned! Surrender yourself. It is the ego that creates the trouble for you. If you are really able to merge that sense of “I-and –mine” with the feet of God, then all your troubles are at an end. When something sad or unhappy happens, we say, “God did it”! No! God does not do it. He has nothing to do with it. He watches your karma bearing fruit. From your last birth you have brought all joy, misery, sufferings, happiness and sadness, which come like sun and rain. Now this is your own karma working itself out. Why blame God? He has nothing to do with it. When you do something-an action- reaction sets in. Cause and effect! Every action has got a reaction. You set the action into motion—the reaction takes place. How does God come into the picture? Everyone blames God and He has nothing to do with it! “God did this to me” God does nothing of the sort. He is there, trying to bless you, encourage you and help you. But you won’t take His help and then you blame Him! This understanding must be there: that we are the makers of our Destiny. We cannot control the present Prarabdha karma because there***

*is no controlling it any more. It is like an arrow that has been shot. It started working right from the time we were born. We can control tomorrow, though we cannot control today. But we can mitigate it, by complete surrender towards God. And one never knows: if you surrender so beautifully towards God, so completely, totally and absolutely, you maybe sure that God will work miracles for you. One never knows. You know the story of Markendeya? We must be worthy like him. You know his surrender was total. Surrender means you must surrender your personal desires, wishes, ambitions, everything at the feet of God. Total Samarpanam at His feet.*

*The next thing is, if you have any worries, give them to God. He will take them over and look after you. It is said “Man does not live by bread alone”. There are many other things, which are truly worth striving for, other than your daily bread. The daily bread will come; we do not have to worry unnecessarily about it. What we have to do is, think about our spiritual progress, live in this world, using this maya-which is drowning us, hindering us, and acting as an impediment in our path - as a ladder to overcome the same maya. To overcome this maya you can use maya itself! This total Sharanagati is*

*dependent on your surrendering your small ego to the Divine Will.*

*Some people come to me sometimes, wanting to get Self-realization immediately! Without surrender nothing is possible. Do not say, “God must do this and that for me first”. It is not right. God is not our servant, we are His servants. Understand that first. You surrender first, and then He will reveal Himself to you. After all, who gave you everything, whether it is your wife, husband, child or possessions? They are not yours. How did you get them? But for the grace of God, we would not have anything. If He withdraws His grace, everything goes. So we must understand that and be thankful and grateful to God.*

*When we do something, and it is successful, give thanks where it is due—at God’s feet. That’s the place for it. He did it. He is the one, single Doer! If He did not give us His grace, we would not have been successful. Therefore, whenever you achieve success or something good in this world, remember God. Thank Him humbly, by falling at His feet. Understand that there is only, one single Doer that is God and none other. We must possess that humility. In its absence we would be great sinners.*

*When we are in agony, then we remember God! We use Him as an umbrella. You know how an umbrella is used. When there is sun or rain, you use it. Otherwise it is left in the corner and forgotten. That is the way most people use God. Though this is the type of treatment God receives from us, He is still forgiving. He understands our small finite minds and knows how much He can expect from us.*

*So we must practise complete surrender towards God. This Sharanagati is the easiest way to God. Total Sharanagati is as hard as Atma Vichara itself. But still for a beginner Sharanagati is the easiest path. All your worries, miseries and happiness, you must hand over to God. Don't throw only your worries at God's feet. Some people have that habit. That is not right, you must give everything to God and leave it there.*

*Nothing in this world is yours. Even your children are not yours. They belong to God. Your relations belong to God; your possessions belong to God. Even your body is not yours. In the final stage we must overcome even deha buddhi or body consciousness. Then alone we would reach that highest stage.*

## ***This path is for everyone***

*Some people may ask me, “Why should you tell an ordinary householder all these things? This is all too much for us.” I don’t think so at all. If we are educated and cultured, if we are able to read one sentence, then we should be able to understand this also.*

*I don’t think that a householder’s life is a licence given for all types of worldly pleasures. It does not mean drowning yourself in maya! No! The householder’s life does not mean one of absolute enjoyment. It is a training ground where we wash off all our desires. This is where a human being has to be taught and trained to control himself and to wash out his desires slowly and become a part of God.*

*Now a householder’s life is a perfect school or vidyalaya where you can learn self-control, self-discipline and self-purification. A lot of trouble comes to the householder. How many sacrifices he or she has to make! How much of responsibility he or she has to shoulder! Now if you were to use these chances instead of wasting time, do you know how high you would rise on the spiritual ladder? Suppose we did our duty with joy and grace instead of unwillingness? If we grumble and do our duty, it brings no good results. We must do our duty happily, joyously, however difficult it may seem.*

*Now, these circumstances in a human being's life can and must be used by him or her, to wash and purify himself completely, so that he can also stay at home and become a Jivanmuktha. There is no rule that you must go into a forest, discard everything and everybody, and then only attain that stage of jivanmukthi. There is no rule like that.*

*We have got the highest example in King Janaka. He stayed as a king and was supposed to be the highest of Gnani. Even Vyasa's son Suka, was sent to Janaka, to get his approval. Now you know how great is a Gnani who stays in the world and yet is not of it. The boat can be in the water but the water should not get into the boat. That is—we should not get ourselves involved in this world. We must do our duty correctly, yet not get involved. That is the ideal of a perfect human being's life. That is how we should lead our lives. The way it is generally lived brings us only unhappiness. We do not cherish high ideals. Therefore, all this trouble.*

*Now, here comes a sort of difficulty, — due to mental conflict. We want to surrender ourselves, but we have so much of our personal desires and ambitions, which stand in the way. By total and absolute surrender, you come to a state when there is no volition of your own. You won't wish for anything. You will not care for*

*what happens to you. Let anything happen. God can serve us a feast today, with all the courses, vadai, payasam etc. Tomorrow, He can give us just two or three curries and rice. The next day, one curry and rice. The next day perhaps only salt and rice. And the next day, maybe the rice is full of stones and worms!*

*This is only an example. Each day will be different. You cannot expect a full feast every day, but for each day you must cultivate the same outlook; perfect equanimity of character, accepting everything that comes to you as Prasadam from His Divine Hands, that is the attitude of one who has totally surrendered to God. That attitude, we must keep as our goal. We must walk and climb towards it. It cannot be gained overnight. Even in ordinary fields of human endeavor, we cannot secure results suddenly. If we want to go and buy a nice Kancheepuram sari, we must pay a very nice price also! In the same way, we have got to pay a price for this too. This is the highest achievement of man. Then, how can we expect to get it for nothing? In the physical world we have powerful laws. In the metaphysical world too, we have such laws. Therefore, do not expect to get something for nothing. It is just not possible.*

## ***How God looks after his own***

*People come to me and say, “Show me God at once”. Are you ready for it? Are you qualified to see God? Everything in this world needs qualifications; if you want to appoint a peon or a clerk, you ask if he has got certain qualifications. Then for Self-realization, the highest achievement of man, is it that no qualifications are necessary! We need so many qualifications! And the first one is self-purification. The easiest way to it is Sharanagati. Surrender yourself by leaving everything to God.*

*Now, this conflict comes, between God’s Will and the human will, We might say that we have surrendered but what happens is that the surrender is not complete. We can understand this when circumstances prove it. Something happens which we don’t like and we abandon God. We should not have personal or selfish desires. We must hand everything over to God, with perfect faith, trust, confidence and belief in Him.*

*Now you have your children. The mother is cooking in the kitchen while the child plays outside. The child does not think, whether the mother is*

*cooking the next meal, whether she has got gas, or vegetables or rice, she simply plays and when she is hungry she cries out “Ma! Give me rice! Give me food!” Then the mother gives her food. Now this is an ordinary human mother, then what about the Divine Mother, Mahalakshmi? Do you think She will not look after you? Do you have doubts about that? Then you don’t know God at all!*

*Suppose a person has surrendered completely, and I really mean surrendered, he or she need not worry about the next meal! I can give this to you in writing. You see, two plus two makes four. Given conditions produce given results. Let me tell you, if these conditions are there-total trust, belief, faith and confidence in God and total surrender of all your desires and wishes - you can be sure that you will be looked after by God. Divine Help is unfailing. Sri Krishna has said, “Ananyaas chintayanto maam yeh janah paryupaasathe/ Tesaam Nityaabhyuktanaam Yogakshemam vahaamyaham// To those devotees who think of Me to the exclusion of everything else, I give them what they lack and preserve what they have.” You live a good clean life, live the life God wants you to live and you will find that He comes to you and sees*

*that all your needs are met! And beautifully! I stand surety for it because I have experienced it, I do not know how many millions of times since I was born. I never bother about myself. I never think about myself! I don't want to know what is going to happen to me five minutes afterwards! I am just not interested. I have gone through so much of trials and tribulations in my life, which another person will be shocked to hear, if narrated. Many have asked me how I did it. By God's help! He did it for me! I have not thought even for a second, "Will God help me or not?" I have known from the bottom of my heart that God will help me! And He has! The same goes for you also, but you must do what I have done.*

## ***Aspire for the highest***

*I do not ask you to leave this world or renounce anything. This is my message: Live an honest, good, clean and a righteous life; with total trust, faith, confidence in God, and total surrender to God. Do this and the rest will be made easy. Success in your mental, physical, emotional and spiritual life will come. You must do it. I paid the price and got the reward. You pay the price and you will get the reward. Unfortunately, the ordinary people can't aspire for this. They prefer some third rate crown of this world, which anybody can topple. Can you see what happens in politics today? In a second people cross floors and a person who is a President or Prime Minister today is toppled. It lasts only for a second. But this is unchangeable glory. This grandeur and glory lasts forever.*

*Have we forgotten the names of Adi Sankara or Buddha or Vivekananda or Sri Ramakrishna? Even for that matter, people who have led grand, glorious lives in this world, like Mahatma Gandhi or President Lincoln? They are people on the path to God. The pleasure we are seeking for in this world is transient and temporary. It does not bring us true happiness.*

*True happiness is possible only when the mind is tranquil. When all the agitation, restlessness and turbulence of the mind have ceased, then alone we get peace of mind. To secure this we get Mano-shuddhi and Chitta-Shuddhi. This we must practise everyday. We must be careful not to think any evil thoughts. We must not do any evil actions. We must train ourselves. All jealousy, anger, resentment and greed are like cancer of the soul. It eats into us. It stops our spiritual and mental progress. So you must try to get rid of these things. Throw them out lock, stock and barrel. We want only good thoughts.*

*You may not have been lucky to get Guru upadesham. You must have certain spiritual qualifications to get it. It is not easily got. Nobody who knows anything about spiritual life will give it so easily. A disciple will be tested a hundred times over. That is a very high standard. Now, suppose you have not reached that standard, you must start wherever you are placed in life today. Let it be in the nursery. Let us climb. Don't get disheartened by thinking that "I have no chance, since I am so lowly and unworthy of all these things". Throw away this kind of thinking! Understand that God will bless anybody who tries. If a child in the nursery gets good marks, then he will be promoted. So live life well because when we pass from the first class, we go to the second. God is always*

*with us, helping and encouraging us, and patting us on the back if we do well. He is not like a human being. He is very understanding. When we call Him once, He answers ten times! But the sad part of it is that we don't even call Him once.*

*It is a very sad thing that human beings forget God in this world. When I see people drowning in maya, I feel upset. I feel like waking them up. Perhaps when I talk to you, some of you may wake up and think of God. But each soul has its time to wake up. I can only tell you, that's all.*

*Why tie yourselves into knots with unnecessary worries? You see, when you are travelling in a train, you do not put your luggage on your head! The place for it is the rack. You keep it there and sit down happily. Similarly why not hand over our worries to God? He is there and will look after everything for you.*

*Now, surrender does not mean irresponsibility (tamas). You do your duty correctly and leave the rest to God. There are certain things, which you can control, and certain others, which you cannot. Do your duty correctly and also what is in your power to control. There are certain things, which are inevitable. Understand that God's Will is supreme in the world. Then, why are we fighting it? Why not give in with good grace? There is a*

*prayer “O Lord! Grant that I may never seek to bend the straight to the crooked, your Divine Will to mine, but that I may ever seek to bend the crooked to the straight, my will to Thine!” We must always bend our will to God’s, as we are His servants, not His master.*

*How many people go to the temple when there is a festival or on an auspicious day-or, of course, when they are in trouble! When they go to the temple, they buy the smallest coconut they can. The poor shopkeeper knows that there is a certain type of coconuts used for God. He keeps these coconuts separate. If you ask for archana requisites he takes and gives you these. A small coconut, a couple of agarbathis, a little camphor and God has to be satisfied! Now what are we trying to do? Who is the receiver and who is the giver! Who gave you money to buy that coconut? Why not buy a big one? After all, God only gave you the money. And even then, the coconut is coming back to you as neyvedhyam. Why not break a big coconut, so that you may get a big one to eat at home? Think at least that way! I have seen this type of thing and I feel very sorry. It is most disheartening. Even though the money is going back to them (as blessings), these people don’t even want to give the archaka something. They ask for the whole thing back; and they forget the poor man earns his living only through this.*

## *Nobleness enkindles nobleness*

*Why not try to be generous? The more we give the more we get. By living good, charitable lives, we are not going to lose anything. "As one lamp lights another, nor grows less, so nobleness enkindleth nobleness". When you live like that, you set an example to others. They follow us. Therefore we have brought some light into the life of others.*

*The law of karma is inexorable. We cannot influence its course once we have set it in motion. Once we do something, that deed is done, whether it is good or bad. Every thought, it is said, goes three times round the world and comes back with interest. If you understand that, you will not be able to think a single bad thought. This law of karma is very important and our lives are hanging on it. This karma has brought us to this state we are in today, and tomorrow also, our lives are going to be circumscribed by this law again, because what we do today we are to harvest tomorrow; what we sow, we reap.*

*Therefore, you must be alert and aware. What does it matter what another person does? Why worry whether he is doing good or bad? You must learn to mind your own business! This type of concern for oneself*

*is not selfishness. It is only perfecting and purifying oneself. This is man's first duty. God did not say that you should look into other people's faults. Perfect yourself first. When we do that, we begin to ascend slowly towards God and will be more and more at peace with Him. In perfecting ourselves, we must also use Sharanagati. We must say, "All right, I have so much of anger and temper. You must help me and give me power to control it. Please God, take away my temper." Pray like that. Pray with tears in your eyes. Ask for help and it will come. But nobody prays like that. And then people say "We pray to God, but He does not reveal Himself to us?" How can He?*

*A certain man went to a saint and said, 'I want to see God very much.' The Guru said, 'Do you want to see Him? All right. I'll show Him to you!' He took the man to a river and held his head under the water for some time. The man started suffocating. He screamed to be released. The saint did so and asked him, "Now? What did you want most, under the water?" The man said, "I wanted a breath of air." The saint replied, "You wanted a breath of air most in the world, is it not? When you start wanting God in the same manner (i.e. to the exclusion of everything else), then you will see Him."*

*So, you must try to reach the highest stage. That is where you will find Meera and the other saints. But we must want God. At least now, in the early stages of your spiritual progress, try asking for things like this. Of course, I'm not saying that if someone is sick, you should not pray for his health etc. But, one who is totally surrendered does not think of that also. Don't use God like a kamadhenu or a kalpavriksham. When you go to a king, you must not ask for brinjals or ladies-fingers! You must ask him for the precious gems that he has got, ask him for that. He will give them to you. Don't ask God for the things of this world, because they are transient. Ask for things which He alone can give you; which no one else in the world can give you.*

## ***Draupadi's surrender***

*You all know the story of Draupadi. As long as she hung on to the sari that Duhshasana was pulling at, even though she was calling Sri Krishna, there was no response. She called to her husbands, then she called to Bhishma and all the elders of the assembly, but nobody could save her; no human being got up. Then she knew, that in spite of having five husbands there was nobody to save her, except God. So she called Sri Krishna, still holding on to her sari. Sri Krishna was there, but was waiting for her Sharanagati to be complete. As long as she held on to her sari, He did not help. But when things became too horrid for her, she put up both her hands in total Sharanagati. Total surrender and a desperate call to Sri Krishna. Then immediately the miracle happened. You see that is the finest example of surrender.*

*You must be like that. Your ego must be surrendered at God's feet. Give everything to Him. It was He who gave it to you. In short, everything belongs to Him. Then what are we trying to hand back? We have to understand that nothing belongs to us.*

*Just because a couple get married, it does not follow that they should have a string of children. There are so many couples that don't have any children<sup>1</sup>. It is*

*God who gave life to the children. So, to that God, what can we give except our love for and surrender to Him? Even then, He is not the gainer. He is not the receiver. We are the gainers and the receivers. So, understanding this, we must, with total humility, surrender our egos to Him. Then you will live a truly happy life. I repeat, this is not irresponsibility. Do your duty correctly and you will find that happiness within you. The kingdom of God is within you. In the Bhagavad Gita, Sri Krishna says, "I will look after the 'Yogakshemam' of those who have surrendered to me." You see, He is God and knows us very well. He says, "I'll give everything to you but please come to Me first, then I'll give you whatever you want" And when we reach Him, we find that we don't want riches at all. Now for instance, if you see a vision of God, you will not feel like looking at any picture of God, because the vision itself is so beautiful! Meditate after your prayer, say for about half an hour. Let it be one hour, if possible, because out of the 24 hours, we are giving only one to God!*

*As soon as you get up in the morning, have your bath and say your prayers. Only then should you do any other work.*

*When you are asked to go to a room, suppose that room is very dirty and unclean, you will think twice*

*about sitting there, is it not? This is what God is saying, "Clean yourself and into your heart and then will I come in. I cannot enter when it is dirty." We are so full of our Kama, krodha, madha, and moha.... Then how can He come in? God is Divine Purity.*

*You must make use of your life's experiences, day and night. Learn from them. You must constantly ask yourself, "What is the moral teaching behind all this?"*

*We must pray incessantly. There is no prayer that goes unanswered. We might think so, because it may not be answered on the spot. We should not want it at once. We must set no deadlines. If you set a deadline then you won't get any answer at all. You may pray to God, please do this for me. He will do it In His own time. We should not try to teach Him because He knows what is best.*

*A little bit of Bhakti should be practised every day with total surrender towards whichever Ishta Deva or Isha Devatha you have. Surrender your ego completely. First you can practise partial and afterwards total surrender. If you practise it, it should not be hard. We must learn to take a little trouble over this. We must try to make time for a little concentration and meditation. Try to read the scriptures. You can read - 'Atma Bodha', 'Vivekachudamani', 'Bhagavad Gita' etc. If you are*

*interested, you read the 'Upanishads'. People come and ask me, "Why do you give this greatest highest Gnana to ordinary people? I do not think that is right." There are no extraordinary or ordinary people. It is left to individuals, if anybody wants, he can be extraordinary at any time. It is his or her wish and intense yearning and aspiration that make him or her different from others. I never thought that I was better than the others. The only thing is that I had absolute love for God and surrendered totally to Him. I was not deluded by this maya. Therefore, I have attained unity with God. This anybody can achieve. So from tomorrow onwards I hope that all of you will practise and try to achieve that great, eternal happiness, which is there for everybody to achieve in this life. In this janma itself, you can get Atma Gnana if you wish and it is not beyond anybody who truly and seriously strives for it.*

*You must do true Abhyasam for it. Do your duty with complete alertness and total surrender. Nishkamy karma is what you must do, not only in the pooja room, but also when you come out of it. Not a minute should be wasted. Within the framework of Dharma, you must live a good householder's life and set an example to others. If you persevere, surely, by God's grace, you can get Atma Gnana in this birth itself.*

*So I pray that God will bless you all, give you,  
more bhakti and Gnana and point out the way to Him to  
you.*

***Narayana!***

Have you read Her Holiness Sri Sathguru Swami Gnanananda Sarasvathi's

# WHO RECEIVES GOD'S GRACE?

**Divine Grace can be quite difficult to attain, very hard maybe and the process is heart-rending sometimes, but it still comes.**

**It is worthiness that matters.**

**How worthy is the Devotee to receive it.**









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