

Satsang by Swami Amar Jyoti

# Devotion to Sadhana

**It is up to us to make dharma our anchor by doing practices daily and doing our duties with love and care. Treat others with patience, love and kindness. If we cannot learn in the situation we are in, where shall we?**

**C**ONSERVATION OF ENERGY and regular practices are necessary on the spiritual path, not only fixed meditation times but increasing the time and practices as well. Many times we give excuses because of our incapacities. A little bit of variation is okay but laziness has no place. Do not watch the clock; dependence upon time is also a block. Keep your body and mind clean and pure as much as possible. Be compassionate to others so that your mind does not get disturbed. Avoid negativities, resistance, doubts, anxieties, fears, and weaknesses of all kinds. It may seem a lot of work but it is enjoyable because with each weakness you conquer you become stronger.



Maintain the balance between rest, work and practices. Study some to elevate your mind, but do not rely too much on reading. Read an inspiring book or article and then sit and pray, do your mantra or meditate. Whatever the results each day, maintain patience and perseverance. Do not do practices mechanically, simply because you have to do them, but with love in your heart. Then you will also enjoy them. Love and compassion soften your heart and give you peace, which injects more inspiration into your practices. Do not count the time, whether it is days, months or years—just keep practicing. That is the life of a good seeker. An advancing soul needs only a few things in order to realize the goal—protection from heat, cold, hunger and thirst, a few herbal medicines—then devote your mind and body to *sadhana*, spiritual practices.

Whichever spiritual goal you choose, you have to purify yourself first. See that you become free from negativities, resistance, doubts, weaknesses and self-importance. Clean and clear those impurities that create anxieties, fears and unnecessary worries. We have to face them and deal with them. A brave soul would not give much importance to those things. They need attention but not to the point where we lose our balance, peace of mind and spiritual power. The way to the goal is not through boasting or egotistical determination but by dealing with things with equanimity and not being overwhelmed by them. This needs a lot of practice. By this method you gain retention, which is called *dharana* according to Raja Yoga. Dharana gives you a foundation, making you foolproof so that weaknesses no longer degrade you. You may go up and down—that is normal in practices—but keep believing and having faith in yourself and in God that you can sustain the gains from your practices. It is not by pushing or demanding from yourself but by coming in tune and remembering your beautiful experiences or spiritual awakenings. Dwell on those until your consciousness begins to free itself.

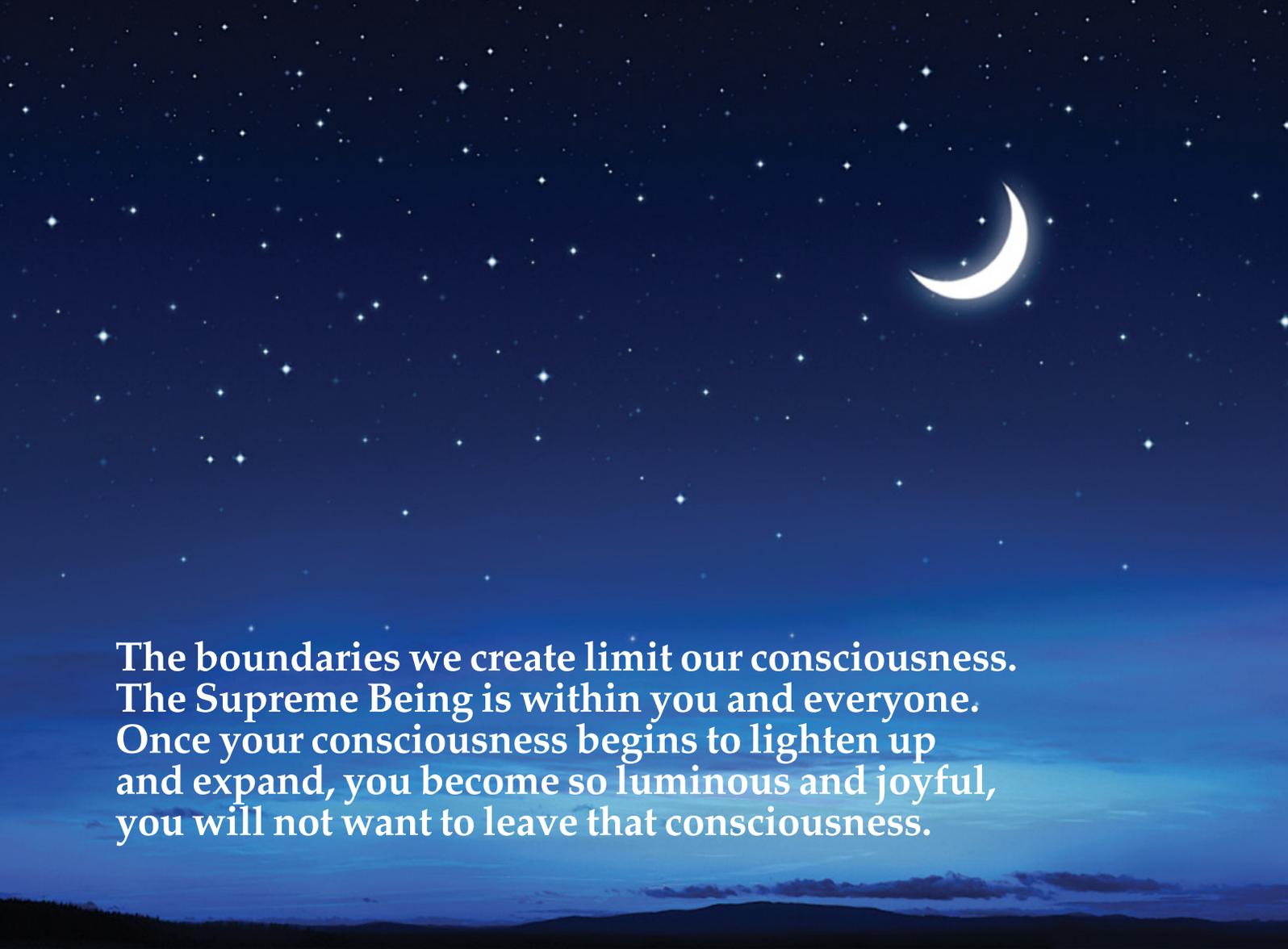
Humanity as a whole is obsessed with many trappings, believing that they are needed, realistic, logical and practical. We do not see the way out. That is how the parrot lives in the cage: believing only in the world it knows. If there is something outside the cage of our mind and body, most of us have lost remembrance of it. This forgetfulness is called *vismrti* in Sanskrit. Then we decorate the cage with art and music and culture;

we create a history of how and where it was built. Very few get the idea to come out of the cage. If I say, “This is a cage, come out,” they will just look at me like—“What are you talking about? Come out of the cage?” Their consciousness is trapped; they do not even know they are in bondage.

Sages and holy men teach us how to live in the world and be peaceful and happy. There is a vast Consciousness where there is joy and peace; it is inclusive, cosmic. To get to that you have to concentrate upon your chosen ideal, your chosen God, your chosen holy Name or form, and just meditate with love in your heart—no back thoughts, no reservations, no doubts, no apprehensions, no fears. You are looking forward and upward in order to allow that Light to descend into you. But practices alone do not give the results. You have to avoid pitfalls, negativities and resistances, all that you call evil and bad. There is no compromise in that.

You have to learn how to deal with others with compassion, forgiveness and tolerance. Even if you are insulted, it is better to stand that loss and not lose your equilibrium. That is very important to maintain your focus and concentration. Even if someone says harsh words and you do not reply or react, but if you carry a feeling inside that you have been wronged it will keep disturbing you. If you are wrong, correct it. If another person is wrong, let it go. This is the characteristic of the seeker: to maintain peace and equilibrium so that when you sit at the lotus feet of your God in meditation, you are soaked in love.

The boundaries we create limit our consciousness. The Supreme Being is within you and everyone. Once your consciousness begins to lighten up and expand, you become so luminous and joyful, you will not want to leave that consciousness. I remember a song that they sing in Bengal about Divine Mother: “Who says my Mother is dark?” meaning Kali. If you ever see Her you will see Her beauty. It is so magnetizing—you will never leave Her. Kali is painted black because She



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symbolizes death and time, which involve darkness. Also She takes the sins of humanity, the darkness of the children, on Herself; that makes Her dark. She is very beautiful. This Consciousness seems illusive, intangible, but once you touch that, even imperceptibly, it is very captivating.

Your job as a seeker, as a disciple, as one who wants to see the Light, is not to take the law into your hands but to leave up to God. At no cost let yourself become agitated, even if you feel justified. Just play your part and do your duty, whatever are your propensities and temperament. Forgiveness, patience and letting go are essential. Fighting for rights is a part of human life but not for seekers of Enlightenment. There is a story of a saint in India who was sitting on a chair, leaning against a wall talking with someone. Neither of them noticed a scorpion on the wall until it bit him on the shoulder. His shoulder was bare as they do in tropical countries, and the holy man just shed off that scorpion and allowed it to go. The other person told him, "It stung you—you

didn't even kill it?" The saint replied, "He did his job, I did mine." See if you can be like that. This doesn't mean you should go and sit among snakes and scorpions and let them harm you. You'll be finished! But what I mean is to forgive, let go and forget. That is the job of the seeker.

If you want to carry on a good religious life and also a good mundane life, then there are other morals. You need not give tit for tat, a tooth for a tooth, but at least you can react against injustice and fight for the good cause. But if you want to reach the goal of Enlightenment, if you want to touch your Supreme Being within you, then morals are different. The way is cut and dry. To the degree you compromise, the results are compromised. The spiritual path has been likened to "walking barefoot on the razor's edge." Not literally, but it requires pure unalloyed, undistracted, concentrated, one-pointed focus on the goal. The Vedas say that we have to do some work for the maintenance of the body. Krishna told Arjuna: "If I stop working, the worlds will collapse. Even I am working." Keep



the balance of body, mind and *prana* or life force. We generally rest the body but we also need to rest the prana. That rejuvenates and regenerates our vitality. In order to come in harmony and balance, we need a lot of relaxation. We have to see what agitates us: whether it is food or associations, certain literature, exercise or recreation. Others may be okay doing various things, but see what is okay for *you*. By these methods you might lose certain things in the worldly sense, but remind yourself that you are a seeker; those losses do not mean anything.

Choices are always up to us; nobody can dictate what your choices should be. But whatever you choose, you stand responsible for its results. There are three kinds of karmas or choices: those that you wish and choose by your own willingness; those that someone chooses for you and you somehow go along with them; those that you do not wish but you are led to do by circumstances. In all three kinds you are responsible for the results. So whatever you choose, you have to be very careful. Do not choose because I teach you or someone else influences you. Each one hears what he wants to hear or remembers what he wants to remember;

therefore it comes to personal choices. Be sure that you are genuinely, honestly and sincerely choosing and standing by your choice, because the results will be yours. Do not say, "Oh, I didn't think this would happen." It is too late at that time; you have to pay the price. Not only is ignorance no excuse; ignorance is the greatest sin. Why are you ignorant in the first place?

Ignorance is denial of God's creation. It is negation of the Light. "Why did He give me the capacity to negate?" You wanted your free will; now it is up to you how you use it. You asked for certain things that brought suffering. "But then, I didn't know." That is the whole point. Now you are hearing and knowing: are you going to do anything about it? If you are genuine and honest, do it now. Real seekers do not lament; once they know, they start doing. What is gone is gone. Do it now with faith, reliance, sincerity, honesty and freedom from laziness. Do it with a heart full of love for the Lord, and compassion and kindness for others. Do your duties according to your *dharma*, not as you want or wish or what your ego tells you to do. Do as dharma dictates. There is a Sanskrit aphorism, *Dharma rakshati rakshitaha*, which means: "If you take

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care of dharma, dharma will protect you and lead you toward your goal." This is the way to reach your pure Consciousness. Do it with no complaints, no regrets, no doubts, no anger, no greed, and with no back thoughts that others did wrong to you. Just forget it and let go. Departed ones, bless them if you can, pray for them, but do not lament. This is the way to free your mind so that when you sit in meditation your consciousness opens up. It is always within us.

As spiritual seekers we are too busy with objective things. We go on collecting more and more machines and defusing our own energy and capacity. We have lost touch with many of our faculties, our hidden powers and latent knowledge, by our dependence upon so many external things. Go within and you will find everything. As you keep doing practices regularly with a peaceful mind, you will find infinite wonders opening within you. Whether you are virtuous or a sinner, whether you are old or young, do not think about these things. Amidst all incapacities and weaknesses, just start doing. Follow the dharma. Do not hurt anyone. Practice regularly, and have faith that within you the whole cosmos exists—God, your Supreme Being, your Spirit, the Light. To tap that faith you need regular sadhana. One who is perfected in sadhana is called *siddha*.

In order to achieve Enlightenment you need two things, like the two wings of a bird: avoid whatever disturbs you by maintaining your inner equilibrium (called *abhyasa* on the yoga path) and sadhana. If you have these two, you need not even use analysis or logic for why you should forgive someone. If you have to suffer their wrongs again for the time being, that is paying off your karma. There is no such thing as endless suffering, even from a seemingly bad person. There have been evil people such as Ravana, Kamsa

and Judas, but even their karmas had an end. Ravana, the demon king who abducted Rama's wife Sita, was transformed at the time of his death. Kamsa, the evil king who imprisoned Krishna's parents and murdered all of Krishna's siblings, did not repent, but in his next birth he had to start all over again. Judas hung himself. Evil is not eternal. If you start hating an evil person, you will become disturbed and react to him or her. It is endless. How many will you react to?

You have to learn how to swim artfully within the waves of the world. If you wait until all the waves subside, it will never happen. You have to learn how to live with diverse people and situations. By not fighting back, by maintaining your peace, truthfulness, forgiveness and kindness, your mind remains undisturbed. That is the path of yoga and thereby you are becoming a yogi. The Yoga Sutras proclaim, *Yogas chitta vritti nirodhah*: "That is yoga whereby you subside and silence your *vrittis*," which are the modifications and disturbances of your mind. No logic, analysis or justification is valid for allowing our minds to be disturbed reacting to anyone or anything around us.

Therefore we advise you to first go within and remember any glimpse, vision or even imagined experience of something spiritual. Whether it is God or Light or Consciousness, just concentrate on that. This is dharana, the retention or concentration, which is the sixth level on the eightfold path of Yoga. When you are quiet and concentrated, things no longer disturb you. You can then focus on your chosen goal or ideal. And when that deepens it becomes meditation. You will not want to leave that; it is so self-satisfying. As one saint humorously commented: "With a real meditator you will have to pry open their eyes with a pair of tongs." You become completely unaware of your surroundings. When you reach this depth of meditation, you are nearing the goal. By that time the world has vanished for you. This may not be for everyone and I am not saying you should do this—but that is how intoxicating this level of absorption is.

Real meditation is quite beyond what we normally call meditation. You have conquered the disturbing elements of your mind, disturbing situations, surroundings and people. As stated in Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, *Yogah karma sukaushalam*: "The way of yoga is to tactfully conquer the disturbances within you and around you." Therefore you are able to divert your mind within to your chosen God, your ideal and focus. You might

A person is shown in silhouette, sitting in a meditative lotus position on a light-colored tiled floor. In the foreground, three lit candles of varying sizes are arranged, casting a warm glow. The background is softly blurred, suggesting an outdoor or brightly lit indoor space. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

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still get some disturbances of mind—these are what we call traces or *samskars*—but by practicing on and on your aspiration matures and you become more saturated. Gradually your practices deepen and somehow you are pulled in like a magnet—and that you cannot leave.

At that point, for the great advanced seekers, nothing else matters. Days, months and years may pass away. Today we may call them selfish or impractical, but tomorrow they will be the ones we worship. One yogi, one mystic, one Realized soul holding that

concentration creates a balance that affects billions. This is not poetry. Such advanced souls, even if they are sitting in a cave or under a tree, send their vibrations to all of humanity and beyond. They are so compassionate, so kind. When you begin to deepen your practices you will find that the Pure Consciousness within you—call it God, Light, Liberation, Mother Divine—is very captivating. You will find worlds and worlds and galaxies within you, literally. Great mysteries and powers will open up. You will no longer be the individual you are now. The dark side of nature—meanness, egotism and arrogance—you will see as shallow rubbish. You will wonder why you ever clung to it. There was no reason; you were just dabbling in ignorance, trapped in bondages.

It is not by egotistical determination or assertion but by the way of humility that we become instruments of God. It needs a lot of purification and practices to do this. It is not only joyful for you but for others as well. In spite of any problems or circumstances or surroundings, you will all of a sudden feel joyful. You will deal with the problems but still feel joyful. I am not telling you to stop doing your duties but to change your outlook. Act according to dharma, the law, the justice, with harmlessness. Avoid selfishness, greed and clingy attachments. Take care of everything and everyone with the sense of righteousness, not self-righteousness. Love and care for your children, your parents, your husband or wife and others, but devote your mind and heart to God. This is the way the world will change.

It has to start with you and me, but don't take the egotistical attitude that we are chosen ones who will bring about world transformation. Many have thought this since centuries and they are no more. The way starts with you. Change yourself first, transform yourself, purify yourself. Be kind, compassionate, and help as much you can, but devote your heart and soul to your chosen ideal, to God. That is number one. While keeping that pole star before you, perform your duties. Then you will do everything for God. And whatever is obstructing, whatever is wrong with your body and mind, will begin to change. God doesn't want those wrongs, so you will have to change.

Even if your relatives, friends, and others misunderstand you, forgive them. Do not agitate. "I have a problem—they don't understand me." It is not a problem; you are making it a problem. If they do not understand, just leave it there. Don't fight with them.

See that at least they get the example that you are in peace. If you agitate or fight they will say, "If this is the result of what you have learned, what have you gained except another label?" You have to prove by your example that you are more peaceful, more joyful and easier to live with. It is up to us to make dharma our anchor by doing practices daily and doing our duties with love and care. Treat others with patience, love and kindness. If we cannot learn in the situation we are in, where shall we? Who else will try your patience if not your wife, husband, child, parent, co-worker or co-disciple? Who else will teach you?

It is our own selfishness that comes in the way every time. Everyone wants others to do their own bidding. That is why separations and divorces are so common. In a majority of the cases it is because people do not get what they selfishly want, not because things are really wrong. Those who are selfish, those who hurt others, are really the weakest ones. They are constantly focused on "me" only. They have lost their humanity and their capacity to live with fellow beings peacefully and harmoniously.

Develop your focus and concentration. Make yourself immune to disturbances so that you do not blame those outside you. Learn how to live so that you do not get disturbed in spite of whatever circumstances are present. When you achieve this tranquility, peace and imperturbability, you are fit to sit in meditation. There is an unfathomable treasure within us, full with Light, and this is the way to tap it. So continue to practice day in and day out, do your duties according to your dharma, and dedicate your heart and mind to your goal. That will usher in the Golden Age, the New Age, not only for you but for others as well. 🌸

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