



Live in the Spirit of Yoga

*Birthday Message
by Swami Jyotirmayananda*

YOU ARE A pilgrim journeying through the world of time and space. You are seeking to discover your essential nature which is *Sat-Chit-Ananda*—Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Absolute. But due to ignorance you have identified yourself with the ego-center, which is ever tossed by the waves of the mind. Thus, you are trying to find the fulfillment of your inner spiritual hunger through the perishable objects of this world.

How can the light of the Self be discovered in the encircling gloom of illusion? How can eternity be encompassed in the realms of time? How can infinity be reached in this limited world? How can perfection be realized in a world that is conditioned by time and space?

Yoga is the answer to these questions. In spite of the fact that the human personality seems to be encompassed in a world of time and space, one's deeper spirit seeks to realize its essential nature, which is transcendental, supra-mental and spiritual. All religions of the world are emphatic in proclaiming that man is essentially Divine. The Upanishads declare, "Thou Art That," meaning that you are not this perishable personality, but you are the eternal Self.

In fact, at the core of your existence you are not an individual personality. You are the Absolute Self or *Brahman*, which underlies all names and forms. In the depths of your being you encompass the heavens and the earth, and you far surpass them. You are like the ocean, of which the world of time and space is

nothing but a passing wave. You exist to realize your eternal nature through intuitional Enlightenment.

Do not lose sight of your goal. You can attain freedom from the bondage of the world-process even in this very life. Live in the spirit of Yoga. Do not pursue the objects of the senses, considering them to be the true objectives of life. You have done so through millions of embodiments, but yet you are not fulfilled. If your mind continues to be dominated by the illusions of the sense-enjoyments, the karmic process does not terminate. Led by desires and cravings, you continue to incarnate from one embodiment to another, encountering numerous relatives, passing through numerous conditions of pleasure and pain.

LEARN TO BE good in order to tear yourself away from the network of illusions. However, your goodness must be founded on increasing insight of the fact that you are the Non-dual *Atman* and not this passing personality, and that all beings are essentially rooted in the ocean-like Self. Your practice of virtue should not be aimed at the attainment of the perishable joys of the heavenly worlds (astral planes), but rather at the attainment of liberation from the wheel of birth and death.

Practice non-violence in daily life. Since the universal Self dwells in all, and you are that universal Self, you should not set up waves of anger and hatred towards anyone. How can a person develop hatred towards his very teeth when they happen to injure

his tongue? When you have a vision of oneness, you do not develop anger, but you exercise patience and endurance, and try to promote harmony and understanding. This is the lofty ethical ideal based upon the philosophy of Vedanta.

Let not the negative in you win the battle of your life. If you exercise anger and hatred in order to promote a comfortable condition in this world, you are allowing the negative in your lower self to become victorious. By doing so, you are turning away from the inner voice of conscience that emanates from your higher self, and which is beckoning you to realize your essential nature of limitless glory.

With non-violence as the basis, deck your personality with the wondrous blooms of Divine virtues: patience, humility, sincerity, purity, contentment, endurance, faith, devotion to God, universal love and self-effacement. When your personality then becomes a channel for the revelation of the Non-dual Self, it becomes like a tree covered with heavenly flowers of Divine virtues, the fragrance of which continues to uplift humanity for a long, long time.

BEING A YOGI is not a selfish project, seeking freedom from sorrow just for oneself. Rather, the inward movement for perfection is the only most effective method of promoting true harmony and goodness in this world.

No one has ever done a greater service to humanity than those who have sought the spiritual values of life while experiencing the transient conditions of the world. Humanity is eternally indebted to Christ, Buddha, Rama, Krishna, and all the Sages and Saints of all times and places, for they alone have continued to kindle the flame of faith that illumines the transcendental path leading to the attainment of the ultimate Goal of Self-realization.

Develop a childlike faith in the innate wisdom of God, which sustains all the passing conditions of this perishable world. If you discipline your mind and senses, and attune the strings of your personality to the eternal melody of the Self, you are bound to draw to yourself the most favorable conditions for your spiritual evolution.

A flower blooms, and it draws to itself bees from distant places. It does not have to advertize, it does not have to plan and scheme. Much in the same manner,

when you relax your egoistic involvement and pursue your duty in a spirit of surrender, you draw to yourself all that is beneficial and uplifting for your soul. In this process even what appears as an adverse situation is only a Divine opportunity masked in adversity. For an aspirant this world is Divine, and it presents perpetual opportunities for one's spiritual upliftment. What is actually needed in the sincere aspirant is a change of inner attitude and a deeper faith in the Divine Hand that guides all the movements of this world.

BECOME A PRACTITIONER of Integral Yoga. Blend an inward enquiry of "Who am I?" with an outward life of dynamic selfless service of humanity. Unite the spirit of surrender to God with a ceaseless self-effort to ascend to the heights of spiritual love. Harmonize a life of inward meditation with the confrontation of the practical realities of your daily life. Grow not in a one-sided manner, but in an integral manner, and let your personality harmoniously develop reason, will, emotion and action—the four constituents of your personality.

It is only when musical strings are well-tuned that melody flows through them. So too, only when the strings of your personality are well-tuned by Yoga that the cosmic melody can flow through you. Only when a flute is unclogged does music emanate through it. So too, only when the flute of your personality is allowed to rid itself of the cloggings of egotistic vision does Lord Krishna play His eternal song through it. Therefore, allow the spirit of Integral Yoga to guide you, and become a perfect flute in the Divine Hands.

A person who lives in the spirit of Yoga participates in the universal adoration of the self, for the universe itself becomes his temple. His sensitive vision sees the mountains meditating on God, the oceans singing the praises of God, the rivers flowing in the spirit of selfless service to God. He sees the beloved face of God playing hide and seek through the dwindling shadows of the world-process.

May you live in the spirit of Yoga and realize the spiritual goal of your life. You are that eternal Self, you are bound to realize your essential nature. Intensify your self-effort, and fill your life with the eternal perfume from the mystic gardens of the heart—Vrindavana.