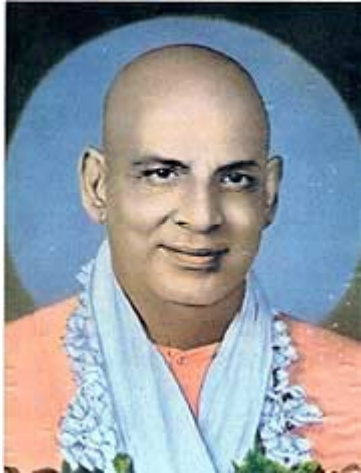



IDEAL OF MARRIED LIFE

Guidelines for happy household and family life

	
<p>Sri Swami Sivananda Founder of The Divine Life Society</p>	<p>SERVE, LOVE, GIVE, PURIFY, MEDITATE, REALIZE So Says Sri Swami Sivananda</p>

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CONTENTS

If you want to be really happy..... <i>FOLLOW AHIMSA</i>	1
Message to Newly Wed Couple	1
Sthree Dharma	3
Women.	4
Advice to Householders	5
Sanctity of Womanhood	6
Domestic Ethics	6
A Message to You	8
Sure Ways For Success In Life	9
The Sanctity of Marriage	9
A Spiritual Daily Routine For The Householder	11
Divine Life	12
Prayer.	13
The Universal Prayer	13

IF YOU WANT TO BE REALLY HAPPY..... FOLLOW AHIMSA

The Hindu doctrine of Ahimsa (Non Violence) is a comprehensive term and emphasises the value of Satya (Truth) Tyaga (Non-Covetousness) and Brahmacharya (Self-restraint).

“Meat diet is prohibited. Do not kill even for sacrifice (Yajna)”.

This is the teaching of the Hindu sages. The Statesman sage of Mahabharata, Bhishma censures animal slaughter even for sacrifice (Yajna).

The mighty faith of Mahavira, the prophet of Jainism reproclaimed the truth of the ancient Vedic Rishis.

Over and over again he taught ‘regard every living being as thy own self and harm no one’.

In his last sermon given on the last day of his earthly life Mahavira said “Destroy the bondage of Karma. Be kind to every creature” ‘O Man!’, he said “Thou art thine own friend”.

Yes—Man is his own friend, he also is his own enemy.

For there is the great cosmic law that what you do comes back to you. What you do unto others, you do unto yourselves. Therefore be kind to all, if you want to be really happy.

—Swami Sivananda

MESSAGE TO NEWLY WED COUPLE

Radiant Immortal Soul!
Blessed Couple;

Jai Sri Ram! May God bless you!

Upon this very happy and auspicious day of your sacred marriage, I pray to the Lord to shower His grace upon you both and grant you happiness, health, prosperity and success in life. I am very happy to give you this little message about the greatness and glory of married life and the sanctity of the home of a house-holder in the Grihasthashrama. This message, I give in the name of Parama Pujya Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj invoking his blessings and Guru-kripa upon you both. Receive this message with earnest attention. You will be greatly benefited.

The significance of married life is great indeed. Fortunate indeed is that couple who start married life with right understanding of its importance and greatness. Marriage is a sacred spiritual partnership between two souls who have come upon this earth to evolve an ideal life of nobility, virtue and Dharma and attain their goal of divine perfection through such ideal life. Therefore, the home of the married couple is a sanctified centre of spiritual life. The home is their place of worship, prayer, spiritual Sadhana and daily meditation. The cultural ideal of your holy motherland,

MESSAGE TO NEWLY WED COUPLE

Bharatavarsha, regards this second stage of a person's life, namely, the Grihasthashrama, as the sacred field for the practice of noble virtue, Paropakara and Dharma and for the awakening of your true inner spiritual nature. You are Divine Atman. You are not merely a physical creature or a mental-intellectual being but you are a spiritual being far superior to the lesser biological and psychological aspects of your temporary human personality. You are divinities without birth or death. Your eternal, imperishable, immortal, spiritual nature must be realised and experienced in this very life. To attain this wonderful experience the wife and the husband must help each other. They are mutual helpers in this grand adventure of ideal living and spiritual unfoldment.

The home is a sacred arena for the attainment of self-conquest and self-mastery which is more thrilling than the scaling of Mount Everest. The daily life of the Grihastha and his Grihalakshmi must be the sublime process of manifesting their inner divinity and expressing it outwardly through thought, speech and action. Lead this divine life. Truth, purity and universal love and compassion constitute the basic foundation of such divine life. The essence of divine life is selflessness and Seva, devotion and daily worship, concentration and regular meditation and to discriminate between the real and the unreal, the divine and the undivine, between the spiritual and the unspiritual.

Blessed couple! May you both lead such a divine life! Feel that your house is the abode of God. Make God the most important factor in your life. Give God the central place in your daily life. God who is the Lord of the universe is the master of your home also. Feel it a sacred privilege to be servants at His feet. Tell Him with deep feelings, "I am Thine, all is Thine, nothing belongs to me. Thou art everything O Lord. Bless me to worship You and to serve You in and through all beings." Feel God's divine presence always in your home. Feel that you are doing everything to please Him, to glorify Him. Make your home the holy house of prayer. Both of you must worship together, pray together and glorify God together. Uphold Dharma. Love and respect each other. Evolve the life of harmony, beauty and mutual regard. Develop noble character. Let moderation and a wise self-control be the keynote of your life in all things. Create a sublime spiritual atmosphere within the home. Shine with lofty virtue. Let your life be an inspiration to other young couples. Make such an atmosphere at home that one who enters your home must feel at once inspired and elevated. Such is true success in life. In such a home Satya-Yuga will prevail. Kali-Yuga cannot enter there. Such a home is Vaikuntha on earth. Such is the glory and greatness of Grihasthashrama.

Always regard your married life in its correct perspective and recognise its sanctity, spirituality and divinity. This is the wisdom. This is the way to joy, peace and blessedness. This is the secret of spiritualising all your activities and living Yoga in daily life. Thus the home-life will become the gateway to immortality, spiritual perfection and divine realisation. Verily, Grihasthashrama, when it is rightly understood and nobly lived, becomes the great portal to eternal blessedness and liberation. Our salutations and adorations to ideal married couples who are visible divinities and worthy of our worship. In that home where dwell the Pativrata Nari and her loyal and devoted husband like Bhagavati Mother Sita and Maryada-Purushottama Lord Rama there the Devatas from Devaloka come to offer worship and feel themselves sanctified. All the sacred rivers like Ganga, Yamuna and Sarasvati abide in such an ideal home. That home is sacred like Varanasi, Prayaga, Ayodhya, Mathura and Dwaraka. May this world be blessed by such ideal married couples, and such sacred houses of ideal Grihasthashrama! I wish you joy and peace. May your life be radiant like the shining sun and bring light into the lives of many others! Hari Om Tat Sat!

With regards, Prem and Prayers for your highest welfare and happiness,

Yours, at the feet of Sri Gurudev,
(Swami Chidananda)

STHREE DHARMA

Duties of a Woman

Manu says “Let a woman attend to her household duties most cheerfully and with great dexterity, keep her utensils and apparel clean, her home tidy, her furniture free from dust, all eatables pure, clean and free from dirt. Let her never be lavish in expenditure. Let her cooking be done so nicely that the food may act on the system like a good medicine and keep away disease. Let her keep a proper account of income and expenditure and show it to her husband, use her servants properly and see that nothing goes wrong in the house.” (Chapter V-50).

“Let the husband and the wife read and recite the Vedas and other Shastras that soon give increase of wisdom, teach the means of acquiring wealth and promote their welfare. Let them also carefully revise what they have studied during their student life and teach the same. As far as a man thoroughly understands the Shastras, so far as can his knowledge advance and so far may his love for them grow.” (Manu IV-19, 20).

She should do such noble actions which would please her husband and would bring him glory, honour, faith in God and the final attainment of God-consciousness. She should be humble, active and straightforward. She should have a knowledge of the duties of the Grihasthis. She should herself do all the works of the house. She should know cooking well.

She should respect all her husband’s relatives. She must serve her old mother-in-law and father-in-law. She must do prostration to old ladies in the house, father-in-law, mother-in-law, Sadhus, Sannyasins and Bhaktas. She must give alms to poor people, Sannyasins and Brahmacharins when they come to her house. She should give blankets and clothes to Sannyasins. She should treat the guests and friends of her husband with respect. She should invite them for dinner on auspicious days. She should serve poor and sick people, Sadhus and Sannyasins. She should be charitable and spend one-tenth of her husband’s income in charity. She should cut the coat according to the cloth. She should never live beyond the income of her husband. She should never borrow. She should make both ends meet. She should never allow the expenditure exceed the income of her husband. She should have a very large heart, she should get up at four in the morning and practise meditation. She should wake up her children also at this time and make them do Japa and Kirtan.

The sleeping apartment must be furnished with the pictures of saints, Rama, Krishna, Narayana, Siva. Husband, wife and children will draw inspiration when they look at the pictures. The child in the womb is influenced by the sentiments and emotions of the mother. If she studies daily Ramayana or Bhagavata and leads a pious life during her period of pregnancy, she will give birth to a noble and pious child.

Napoleon's mother always kept with her pictures of Greek and Roman heroes and sang songs of these heroes. Thus the heroic spirit was created in Napoleon while he was dwelling in the womb of his mother. Abhimanyu learnt the way to go inside the Padma Vyuh (Chakravayuha) when he was in his mother's womb.

Mother is the first Guru. The child learns the alphabet from the mother. The child learns to speak from its mother. She may make him a saint or a ruler or a rogue. She imparts her virtues to her child with the milk.

—*Swami Sivananda*

Annadana purifies the heart of the giver. One who does charity of food and delights in feeding others, develops cosmic love or universal brotherhood.

—*Swami Sivananda*

WOMEN

Modesty is the ornament of women. To go beyond the boundary of modesty, to behave like a man, destroys the elegance, grandeur, grace and beauty of the fair sex. Nothing can atone for the want of modesty in a woman, without which beauty is ungraceful. Modesty is a fundamental virtue which a woman ought to possess. Modesty is a wonderful mixture of humility, politeness, decency, elegance, gentleness and sweetness. Modesty is the most precious ornament of a woman. A modest woman is restrained by a sense of propriety. She has good behaviour and manners. Modesty is the mark of true nobility. A woman without modesty is a flower without fragrance. A woman without modesty is a mere void although she possesses many other virtues. Modesty raises a woman to the status of divinity. A modest woman commands respect.

O Devis! do not waste your lives in fashion and passion. Open your eyes. Walk in the path of righteousness. Preserve your Pativrata Dharma. See divinity in your husband.

—*Swami Sivananda*

ADVICE TO HOUSEHOLDERS

I will tell you a very, very easy method of Sadhana by which you can attain God-consciousness even while you live in the world amidst multifarious activities. You need not have a separate place or room and time of meditation. Close your eyes for a minute or two once in every two or three hours and think of God and His Divine qualities such as Mercy, Love, Peace, Joy, Knowledge, Purity, Perfection and so forth during work and repeat mentally HARI OM or SRI RAM or RAM RAM or KRISHNA KRISHNA or any Mantra according to your liking. Feel that the body is a moving temple of God, your office or business house is a big temple or Vrindavan and every activity such as walking, talking, writing, eating, breathing, seeing, hearing, etc., are offerings unto the Lord. Work is worship. Work is meditation.

Give up expectation of fruits and idea of agency (I am the doer. I am the enjoyer). Feel that you are an instrument in the hands of God and He works through your organs. Feel also that this world is a manifestation of the Lord or Visva Vrindavan and your children, wife, father and mother are the images of the same Lord. See Him in every face and in every object. Have a cool balanced mind always. If you develop this changed angle of vision and Divine Bhava in dally life by protracted and constant practice, all actions will become Yogic activities. All actions will become worship of the Lord. This is quite sufficient. You will get God-realisation quickly. This is dynamic Yoga. This is very powerful Sadhana. I have given you a very easy Sadhana.

Write daily for half an hour in a notebook your Ishta Mantra, observing Mowna and without turning to the other sides. Write down in bold types on slips of paper “SPEAK TRUTH”, “OM PURITY”, “I MUST REALISE GOD NOW”, “I AM AN EMBODIMENT OF PURITY, MERCY, LOVE, AND PATIENCE”,—and fix them in bedroom, dining hall, front-rooms and verandah. Keep some slips in your pocket and diary also. This is an easy way for developing virtuous divine qualities.

May the Lord bless you all!

—Swami Sivananda

Love and service are two keys to Divine Life. Religion and life are not two but one. Lead the Life Divine.

—Swami Sivananda

SANCTITY OF WOMANHOOD

1. Woman is the Divine power on earth.
2. Woman is the first teacher of man.
3. See woman as the Energy of God.
4. Woman is the Sajiva Maya or Chaitanya Maya.
5. Woman is an embodiment of sacrifice, Ahimsa and patience.
6. If she is weak in striking, she is strong in suffering.
7. Woman is an embodiment of patience, gentleness, softness, sweetness, service and Ahimsa.
8. Woman has innate sweetness. She is kind, tender and affectionate. She has a motherly heart. So she is fit for Bhakti-Yoga.
9. The women of India have preserved the spiritual character of our society.

—Swami Sivananda

DOMESTIC ETHICS

(1) Yoga At Home

Sometimes the house becomes a hell when there is no religious unity between husband and wife. If the husband is religious, the irreligious wife does not allow him to study religious books, to sit in meditation, to visit holy places of pilgrimage, to practise Brahmacharya and to have Satsanga with great souls. She is afraid that he will become a Sannyasin even though he gives a solemn pledge that he will not do so. There are always quarrels in the house between husband and wife. The husband has no peace of mind even though he earns a decent sum and has got all the earthly comforts. The wife threatens the husband, “I will burn all your religious books as study of these books has only produced a change in you and you are neglecting me and do not take any interest in household affairs. I will throw stones at the head of the man who has written these books and has inspired you to take recourse to Yogic practices. Fools only will practise Yoga”. How can men live happily with such ignorant and irreligious women? It is better to dwell in the midst of Asuric women like Tataka in the forest than to remain in the company of such horrible women who disturb the peace of the house. If your wife stands in your way of doing spiritual practice mildly suggest to her that you will take to Sannyasa. Then she will come to her senses.

It is the duty of the husband to train his wife also in the religious line. She must do some Japa, and Kirtan. She must study religious books such as Ramayana, Bhagavata and Mahabharata.

She must take recourse to occasional fasting. He must take her to places of pilgrimage and attend discourses and Kathas conducted by Mahatmas. The wife must help the husband in his religious and Yogic practices. Then only the house will be a blessed place.

Some have taken Sannyasa on account of the bad behaviour of their wives and their hindrance to Yogic practices at home. If they allowed their husbands to continue their practices and helped them, they would have remained in the Grihastha Ashram. It is the duty of intelligent girls to co-operate with their husbands in leading a religious life at home. Then only can both lead a life of peace and happiness at home. The scriptures declare, "Without religion a house is a burial ground though it is a palace."

The husband also should not interfere with the religious practices of his wife. He should help her in all possible ways in her spiritual evolution and purity of life.

May there be temperamental, psychological and spiritual unity between the husband and wife! May the husband help the wife and *vice versa* in religious and Yogic practices! May God-realisation be your watchword! May purity be your maxim! May Dharma be your guide!

(2) To Husbands And Wives

Quarrels arise daily in the house between the husband and the wife on account of misunderstanding and difference of opinion. The wife thinks that the husband should obey and please her in all respects. The husband thinks that the wife should obey and please him in all respects. Is this possible? No. And so they quarrel every hour. It may not come into regular fisticuffs and blows at all times, but they will not speak for some hours in the day. Sometimes there will be boxing and caning also if the husband is short-tempered and lacks self-control. At other times the husband breaks the vessels when he loses his temper. If the wife is like Xanthippe (wife of Socrates) or Jijibai (wife of Tukaram), the table will be turned. There will be thunder and rain on the husband's head. Sometimes the wife, when she becomes angry, refuses to cook the food and lies down in the bed drawing a blanket over her body and head under the pretext of severe stomach-ache. The poor husband runs to the hotel to take his meals in order to catch the pilot train to go to his office. Sometimes the wife goes to her mother's house without informing the husband. The poor shameless weak-willed husband runs to his mother-in-law's house to bring her back with fresh glowing, golden promises and entreaties.

The wife must be ever ready to receive a volley of abuses when the dishes are not prepared to the fastidious taste of her husband. These are only minor, unimportant causes for daily quarrels. The major causes are too numerous to be mentioned here. You already know them in full and in detail also.

But still, if you ask a householder, "Which is better; a householder's life or a life of a Brahmachari?" surely he will say "Householder's life is thousand times better than the life of a celibate". He will vehemently fight with all his clumsy arguments to support his view. Do remember the story of the king who took birth as a pig and was rejoicing with his piglings. His case is similar to this king.

People have neither discrimination, dispassion nor subtle sharp intellect. Hence they are not able to know things in their true light. Their intellects are clouded, perverted, turbid, intoxicated and veiled by passion, delusion, infatuation and ignorance. Hence they do not know what they are exactly doing.

When they are swayed with passion, husbands and wives forget all about their quarrels which occurred in the morning. They think that their life is a blessed one. They utter pleasantly some flowery speech for the time being, though there is no real union and love in the core of their heart.

Try to possess self-control. Rise above passions. Be pure. Develop good behaviour, good conduct. Control anger. Be regular in Japa, Kirtan, meditation and study of Gita. Lead a life of ideal householders. Go through the books “Advice to Householders” and “Sure Ways for Success in Life and God-realisation”. Put the instructions in daily practice.

O Ram! Treat your wife like a Devi. She is the queen or Lakshmi of the house. Where woman is honoured there is wealth, prosperity, success and peace. O Lila! Become a Pativrata. Do not quarrel with your husband. Become like Savitri, Anasuya or Sita.

May you all lead a life of Purity with devotion and attain the supreme blessedness in this very life!

—*Swami Sivananda*

Where there are kindness, humility and purity, there spirituality springs up, saintliness shines, divinity descends and perfection manifests itself.

—*Swami Sivananda*

A MESSAGE TO YOU

Radiant Immortal Atman!

Om Tat Sat! Homage unto the Divine! It is an immense happiness to me to address these few words to you today. May they be engraved in your heart and be enshrined in your thoughts!

Live with understanding and wisdom. Understand the meaning and purpose of life. Understand your real nature and why you are here. Here on earth you are but a passing traveller. Your real abode is that realm from whence you came. Here all things are temporary. All things pass. Therefore seek the Eternal. Your Real Nature is not earthly. It is spiritual and deathless. To realise your Reality, your eternal identity is the purpose of life. While you strive diligently for this inner experience, cultivate Ideal Relationship with this world around you. To all beings relate yourself

with nobility, sympathy, kindness, love, selflessness and the desire to serve all, SERVE HUMANITY AND SEEK DIVINITY. Compassion to all is the key to blessedness. Humility is the highest virtue. Truthfulness is the greatest treasure. Self-control is the supreme wealth to possess. Egoism is the worst blemish.

Be an ideal individual. Become a spiritually illumined soul. Thus crown your life with Wisdom, peace and blessedness. You will then become a blessing to all mankind. I wish you Joy and Peace.

—*Swami Chidananda*

SURE WAYS FOR SUCCESS IN LIFE

Have a simple and unassuming manner of life. Live not to eat, but eat to live. Bear no envy. Commit no slander. Speak no falsehood. Practise no deceit. Harbour no malice. You will be ever joyful, happy and peaceful.

Righteousness is the rule of life. Lead a virtuous life. Strictly adhere to Dharma. Human life is not human without virtues. Study the lives of saints and draw inspiration from them. Cultivate a melting heart, the giving hand, the kindly speech, the life of service, equal vision, and impartial attitude. Your life will, indeed, be blessed.

Lead a simple life. Lead a regulated life. Lead a hard life. Take hold of each day as if it were the last day, and utilise every second in prayer, meditation and service. Let your life become a continuous sacrifice to God.

Live in the present. Forget the past. Give up hopes of the future. Understand well the meaning of life, and then start the quest. Life is thy greatest gift. Utilise every second profitably. Success often comes to those who dare and act. It seldom comes to the timid. May you all attain success in life!

—*Swami Sivananda*

THE SANCTITY OF MARRIAGE

Householders should not forget even for a moment that marriage is a sacred thing. The sanctity of married life has to be realised in all its fullness and in all its seriousness. Marriage is a sacrament. It is not just the union of two bodies. That is the least important part of it. The husband and the wife should not think there is absolutely no love above their physical life. There is a love. Marriage is the bringing together by God (through some mysterious law which operates in this universe) of two souls in this vast, vast phenomenon called life in this vast stream of existence where countless millions of souls are moving in their individual planes of spiritual evolution towards the Divine. Through the Grace of God, through the Divine Will, and through the operation

THE SANCTITY OF MARRIAGE

of certain laws that govern this universal life, two souls are brought together. That is the meaning of marriage.

Through the coming together of these two souls, God means an important process to be worked out and that is the sharing of the spiritual impulse between the two. What they have earned, what they have learned, and their spiritual potential—the husband and the wife are to share. The husband is to enrich the spiritual life of the wife and the wife is to enrich the spiritual life of the husband and both are to go hand-in-hand toward the Supreme Attainment of the Divine Consciousness. That is the true, inner meaning of family life. Marriage is sacred. It is not to be treated lightly. It is not to be considered in a vulgar sense. Marriage is an alliance which is for something more than mere physical enjoyment, for something more than even the all-important purpose of the propagation of the race (though, to a limited extent, this is also a purpose of marriage). The offsprings of the husband and the wife are also to be spiritual beings, because they are other souls coming into this earth-plane to work out their own evolution. It is therefore, the sacred duty of the husband and the wife to provide an ideal home and the proper initial impulse to these souls that come as their children. The children are to be held in trusteeship for a while until they grow up and go out into the world. The growth and development of the children will be in accordance with their own spiritual nature, with their own spiritual evolution, with their own Karma which they have brought with them; yet, the mother and the father can give a great deal from their own lives to the initial spiritual unfoldment of their children until the children attain a stage when they can themselves mind their further spiritual evolution. If healthy spiritual ideas are implanted in the young minds from the early age, they are bound to sprout forth at a later stage and bring blessedness to the children.

And, as the children are to be brought up to respect the law of celibacy, of continence, until they are actually married, so the husband and the wife should adhere to the law of continence and celibacy; and for them, this law should operate in the form of a strict moderation of marital life. Marital life should be based upon self-control, not upon indulgence. Then, the wife should regard the husband as the only partner and vice versa. The wife should not have any other male and she should not think of any other man, but should be devoted to her husband; no thought of any other man should ever cross her mind. All the rest of humanity should be to her like children—she is the great Mother. The husband must have the vow which Rama had—the vow of the single spouse. That means that the thought of another woman will never enter his mind. To him, the only woman is his wife and their marriage ties are sacred. In this way the whole family set-up becomes sacred and holy and the interior life of the spirit goes on unhampered. There is nothing in the exterior life of the being to injure the spiritual life. There is nothing in the exterior life—either in the family life or in one's personal life to hold back or obstruct the spiritual life.

And thus, both husband and wife go in perfect harmony, and their lives, on the dual wings of exterior activity and interior prayerfulness, go to the ultimate blessed state of supreme God-consciousness—Divine Realisation. Blessedness becomes theirs, in and through their family life, wherever they are.

—Swami Chidananda

A SPIRITUAL DAILY ROUTINE FOR THE HOUSEHOLDER

Each householder should have an ideal daily routine. The home life should not be left to itself, but taken care of. In addition to those unexpected things that come up every day—a visit of someone, a telephone call, an invitation to go out with someone—every one of you should have an accepted basic programme, a basic schedule for your daily life, which should include an hour of prayer in the morning and an hour of prayer in the evening. The prayer hour might include the reading of scriptural texts, the reading of sacred and inspiring spiritual books, a few minutes of quiet, indrawn meditation, a few minutes of actually articulated prayer, inspiring prayer. The prayer can be spontaneous; it does not necessarily have to come out of some book. Or it can be both, as there are some very inspiring short prayers in the Gospel and also in some other books. The children should also be trained in this way.

There should also be some actual act of external worship. After all, we are embodied creatures and we wish to exercise our bodies also in devotion. When you are in a state of worship, the body also should take on the attitude of worship. You should light a candle, burn a little incense, bow before the Deity, offer supplication, ask Him to enlighten you, to fill your heart with virtue, fill your heart with divine love, goodness and selflessness, and then, bowing low and with genuflection, kneel, press down with your forehead. In this way, you have to humble yourself in the presence of God. Then, as the body genuflects, prostrates and humbles itself, the influence of those little acts has a chastening effect upon the mind. We cannot become completely heedless to these reactions of the body upon the mind and the mind upon the inner spirit. Therefore, each day, you should have an hour when you have scope for the exercise of all these several aspects of your being—for the exercise of the body, the heart and the feelings in prayer; for the exercise of the mind and the intellect in study, reflection and enquiry; and for the exercise of the spirit in inner contemplation, silence, indrawnness and meditation.

Each member of the family should have a private altar. The mother should have her own nook or little corner, where she has her own little prayer, little conversation with God, little asking for guidance, little intimate communion with God. The husband, likewise, should have a little altar for himself, and if this cannot be had, at least he must have some time for himself, when he communes with the Maker individually. And the children should be trained right from the very beginning to have such separate little corners for themselves. Just as they have one corner for their toys, another for their books, a third for their pets, so they must have a corner for their own communion with the Most High, and if this habit is developed from childhood, then later on, they will be able to have their own independent spiritual life.

—*Swami Chidananda*

DIVINE LIFE

To practise non-violence, truth and celibacy is DIVINE LIFE.

To be kind, generous, humble, tolerant is DIVINE LIFE.

To practise virtues and be righteous is DIVINE LIFE.

To serve the poor in selfless, dedicated way is DIVINE LIFE.

To serve the sick with all-is-God attitude is DIVINE LIFE.

To be merciful, courageous and devotional is DIVINE LIFE.

To sing the name of God and pray is DIVINE LIFE.

To do Japa and meditation is DIVINE LIFE.

To be an instrument in the hands of God is DIVINE LIFE.

To act rightly and live in God is DIVINE LIFE.

To do unconditional self-surrender to God is DIVINE LIFE.

To restrain the senses to have God-communion is DIVINE LIFE.

To be on with the Divine Will is DIVINE LIFE.

To be a silent witness of the three states (waking, dreaming and deep sleep) is DIVINE LIFE.

—*Swami Sivananda*

PRAYER

*Lord, make me an instrument of Thy Peace,
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is discord, union;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is darkness, light and
Where there is sadness, joy.*

*O divine Master, grant that I may not
So much seek to be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand,
To be loved as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
And it is in dying
That we are born to eternal life.*

—St. Francis of Assisi

THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER

*O Adorable Lord of Mercy and Love!
Salutations and prostrations unto Thee.
Thou art Satchidananda.
Thou art Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient.*

*Thou art the Indweller of all beings.
Grant us an understanding heart,
Equal vision, Balanced mind,
Faith, devotion and wisdom.
Grant us inner spiritual strength
To resist temptations and to control the mind.
Free us from egoism, lust, greed, anger, hatred and jealousy.*

*Fill our hearts with divine virtues.
Let us behold Thee in all these names and forms.
Let us serve Thee in all these names and forms.
Let us ever remember Thee.
Let us ever sing Thy glories.
Let Thy Name be ever upon our lips.
Let us abide in Thee for ever and ever.*

—Swami Sivananda