

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----|
| PREFACE..... | iii |
| 1. SEEK GOD NOW!..... | 1 |
| 2. LORD, POSSESS US WITH THY LOVE | 10 |
| 3. THE PURPOSE OF LIFE IS TO FIND GOD..... | 15 |
| 4. THE INFINITE NATURE OF GOD | 22 |
| 5. IN GOD IS ALL HAPPINESS | 36 |

Seek God Now!

*Self-Realization Fellowship International Headquarters,
Los Angeles, California, July 15, 1941*

God-realization is attained only by great effort on the part of the yogi, and by divine grace. Though God can be approached by law, still, as the Searcher of Hearts, He must be convinced that a devotee really wants Him before He sends His grace. God withholds final illumination from a devotee, however perfected he may be in the science of Yoga, who does not wholeheartedly desire Him.

I recall a time in the ashram of my guru, Swami Sri Yukteswar, when month after month, with the greatest devotion, I was seeking God; yet I was experiencing a sort of stagnation. When I questioned Master about my problem, he said, "You think that if you had more mental power or more miracle power you would realize more fully that God is with you. But that is not so. Suppose He responded by giving you control over the whole universe. Possession of such power would leave your heart still unsatisfied. God is the Ever-New Joy you already feel in meditation. When man loves that Joy above everything else in this world, desiring it more than money and fame, more than his indulgences in moods and habits and sensory experiences, God will open the way." Few devotees are prepared to make such "sacrifices."*

* "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few" (*Matthew 9:37*, Bible).

It is at once very easy and very hard to please God. He is playing with His devotees even in tests, and He tests them all the time.

How easy it is to pack the day with foolishness, how difficult to fill it with worthwhile activities and thoughts! Yet God is not so much interested in what we are doing as in where the mind is. Everyone has a different difficulty, but God doesn't listen to any excuses. He wants the devotee's mind to be engrossed in Him in spite of any troublesome circumstances. Even as I am engaged in talking to you now, my mind is ever on God. I am with Him inwardly all the time. I live in His Joy. Loving and craving naught else but that joy, I find that all obstacles to God-union give way before me. This declaration is not a fairy tale; it is true. But not until God has received all of the devotee's love will He come. It will seem that He has forsaken us sometimes, but such tests are inescapable; if we steadfastly refuse to give up our search, God receives us as His own.

In worldly ambitions there is always an element of uncertainty. Some people spend year after year trying wholeheartedly but unsuccessfully to make money. But in the spiritual path no wholehearted devotee is ever unsuccessful. His labours are never in vain.

Perseverance Is the Whole Magic of Spiritual Success

The greatest enemy of divine realization is the body; it becomes easily tired and wants to give up. A true devotee never relaxes his effort nor admits the supremacy of the body. Continuous vigilance is required. We must believe, against all seeming odds, that He will come. Even an agnostic who thinks that there is little likelihood that God exists, but who perseveres in the search for Him, will ultimately find Him. Even though God may not seem to respond, one

should not succumb to doubts but should unremittingly continue in the holy quest. *Perseverance is the whole magic of spiritual success.* If the Lord responded easily and openly to the devotee's prayers for divine illumination, all men would immediately seek Him—not for love of Him, but for the illimitable rewards.

This world is God's playhouse. It is part of His intricate drama here that He has made it very difficult to discover His presence. Because the search is not easy, we tend to forget Him. Even when we see our loved ones pulled away into the mysterious unknown, we do not think seriously about our having to go too, sometime. But one should not wait for the approach of death to realize the importance of seeking God. It is every man's supreme and immediate duty. Each minute of life should be a divine quest. The burning question in our hearts should be: "When shall I find Thee, O Lord?"

No matter what happens, never give up the vital search. Suppose one sits to meditate, and friends arrive. There is nothing to do but to cut the meditation short; yet one may still keep his mind on God. Whatever the activity, the inner attention should be on Him. He is so necessary to us!

Get busy *now*; time is passing, and one day the fearful realization will come that life has gone by as though in a twinkling, and still He has not been found. Let no day pass without your having made an effort to meditate on Him. Soon, surprisingly little effort will be needed. Great happiness comes to the devotee who is steadfast. Without unquenchable enthusiasm nothing can be gained.

The Bhagavad Gita teaches the importance on the spiritual path of rising above bodily sensations. The contact of the senses with outer environment produces sensations of heat and cold, pleasure and pain, and other oppositional states. The average man is easily affected by these sensa-

tions, but the Gita teaches that one should be neutral to them. This is not a recommendation to be rash! If the yogi finds the sensations of heat or cold are extremely difficult to bear, he should seek an outward remedy without becoming inwardly involved. He who can practice mental neutrality is on the way to becoming a saint. He who lives in the bodily temple without being affected by changing sensory perceptions, remaining even-minded during pleasure and pain, cool and heat, and so on, becomes a true king among men. Having attained changelessness, he is one with the changeless Spirit.

All who came to my guru's ashram for spiritual training were disciplined in this way. The aspiring yogi of the West as well as of the East must discipline himself similarly. He should refrain from making too much fuss about the body. If he sees he is finding time for everything else but is too busy for God, he should take the whip of discipline to himself. Why be afraid? There is everything to gain. If a man will not himself cry and struggle to attain his own salvation, will anyone else do it for him?

God-realization is the most difficult state to reach. Let no one fool himself, nor think that someone else can "give" it to him. Whenever I fell into a state of mental stagnation, my guru could do nothing for me. But I never gave up trying to keep in tune with him by cheerfully performing whatever he asked me to do. "I have come to him for God-realization," I reasoned, "and I must listen to his advice." At his ashram we young disciples seemed to be always cooking, and there were many other excuses not to meditate. Yet even though I worked harder there than in my own home, I found the environment of the ashram to be spiritually helpful to me.

Keep a Daily Appointment with God

Let no devotee miss his daily appointment with God. The mind may suggest the movies or some other distraction; but when the time comes for God each day, keep that sacred engagement. Otherwise you will be a long time finding Him.

There is a personal element in the search for God that is more important than mastery over the whole science of Yoga. The Heavenly Father wants to be sure that His children desire only Him, that they will not be satisfied with anything else. When God is made to feel that He is not first in the devotee's heart, He stands aside. But to him who says, "O Lord, it matters not if I lose sleep tonight, so long as I am with Thee," He will come. Positively! From behind the countless screens of this mysterious world the Ruler of creation will come forth to reveal Himself behind each one. He talks to His true devotees, and plays hide-and-seek with them. Sometimes He suddenly unveils a comforting truth when one is worried. In time, and in direct or indirect ways, He grants every wish of His devotee.

Fulfilment of a particular desire seems necessary only if one lacks conviction that he can find perfect fulfilment in God. One who is at peace in God is not tortured by unfulfilled earthly desires. "Taking shelter in Me, all beings can achieve the Supreme Fulfilment...."* No one can hurt me by thwarting me in some outward matter, because to me God is sufficient; His joyous presence is the only conditioning factor in my happiness. Each of you should try resolutely to meditate and to feel His presence, and see how quickly you will become aware of His favour.

* Bhagavad Gita IX:32.