



January 2026

PREMA ANANDA VAHINI





Prema Ananda Vahini

January 2026

CONTENTS

2. Satsang with Swamiji – *What is meant by wisdom and spiritual knowledge?*
9. Christmas in the Ashram
10. Swamiji Answers Your Questions
12. Revere the Divine within all living beings!
15. Message for the Premananda Youth

“God is formless; God is beyond everything. We cannot give God a form or a name.”

- Swamiji



“Try and cultivate love from your heart - anandam, paramanandam and premanandam (true bliss, supreme bliss and the bliss of the purest love). One who is in the state of premanandam is one who loves all without distinction. Love with a pure heart and mind is the love you must cultivate. In order to remain happy and blissful, do not allow greed, falsehood and jealousy to creep into your heart.”

-Swamiji





Satsang with Swamiji

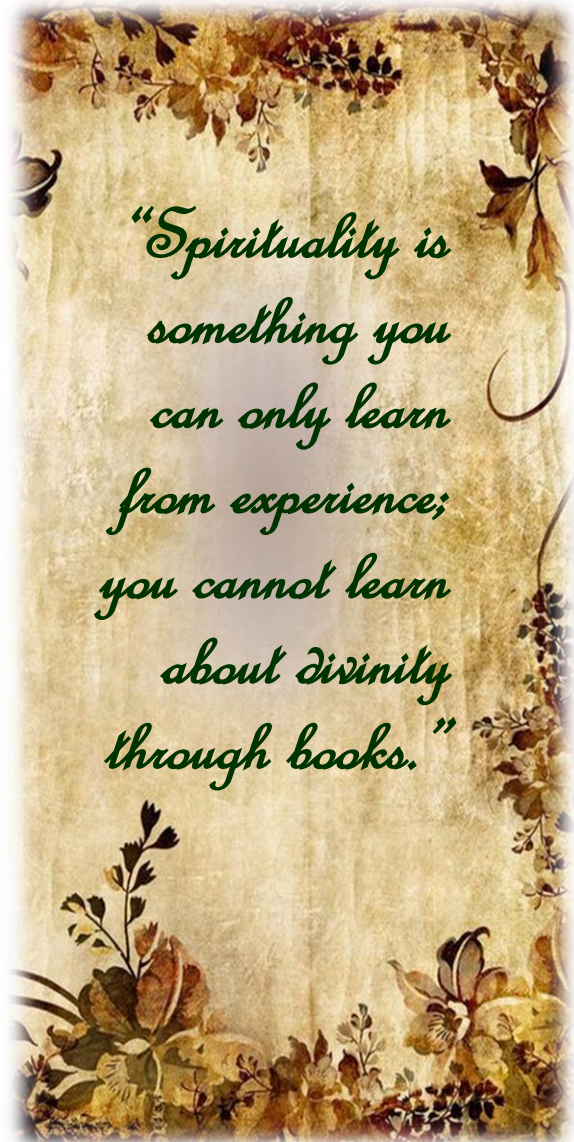
What is meant by wisdom and spiritual knowledge?

(A satsang given by Swamiji on 11th April 1998)

Everyone likes to read books. What one reads in books about various spiritual masters, what they said and the advice they gave, we call book knowledge. In the Bible you can read about the advice given by Jesus Christ. Prophet Mohammed's advice can be found in the Quran. In the Buddhist writings you will find the advice of Buddha, and then there is the Bhagavad Gita and other spiritual books. A spiritual master will talk and give advice and afterwards those teachings are written down.

In each master's teachings there will be small differences. All religions are one, but there will be some small differences. Why these differences? Because each master will have had their own experience and own ideas, and when expressing them, there will be some differences.

How can you gain spiritual knowledge? Many people are interested in spirituality, but only a few actually want to put it into practice. Some people claim to know all about spirituality, but how and what do they know? What experience do they have? Their only knowledge comes from reading books; they have no knowledge gained from practical experience. When you read books, you will gain some knowledge and think it is correct. Then, when trying to put what you read into practice, you may face problems or find it





difficult and immediately conclude that it's all too tiring and boring. But it's not; it's just that you are not ready to practise.

It's not like school. For example, if you are in college studying medicine, after a certain number of years you will become a doctor. This was the result of the book knowledge you acquired, but this is totally different from spirituality. Spirituality is something you can only learn from experience, you cannot learn about divinity through books.



“Whoever really wants to develop spiritually, who wants to practise in the correct way, who wants to reach a higher state, who wants to experience the highest divine energy - the first thing they have to do is get some experience.”

By reading books you will acquire some knowledge about what spirituality is, what spirituality means and the ways of practising it. But how much will you actually practise? To become a doctor, you will read books and study and pass exams – an approach well-suited to medicine. But spirituality is different; it calls for consistent practice and the actual experiencing of it.



First you should select a master and ask him or her what the suitable practice is for you. It will be different for each individual. Some people will be better suited to meditation, some to yoga, some will prefer either abhishekams or bhajans or satsangs, and still others giving service – and there are also many other ways of practising.

There are those who would rather go sit quietly in a jungle and others who like to give service in an ashram. Some just want to live in close proximity to the guru or divine persons while others don't want to do that but prefer to worship a photo of their chosen master. There are so many different things people do.

You also have people who want to learn about spirituality and get divine energy in order to do healings and those kinds of things. Then there are those who have no experience of spirituality but still like to teach it! Why do they do this? It's because of their immaturity, this is why they do these silly things.

Whoever really wants to develop spiritually, whoever wants to practise in the correct way, who wants to attain the highest wisdom, who wants to experience the highest divine energy – the first thing they have to do is get some experience.

And how should they get this experience? Not by accumulating knowledge from books. Reading books will be a support for you at the beginning stage, because it may give you some understanding of what spirituality is. It will give you an idea of what true knowledge and wisdom mean.

I can show you some sugar candy, but how will you know what it tastes like? You will have to put it in your mouth to know how it tastes. Then you will have the experience and know whether it is really sugar or not. In the same way, Swami may tell you about a spiritual practice; so put it in your mouth and taste it – then only you will know if it is correct or wrong.

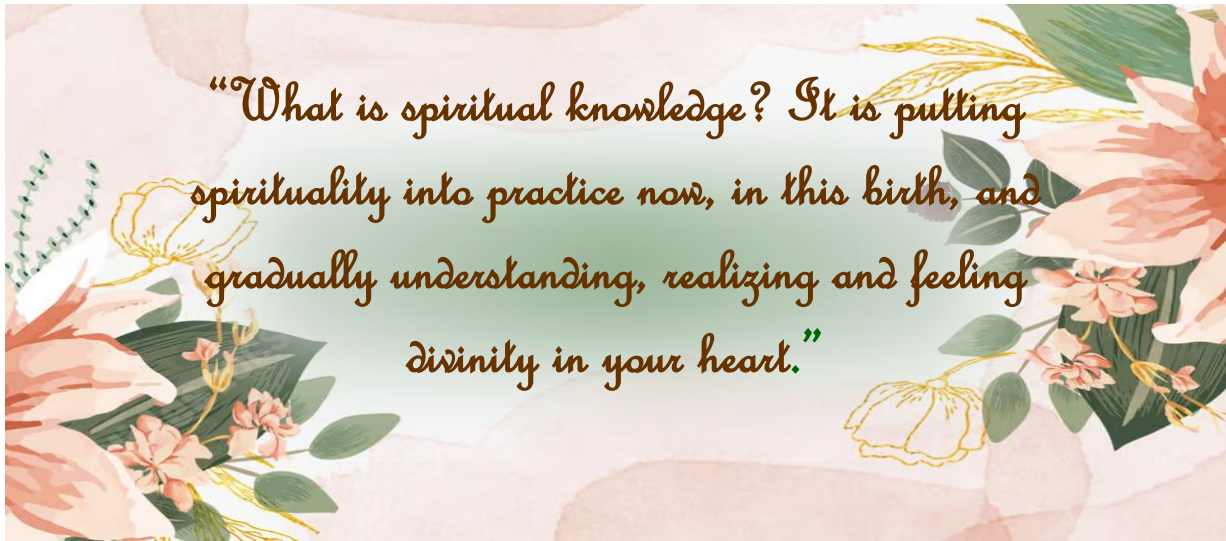
Everyone likes to listen to spiritual discourses, discuss, and ask questions about their doubts. But why is it that so many doubts come to your mind? It's because you are always researching but never practising!

Spirituality is not a subject to research. You can research academic subjects – but you are not academic researchers – you want to practise spirituality. If you have continual doubts in your mind, then there will be no end to them and you will never start practising.

Take family life – once a wife becomes suspicious of her husband, there will not come a point when her suspicions will stop; they will only grow. At the first sign of suspicion, she should talk it over with her husband and get it cleared up. If she keeps piling on the suspicions



one on top of the other, it will end in divorce. And it's the same if the husband suspects his wife.



It's similar on the spiritual path – if you don't clear up your first doubt, others will keep arising and finally you will get fed up with spiritual life. You cannot develop when you have doubts.

Therefore, first you should gain self-confidence and then follow the correct direction on the spiritual path.

Secondly, you should trust your guru; you should trust that he or she is the perfect master and is guiding you on the correct path.

And, thirdly, you should be ready to practise spirituality for your entire life – this is not a temporary work. I have surrendered my whole life to spirituality. You can practise part-time, but at least continue that part-time practice for the whole of your lifetime.

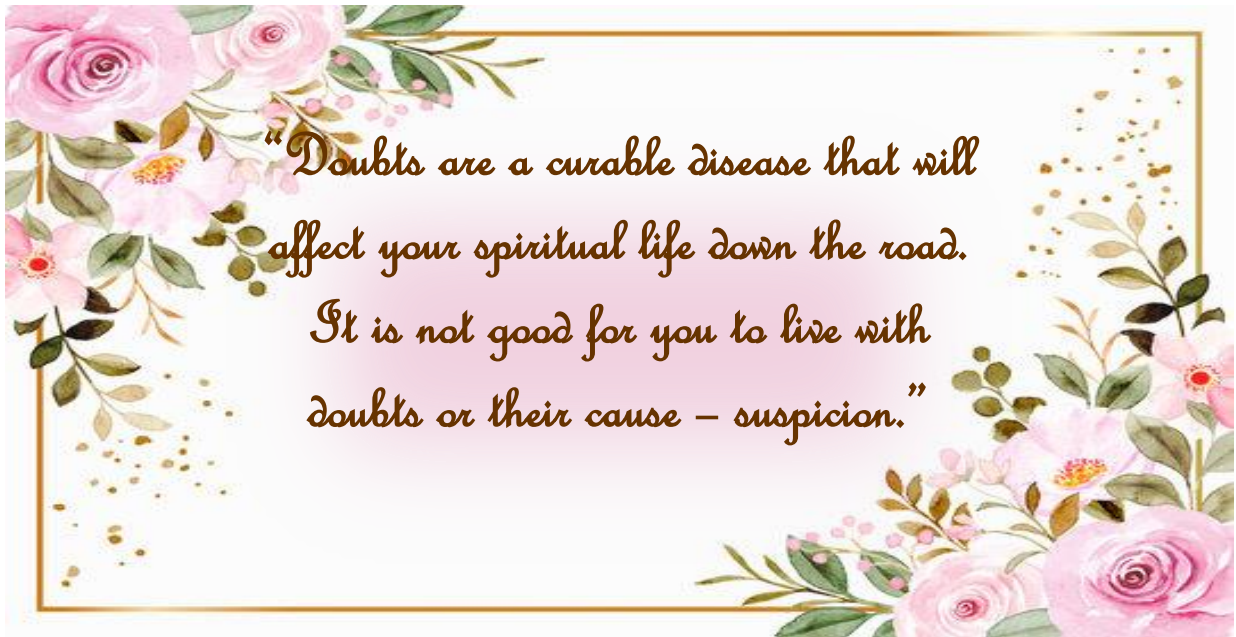
If you are ready to practise your whole life, then proceed slowly. I never say to do anything in a hurry, always slowly. I don't like that you go fast and then get bored. Slowly, slowly, slowly and you will reach your destination.

Have patience in your spiritual life; proceed on the path slowly and you will gradually come to realize many things. Try not to let doubts arise in your mind, but if a doubt comes, then immediately deal with it – the same as in family life. Physical diseases can be cured relatively easily, but doubts are more difficult. Yet doubts are a disease that, left untreated, will affect your spiritual life down the road. It is not good for us to live with doubts, or their cause – suspicion.



So, what is spiritual knowledge? It is putting spirituality into practice now, in this birth, and gradually understanding, realizing and feeling divinity in your heart. Spiritual knowledge is in fact our innate sense.

Amongst all beings only human beings have a sixth sense, all the rest have only five. This sixth sense will let you know what is right and what is wrong. This is why it is such a great and valuable thing to have a human birth. We should not miss the opportunity to develop spiritually in this birth. Do this by using your mind in the correct way – by first building self-confidence, trust in yourself, and secondly trust in your guru.



Our minds are always busy with thoughts of money and wealth, a luxury life, with small problems and all kinds of silly matters and worries that we get upset about. These are all material problems and they have nothing to do with our spiritual life, which relates to a much higher level.

If you want to become mature on this higher level then you should practise using your sixth sense. But who is using their sixth sense? No one. Once you are adept at using the sixth sense, there is also the seventh sense or 'nun-arivu' [in Tamil]. With the seventh sense you would know what is correct and what is wrong. You would understand everything.

For instance, if you would sit for meditation or a puja, you would know the correct path to follow. As soon as your mind runs to the material world, you would know that the mind is going in the wrong direction. If you get a bad idea, your mind would immediately let you know that it's a bad idea. You, your mind, your thoughts, would automatically correct you and send you on the correct path.



In order to attain this level, you should try to gain spiritual maturity. Why are you always gossiping? It's because you like hearing about others' silly matters. But by gossiping so much you only come to know about other people's problems and you forget the purpose of your life. In this way you could ruin your future, because once you've started on the spiritual path gossiping will disturb your mind.



For example, you might discuss something with someone who is not mature, like this fellow here – B. He is not a mature person and will speak from his own level. He will tell you some rubbish, claiming he is spiritually mature and possesses healing powers and this and that other power. And after listening to all that you will be upset.

You will begin to wonder why, after so many years of spiritual practice, that lowly man has acquired such powers and yet you have not, and ego will take hold of you. This is what will happen by discussing unnecessary spiritual matters.

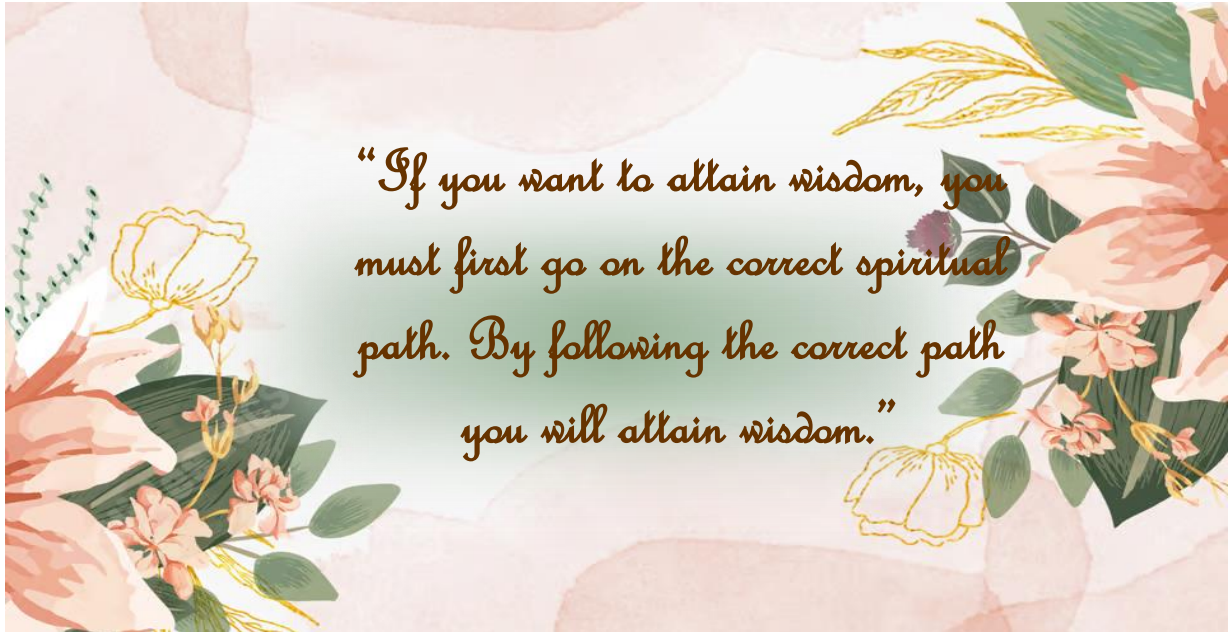
Therefore, don't talk about unnecessary spiritual matters with anyone. If you meet someone like him, just say, "Hello B; how are you? Are you happy? Do you need any help?" and leave it at that. Don't talk rubbish. Don't ask him what he feels about Swami Premananda. He is just an ordinary person who may have more or less faith than you. Each person is on a different level in life.

If you talk to him about Ashram work and ask his advice about that, that is okay. Management work is something everyone can do and it's completely different from spiritual development. Now you are running a Centre, organizing bhajan and satsang sessions, publishing books, translating, doing social service in your country or helping the Ashram – this is service and it's completely different from putting spiritual wisdom into practice.

So how are you going to develop spiritually? The only way to develop is to correct yourself. Don't focus on the faults of others; everyone has faults. B may have a thousand faults, but I am only interested in seeing his good side. When someone stands in front of me, all I will see are his or her good qualities. I will only see the good, not the bad.



Now, if I go to the shop, I won't go looking for bad mangoes, that would be foolish. After buying a mango and cutting it open you might discover that it has bad spots, but when you are buying it you shouldn't get all excited looking for bad mangoes everywhere. That is not the correct way. Just buy the ones you think are good, and when you cut it open you will know the truth. In



the same way, we should not immediately judge others as being bad. That is an immature way of thinking.

Therefore, don't find fault with other people. You can do so when it comes to matters that regard management work, but that is different from spiritual life.

I am talking about both spirituality and wisdom. If you want to attain wisdom, you must first go on the correct spiritual path. By following the correct path you will attain wisdom.

Gai Prema Shanti!



Christmas in the Ashram



We celebrated a joyful Christmas together with the children who stayed here over the holidays. After we sang some carols, it was a treat to see the children's faces light up when Father Christmas surprised us with a visit. He playfully danced with the children before handing out a small bag of gifts and sweets to everyone.





Swamiji Answers Your Questions

Swamiji, you say you are not God but a messenger of God. What is the meaning of 'messenger of God'? As a messenger of God, do you know all that God knows? Are you on the same level as God, or do you have to ask God for an answer to a question?



Talking about God is one thing, and saying "I am God" is another. For example, take Jesus Christ. He said he was the son of God. Why did he say this when he could have said that he was God? Being a son of God means being his child.

Jesus Christ had all possible knowledge and powers, and yet he never said he was God. He did not want to say that, he just wanted to be a messenger. He said he came to speak the truth and spread dharma.

And Buddha – today people in the world worship him as God. But he never claimed to be God. What he said was to follow his dharma, which he expressed very beautifully. Whereas earlier his teachings were memorized and passed down by word of mouth, today they can be found in books. Never did he say that devotees should venerate his person, but simply to believe what he said.

And how about Prophet Nabi (Mohammed) – did he ever ask people to put up a picture of him or worship him? What he said is written in the Quran. He was against people having a picture of him. He said God is formless; God is beyond everything. We cannot give God a form or a name. He said God was there before him and God would be there after him – he will have just lived and died in between.

So, I hope this helps you to understand the meaning of 'messenger of God'. When an [enlightened] person talks about God, he or she does not come as God. A human being is a human being and God is God. A human being will have certain qualities and traits, like a smiling



disposition, irritability, teaching and guiding others, and so on – all of these will be in the person, Although the person may be divine, they will also have these human traits.

It was only when Jesus Christ was crucified that he cried. Before that he never cried. Up until then he was not bothered about it. Even though the Divine was in him, he had human traits. Similar events occurred with Buddha, Prophet Nabi, Krishna, and Rama too.

Take Krishna – when everything was over, he was walking in the forest when someone shot an arrow that pierced his foot and at that time he cried. These are all stories from the Puranas. But I am not here to tell these stories. Why I bring this up is to show the difference between a human being and God. If you were to go deeper into this, you would find many such examples.

If a messenger says that he or she is God, then that can only be ego, it is only to gain publicity. Jesus never said this, nor did Buddha, Prophet Nabi, Krishna or Rama. Let's not break our heads over it; let us just be ordinary human beings. So long as we are alive, we do what we can and then we leave this world.

You already answered many of the questions I had, Swamiji, but could there ever be a situation in which God would leave you without an answer?

Up until today such a situation has never arisen. I am not saying this out of ego.

However, the messenger only gives the message, doesn't he? He is not the initiator of the message.

Yes, I am just a body, much like a vegetable that you cut up and eat. It is only God's will that is being done; nothing is in our hands. We cannot say there's anything we are doing. Spirituality is something far beyond us and beyond our comprehension.

For example, no one can force me to sit here and speak with you – not even me. It's rare that I would come and sit here, everyone in the Ashram knows that. In fact, if I would say that I was coming, no one would believe it. However, although it's difficult, today you have succeeded in making me sit here and answer your questions! Sometimes, it will simply come to my mind that I should explain something. There are people who come here for two, three or five days and leave feeling resentful because I didn't give them an interview, but I don't do this because I want to.

“Jesus Christ was all-knowing and all-powerful, and yet he never said he was God. He did not want to say that, he just wanted to be a messenger. He said he came to speak the truth and spread dharma.”



Revere the Divine within all living beings!

(A satsang given by Swamiji on his birthday in 1998)

Most people desire to have knowledge of some kind, but ultimately the only knowledge that is of true and lasting value throughout the cycle of births and deaths is *atma vidya* – knowledge of the Self. Our true Self is Divinity. Therefore, true knowledge is the eternal wisdom that comes only when one is close to God. How can we come close to God? Is it through reading books, by taking a special course, or by memorising scriptures? No. The easiest way to come close to God is through love – true and pure love for God.

“The easiest way to come close to God is through love – true and pure love for God.”

Where is God? You will tell me, ah, God is everywhere and in every living being. Then, if you really believe that theory, why don't you live up to it? If humanity saw the Divine in all life, the terrible problems of violence, war and starvation would not exist today, because human beings would be intent on serving and helping each other.

The highest form of study is to understand yourself. Having understood your nature and realised your faults, you should then strive for perfection. What is spiritual perfection? Is it having name and fame for your spiritual knowledge and power? No, it is the opposite! Aim at being unknown, humble and simple. Then you are surely going on the right path. It is the childlike and pure heart that is ready to receive spiritual light.

One way of doing this is actually to try and see the Divine in others. Never think yourself greater than another person for any reason. If you have no high opinion of yourself but always think highly of others, you are on the path to having a selfless mind full of love for the Divine, which exists in all beings. I am not asking you to think yourself inferior to others; I am asking you to have confidence in your own divine Self, not your ego-self. When you try to understand that the Divinity is within you, have confidence in that Divinity. When you need help, call out to the divine part of you that is the infinite Truth, not the temporary part of you, which is the creation of your mind based on the worldliness you have learned in this life. Always inspire yourself; always think high thoughts. Do not allow your mind to sink to low levels. Even if you see others committing wrongs, don't think you are better than them. How do you know how long you



yourself will be able to avoid doing wrong? Everyone makes mistake and all have weaknesses. Think of yourself as having many faults that need correcting and then you will see only the good in others.

“The highest form of study is to understand yourself. Having understood your nature and realised your faults, you should then strive for perfection.”

that individual represents, rather than solely the person themselves. And what does a renunciant represent? They are the one who has given up the worldly life and entirely dedicated themselves to the Divine. They are earnestly following the spiritual path and may give themselves entirely to service, meditation, or performing rituals. If the Guru has ordained a sannyasin, they may give their life in service of the Guru, who slowly but surely passes on his or her own knowledge to the disciple.

If the Guru is giving spiritual guidance to many devotees, then the sannyas disciple is always working on expanding their love for God and therefore for all beings. Knowing this to be a difficult path, and understanding that the sannyasin's life is a selfless one, the people in the East respect and revere the sannyasin or renunciant, and they show this in various ways. For example, in Sri Lanka the greatest reverence is given to Buddhist bhikkus (monks). If a monk visits any household, they will arrange a special shrine and cover a chair with a cloth kept only for visiting holy people. They will cook separately for that monk and also serve them at a separate table. They will worship his or her feet and offer them food supplies and a garment for them to wear. They consider these acts to be very meritorious and are overjoyed if the monk is a representative of the great Lord Buddha, for by revering the monk they can feel the grace of Lord Buddha, the spiritual master.

If one sees a person who has dedicated him- or herself to the spiritual life and gives due respect to that person, one feels uplifted in the heart. That person reminds you of your

Our ancient Eastern traditions teach us to cultivate absolute respect for Divinity and for those who have surrendered to God. These practices instil reverence and humility. I am often asked about the Eastern traditions in this regard, as they can be a little difficult for the modern Western mind to comprehend. Many find it hard to accept that spiritually minded people offer worship or show great respect for sadhus, sannyasins, and renunciants. Westerners should understand that they are respecting what

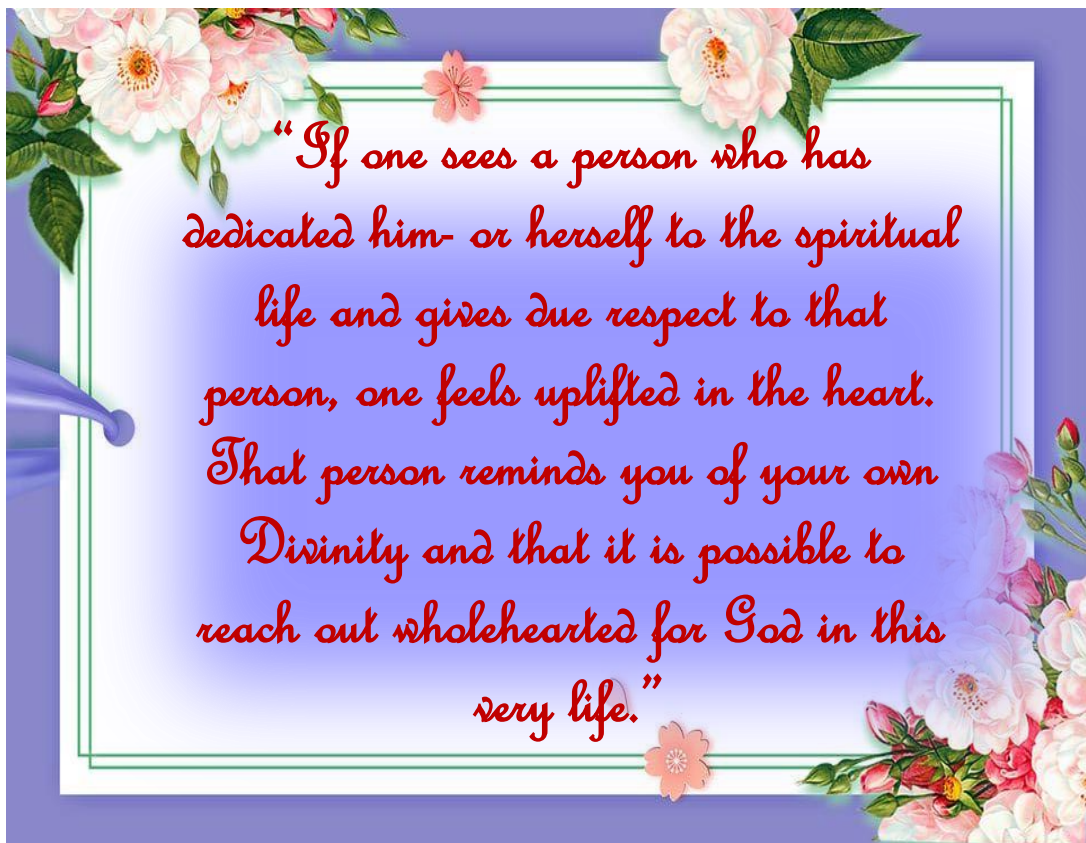
“Our ancient Eastern traditions teach us to cultivate absolute respect for Divinity and for those who have surrendered to God.”



own Divinity and that it is possible to reach out wholehearted for God in this very life.

I have many North Indian devotees. If a Swamiji or a Mataji from our Ashram visits their homes or attends any function they arrange in public, they prepare everything very well. They will cook special food and will feel it is inauspicious if the sannyasin refuses to eat. If the Swamiji or Mataji eats well, they feel that God is blessing them through the holy person. As the sannyasin enters their house or the place of function, they will wash their feet in turmeric water and wave a camphor light. The whole family will worship the feet of the sannyasin and place a little kumkum on their feet, hands and head. They will have prepared a chair covered in silk and decorated with many flowers, for they will not allow the sannyasin to sit on the ground or with the public. They will sing bhajans and then ask the Mataji or Swamiji to speak. If he or she mentions the Guru's name they will raise their hands in prayer. They have great respect for the Divine and therefore show their love to God's representative.

A true sannyasin does not expect respect for him- or herself. They should be beyond reacting to praise, honour or blame of any kind. While I do not expect that my Western devotees will demonstrate their love and devotion to the Divine to the same extent as those in the East, it is still good for them to express respect and reverence to visiting sannyasins. In turn, it is good for the sannyasin to pray for them and remain mindful of the Guru during these traditional rituals performed in their honour.





Premananda International Youth



Message for the youth



There is an indifference in the minds of the youngsters about why they should heed the words of their elders. Ignoring the words of your elders is like ignoring the information contained in 100 books – each book representing a complete experience of one person.



Therefore, an elder's words relay a hundred times more experiences than what could be found in these books. Whenever they give you advice, please listen to them carefully. Then you will also become wise.

My dear children, you will have many opportunities to develop your knowledge about the future, but where will you go to learn the knowledge of the past? If you only turn the pages of books, this will not be of much use to you.

Listen to the words of the older people who are living now. They will teach you a hundred years' worth of life experience.

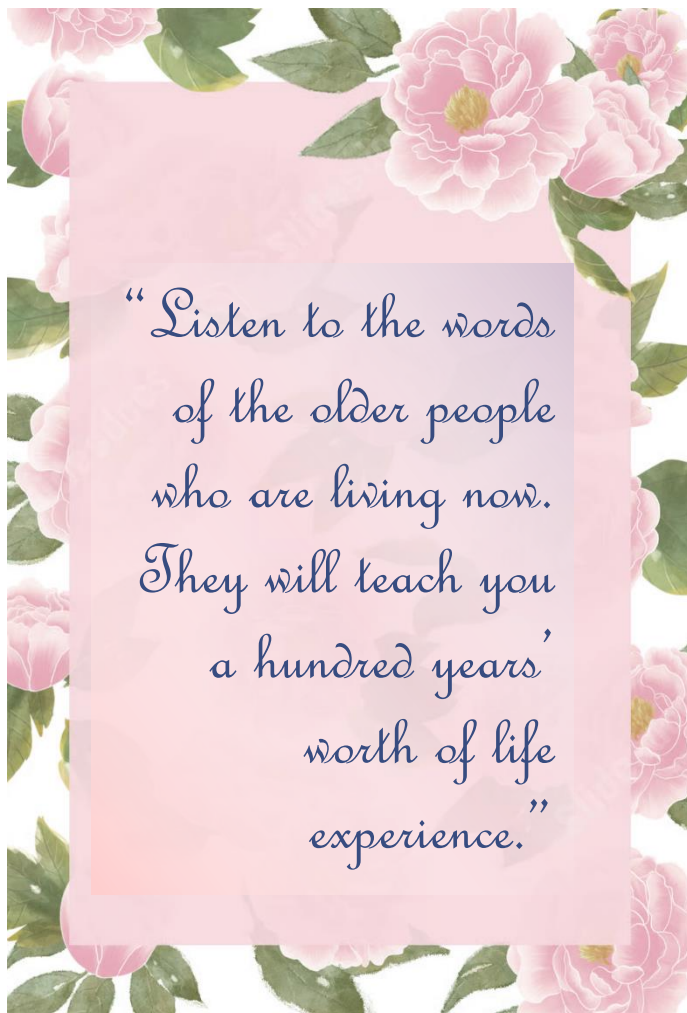
What is worldly wisdom? It isn't only observing and being informed about this worldly lifestyle. The worldly lifestyle draws many small circles, as it were, and shows us only that. We then go around within these small circles, like butterflies hovering over a flower. Is this worldly wisdom?

There are numerous planets circling around in space. The planet Earth is just one small planet amongst all these and even on this earth human beings are being born and are dying in just that one quarter of the earth which is not covered by seas.

The people living on this earth with the highest knowledge do not have a worldly outlook. They do not live with the thought that there are no greater persons on earth than themselves. Such thoughts must be avoided. Compared to the world we are no bigger than a mustard seed.

Therefore, those who say, "Let us pray to this universe that is far greater than ourselves", are those who know the answer to the question: what is wisdom? They are our teachers.

Understand one thing well, the one who gives to all is a charitable person. Without refusing anything to anyone, he or she gives freely of all that they have. However, the one who accepts charity from this person time and time again is actually keeping him or her from giving to others.



*“ Listen to the words
of the older people
who are living now.
They will teach you
a hundred years’
worth of life
experience.”*



Therefore, you should be ashamed of always extending your hand to accept charity from the one offering it. Instead, take a vow to accumulate wealth yourself so that you, too, are able to help others. That will make it possible for you to join the assembly of charitable persons.

If you feel no shame in continuously receiving charity, then without doubt you are beggars and lazy people. Try to collect wealth and then give it in charity, thereby getting a good name.

