

# The Family That Prays Together

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Subject this morning: "The Family That Prays Together," The Family That Prays Together.

I just wanna add a word or two to that subject. It should read, I think that "the family that prays or practices attaining the Presence of God through meditation..." Because ordinary prayer is not very efficient, but those who practice meditation, wherein they attain the Presence of God, then, that family really prays together. So, as I speak this morning, remember, that when we say the family that prays together, the family that practices, through right meditation, the attaining of the Presence of God within them as members of that family, they are really the members, they are really the family that prays together.

And so, prayer, we must understand prayer. Prayer means not just ordinarily, ordinary lip praying. No. Prayer means first of all attaining the Presence of God. And that Presence in us is the Word, the Holy Vibration. "In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, the Word was God."<sup>1</sup> So, if we attain that Presence through right meditation, then whatever we ask in God's Presence is heard, as I have said here a Sunday or two ago. In His Presence, attaining His Presence, whatever you ask, He hears, He knows. And if God is all, if His, if He is in each and everyone of us, has made all things, He knows what we need.

And so, the important thing to me seems, concerning prayer, is to get into God's Presence, attain His Presence first. That really is the prayer we must give. And to do that, if we can merge in His Presence, in us as the Word – the Holy Vibration – merge in that, then our prayers are heard. And so, the family that does that, tries through regular meditation to attain God-contact, they are really the praying family, and the family which will be guided in the right way. So, with those one or two facts about prayer, let us go on realizing the greatest prayer is to mentally repeat Om or Amen, which is the Holy Vibration, and then merge in it.

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<sup>1</sup> St. John 1:1

Now, if you can hear that Holy Sound, if you can hear that Word of God in you, then merge in it, you are offering the greatest prayer, because then you are one with God. He knows your thoughts, He knows our emotions, He knows our feelings. There is no need to pray. As Master used to say, "The greatest prayer is listening to the Om vibration," the Holy Sound, or the Light, seeing the Light, merging in it, offering, if you have to offer one prayer, "Father, reveal Thyself," from the heart. "Father, reveal Thyself, reveal Thyself, reveal Thyself." If God knows all, you don't have to differentiate what you need. He knows. Course that's, that's the, the measure of your faith. If you realize you don't have to ask Him, then your faith is full. But, if you don't have that state of consciousness, ask Him for your legitimate needs – greatest of all, "Father, reveal Thyself; reveal Thyself." Having Him, you have everything.

And so, the family, the family that prays together, it's members have their consciousness, remember now, those, that those members of the family who meditate together, pray together, their center of consciousness is now not in outward consciousness, not in mundane consciousness, but it is in the Inner Consciousness, or Spirit within. It is not in the uncertain center of consciousness, outward, but it, it is in the Spiritual Center of Consciousness in which the security of God is predominant.

That's the first important point to realize about the family that prays together or meditates together. The Center of Consciousness is immediately transported from the outward, changeable consciousness, into the Secure Consciousness of Spirit within. So you can see right off how important it is for the family to meditate together, pray correctly, so to speak, together.

And so, the family that does that, the family that meditates together, will be guided by Soul Consciousness, not by ego consciousness. You look in families guided by ego consciousness, what do you find? Squabbles all the time. I'll come to that in a minute. But those who really meditate together, really want the Presence of God that they may act according to His Will, they are guided by Soul Consciousness, not by ego or outward consciousness. And their perspective, as a family that meditates and prays together, their perspective, is not in outward consciousness governed by conditioned human love, but in the broader perspective of the Unconditional Divine Love of God. That's the important point.

Now do not think because you changed your center of consciousness from that of conditioned human love to the center of consciousness wherein the

Unconditioned Divine Love is the motive. Don't think you are going, do not think you are going to lose. You're going to gain everything. You're going to lose the things you should lose, those things which condition your family, and you will gain that God perspective of the One Unconditioned Divine Love which is in each and every member of the family, and in each and every one of God's creatures.

And so, we should realize that if we change our perspective from this outward, limited, conditioned perspective of human love to the Great Unconditioned Divine Love within, if we do that, what will we find? We will find that all the families go back, all the members of the family go back to God, and that He, He is the Father and the Mother of the family. There'll be no separation; there'll be no differentiation between the Father and the Mother; nor the children, and the brothers and sisters; because we will find that one God is the Father, Mother, Friend, Beloved God. So, that's why the family that prays together will be so much better, because they will not have as the head of their family, the father with his limited capacities, or the mother with her limited capacity, but they'll be the All-pervading Omniscient Father, our one common Father, who is Father, Mother, Friend, Beloved God. How can anything be lost? Nothing will be lost. Everything will be gained.

And remember, Jesus' words that come to me now in Matthew, 12<sup>th</sup> Chapter, 46<sup>th</sup> to 50<sup>th</sup> Verse, when the disciples questioned him, or told him that his mother and brothers were outside and he said, who is, "Who is my mother, who is my brother?" (Sic) What was his answer as he talked, pointed to all of his disciples? These are my mother and my brothers and my fathers and my sisters, because they do the will of God. That's the real family. And so the family that is united in that One Divine Love of God, they are the true family. And the bond is the Unconditional Divine Love of Christ Consciousness within each and every member of the family. So, Jesus spoke a wonderful eternal truth when he didn't overlook his mother and his brothers, so to speak, but he lifted them into a higher category of being one in the Great Divine Family of God's Unconditioned Divine Love.

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<sup>2</sup> Matthew 12:46-50, "While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him." "Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee." "But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?" "And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!" "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

So going on; the family that prays together – although circumstances may separate them, we see families broken up – but the true family that has prayed and meditated together are never separated. They may be physically separated, but they are together in Divine Love, just like those true members of Self-Realization, the Great Family of Self-Realization. Some are scattered all over the world, but you meet them, and you talk to them, and you'll feel your con, their consciousness, and you will find that they are united in the bond of Divine Love.

And so, the family that prays together – even though perhaps they are separated physically due to various reasons – they are never separated, because I know meeting people from all over the world, Self-Realizationists, I feel the same thing. Meeting my own family, as I do once in awhile, what's left of them, I feel the same toward them. Why? Because I can say that we were brought up not with limited family love – bond – but in a broader bond of Divine Love.

And so that's a wonderful thing, those of you who have those near to you separated, realize they are not separated. Physically separated yes, but not if you are joined together in God's Great Consciousness and Love. And so, realize that nothing is lost, especially, when you find God and your family's united in His Great Omniscient Consciousness.

Another point that comes to my mind is this, that the family that prays together, meditates together, adjusts their differences in a dignified way, because for the reasons I have pointed out, they have a dignified attitude toward one another. They look at one another in a different way than a family who is not praying together, not meditating together, governed by outward consciousness and ego consciousness. They look at one another in a different way.

I remember I had this illustrated wonderfully to me when I was quite young. I used to have a friend, and sometimes I'd go to his house. And the minute we opened the door, it was a bedlam. There was the worst fighting you ever heard. The kids were fighting, and the one was pulling the cat one way, and the other another way, with the cat in the middle. That was all right. We expect that. But then the grownups were at it. And finally, the head of the family, father and the mother, who should be, at least, somewhat reserved, they were going at it hammer and tongs – and so it was a bedlam. I'm sure one thing, although the boy – I liked him very much – I'm sure that family didn't pray together. I don't know what they did, but I'm sure that, that meditation was a thing very foreign to their consciousness.

And yet another family, as you go there, sure there are little squabbles, there always will be due to the duality of consciousness, but there's a dignity there because the members of the family look at one another in a dignified way. They respect one another as something to be cherished and loved, while other families who do not know their higher consciousness naturally this bedlam ensues and prayer is very foreign to their existence and likewise they are not guided by the Intuition of God in each member of the family.

Families that pray together, meditate together, and this is very important, learn to behave with one another. That's very important. If you wanna be respected in your family, or any family, or in any business, you hafta learn to behave. As Sri Yukteswarji told Master, he says, "Learn to behave." Learn to behave with one another. And you cannot do it unless you look upon the other as a child of God; look upon them with dignity. And the family that has that dignified relationship with one another, looks upon every other member of the family as a child of God. They have in their relationships in the family – and this goes for business and relationships in any line – they have the Divine carriage that becomes a child of God. Remember that.

Those of you who are family members, no matter what the differences are, have that Divine carriage that is not ruffled and upset, and carries on like a child. Get above it. Realize you are a child of God, have that Divine carriage. You will help the others. That is not egotism. No, that won't go. If you're egotistical, you'll soon be in the middle of the squabble. But, if you have the Divine carriage, as a child of God, act that way towards the other members of the family, you will instill in them the same characteristics, because they true, they, too, are God's children. So, let us have this Divine carriage. And those families that pray together, meditate together, will feel that. They will feel the Presence of God in them. Feeling that, then they rise to that state of consciousness as children of God, and they have Divine carriage. These are very important points in the subject, "Families That Pray Together."

Another point which comes to my mind here, which I think is worth mentioning, is this. That when hardships and trials come to those families that pray together – this is very important, because these hardships and trials are coming, you cannot help but have them in duality of consciousness in which the family lives – so, when these trials come, hardships, the difficulties are met with hope and courage. Why? Because they know God is with them. They know, through meditation and right prayer, that God knows their needs. He is cognizant of what they are passing through. He knows their difficulties. And knowing Him,

having even a little of God-contact, they know that He will respond as best that can be done under the Law. The best will come for those people under Law. And sometimes even He supersedes the Law, the Karmic Law. So those who have difficulties in families, remember these things. Approach them with hope and faith in God, and He will answer as is best possible for you. And sometimes He will even supersede the Karmic Law and lift, lift the trouble – lift you out of hardship and such trying problems.

So, the family that prays together has this attitude: when misfortune comes, because knowing God, even in a small way, it instills in them that faith and hope that He knowing what they need, will take care of them as is best for them, according to His Will.

Another thing that comes to my mind, point that comes to my mind; and this is greatest of all: families that pray together, that meditate together, they keep their faith active. That's a very important point. They keep their faith active. They keep it alive. And, if they do this, or doing this, without question of a doubt, they will see the Hand of God working in the most loving way throughout their family life. These are facts, but it comes only when you keep your faith active. Then you will see the Hand of God working through your family, taking care of all difficulties, helping you to overcome your trials. You will see underneath, His Hand, guiding in the most loving way. As the Master said, "Leave all else, but never God's side. He loves us so wonderfully and silently."<sup>3</sup> Well, if God does that, is He gonna let us drift and get outta line? No. So the family that keeps the faith active, they will see the Hand of God working in the most loving way, watching over His children in that particular family. That's perhaps the greatest point which we can bring out.

Keep your faith active, those of you who are in families, God is in you, in your children, in each one of us, keep your faith in Him. You'll see His Hand working in a most subtle way, but in the most All-pervading way – that's what I mean in the most loving way. Never lets ya down. He never will let ya down, under any conditions.

Now a word or two about married people, especially husband and wife. Remember, that husband and wife for sometimes, they are so close together that unless we are careful, familiarity gets in and breeds contempt. That natural.

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<sup>3</sup> Treasures Against Time, by Brenda Rosser, [www.treasuresagainsttime.com/Book.html](http://www.treasuresagainsttime.com/Book.html), Chapter 3, Letter from Encinitas, CA, on 9/22/38, "God is most wonderful. He loves us so silently and wonderfully and thru the devotees." – Yogananda

And so, we have to watch out for that. As I have said, following these different suggestions about that Divine carriage, but especially, if the marriage does not stay too much on the material plane, everything works out fine. If you keep it on the material plane too much, even in the end all happiness goes. Who wants that? God just says, be moderate, but above all, don't forget me. He's a jealous God. So, the husbands and the wives keep your marriage not wholly on the physical plane, but let God come into it. And then there'll be no contempt for one another, as we know that goes on, as we read the papers, or listen, keep your ears open. There'll be none of that, because if you, husbands, see in your wife the Presence of God, and you, wives, see in your husband the Presence of God, I'm sure it's gonna be adjusted all right.

So, remember that one thing, familiarity breeds contempt. But the Presence of God, through prayer and meditation, will keep that from coming about – will keep a dignified relationship between husband and wife, and, if children are there, they easily absorb that. If the other, if the other condition is there, too much materiality, the children grow up with that same characteristic. So it behooves us, as husbands and wives, to keep our relationship with God, as well as on the physical plane.

I have a friend, he is now Dean of the Christ Church Cathedral in Hartford, Connecticut. And I remember him as a little boy, running around, and then I lost track of him. When I found him again he was a Dean of this Cathedral. And a very nice boy; I remember he was a nice little fellow, but I never thought he'd be that. But he is, and he has written some very inspiring words about divorce and about the proper action in the family, and families that pray together, and meditate together. And this is, is very inspiring. He says this in Guideposts<sup>4</sup> that came out in, way back in '51.

He said: "I have known church people who became divorced, yet in my quarter of a century in the ministry, I have known not a single instance of those who have prayed and worshiped together to be (*sic*) to have been separated." Isn't that wonderful? And so, the family that prays together, he found out – and we can add, that meditates together – they have their differences – the ups and downs of them wouldn't be interesting if they weren't; but, at least, they don't run away from one another. Because why? As Gandhi said, concerning his wife, he said, "I don't know why, she may have more faults than I see, no doubt she

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<sup>4</sup> A Magazine started by Norman Vincent Peale published by Guideposts Publications. Now available on the Internet as <http://www.guidepostsmag.com/> or <http://www.guideposts.com/>

has. But," he says, "there's an indissoluble bond between us.<sup>5</sup>" (Sic) That's a Divine bond. That's the bond of Divine Love. That bond is what we find in the family that prays and meditates together. And so, the words of this Very Reverend, Mr. Hershon are very inspiring and very comforting in the face of what we read so much about in the papers.

And so, finally, remember, feel God as you work in your family. Radiate Him, and you will, without doubt, have the respect of all members of your family. In the beginning they may jump on you and say all manner of things against you, but stick to your guns. Why compromise your position of oneness with God? In the end they'll respect you. And the beauty of those members of the family that pray together, meditate together, all, all get God. That's the most wonderful thing – all, all receive God – some more, some less, according to the capacity.

And I think, in closing it might be fitting just to bring in a few admonitions of the Great Lahiri Mahasaya, who was the Great Householder Saint. He was a family man. He had a wife, and all that goes with those things – children – yet he was one of the greatest saints. And so, we should remember that, those of us who are have families, that if Lahiri Mahasaya could do it, so can we. He was one of the greatest saints, a householder. But, he made God first in his life. Now that doesn't mean to neglect his family. No. That doesn't mean you should neglect your family. But just see to it. And when you wake up in the morning that God's the first thing that comes into your consciousness, and His Light at this point [at the Spiritual Eye], and His Love is with you. Then, throughout the day, your action will be right; will be as it should be. That's all God asks.

He knows He put us here in this mess. And He knows we have to slave and get enough to eat. He knows all that. So, He says, "Just think of me first – think of me first – take me with you. That's all. What you do. That's all I ask. I have everything. You can't give me a thing. I own universe upon universe. But there's one thing I don't have, and that's your love. I, I want that. Give me that." He has to even beg for that, because He's given us independence. But when you give Him that, He's well-pleased, and He takes care of us.

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<sup>5</sup> Autobiography of a Yogi, by Paramhansa Yogananda, First Release 1946 (Free on the internet), Chapter 44, "I believe like every Hindu in God and His oneness, in rebirth and salvation. . . . I can no more describe my feeling for Hinduism than for my own wife. She moves me as no other woman in the world can. Not that she has no faults; I daresay she has many more than I see myself. But the feeling of an indissoluble bond is there. Even so I feel for and about Hinduism with all its faults and limitations. Nothing delights me so much as the music of the *Gita*, or the *Ramayana* by Tulsidas. When I fancied I was taking my last breath, the *Gita* was my solace."

And so, Lahiri Mahasaya, he thought of God first. As his Great Preceptor, his Guru said, "Go back to the world." Naturally, feeling the Great Bliss of Spirit and Illumination which he received from the Great Babaji, he didn't wanna go back. But Babaji said, "You go back, go back, be in the world, but not of it<sup>6</sup>." (Sic) Isn't that wonderful? So, if you're married, be in it. Now don't be attached to it so that it prevents your Soul from expanding into the Consciousness of God from which it has come. That's what that means. Be in the world, but not of it.<sup>7</sup> Be married, be in the family, but don't let that keep you, any of you – father, mother, children – from finding God, that's all. That's all God asks. And instead of losing, we're gonna gain everything. We're gonna gain His Great Presence and His Love.

And so, Lahiri Mahasaya set that great example. And it says in the little book which his grandson wrote, it says these wonderful words, which are so inspiring. "Lahiri Mahasaya showed by his example how worldly people, even in the entanglements of married life, can remain unattached like the lotus in the pond." Look at the lotus in that murky pond where we find them; unattached, with its beautiful bloom. We can be that way. Why not? Married life is simply part in the Drama of Life. What's the difference whether you're playing the part of an unmarried person or a married person, they're all the same. It's the one Consciousness of God in the Great Cosmic Dream. The only thing is, the danger is, don't be attached to what you're playing. Whether it's single life or married life, you can be just as attached singly. Don't forget it. More so, I think, than you can when you're married. Don't be attached. Be in the world, but not of it.

And finally, one of the greatest things I think Lahiri Mahasaya has said, and which I think fits this occasion, are his words about family people. He says these beautiful words, and this is his famous saying: "Do a little kriya each day. Pray a little each day. Do a little meditation each day." That alone will keep us in

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<sup>6</sup> Op.cit. Autobiography, Chapter 34, "'My son,' Babaji said, embracing me, 'your role in this incarnation must be played on an outward stage. Prenatally blessed by many lives of lonely meditation, you must now mingle in the world of men.

"A deep purpose underlay the fact that you did not meet me this time until you were already a married man, with modest business responsibilities. You must put aside your thoughts of joining our secret band in the Himalayas; your life lies in the crowded marts, serving as an example of the ideal **yogi-householder**."

<sup>7</sup> Op.cit. Autobiography, Chapter 24, "The ideal of selfless service to all mankind, and of renunciation of personal ties and ambitions, leads the majority of swamis to engage actively in humanitarian and educational work in India, or occasionally in foreign lands. Ignoring all prejudices of caste, creed, class, color, sex, or race, a swami follows the precepts of human brotherhood. His goal is absolute unity with Spirit. Imbuing his waking and sleeping consciousness with the thought, "I am He," **he roams contentedly, in the world but not of it**. Thus only may he justify his title of swami-one who seeks to achieve union with the *Swā* or Self. It is needless to add that not all formally titled swamis are equally successful in reaching their high goal."

God Consciousness. That'll keep us on the track. Then, he says, "To lead a pure, simple life..." To lead a pure, simple life, [don't try to carry] the whole universe on your shoulders. Some can do it with ease. Some are not made up to rule and govern. Forget that. Lahiri Mahasaya says to "Lead a pure, simple life, by earning one's own living, not being dependent on others for support or help..." that's the independence of the soul, "and silently practicing prayer, meditation, and Kriya Yoga in one's house even without others knowing of what's going on." (*Sic*) He says, do that, and "according to him this was the royal road for self-realization."<sup>8</sup> Isn't that wonderful?

Why should we let any condition, whether it be married life or single life, interfere with us? If we pray, those of us who are in the families, if we pray and meditate a little each day, in the end we will have traversed, traveled the royal road of Self-Realization, which leads to the realization that God is the Father, Mother, Friend, Beloved God of the One Great Family of which we are all members and His children.

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<sup>8</sup> From an article in SADHUSAMBAD, ORGAN OF SADHU SAVA  
A Religious Quarterly Founded by Sadhu Savapati Srimat,  
Swami Sriyukteswar Giri Maharaj  
Vol. I No. 4 Autumnal Equinox

"A true Sanyasa, said he, must be a real Yogi, one whose mind was centered on God. External garb was unlikely to delude people. To lead a pure and simple life by earning one's own living, not being dependent on others for support or help, and silently practicing the Kriya-Yoga in one's own home in privacy without others knowing of it, was according to him the royal road for self-realization."