



## Obedience Is Better Than Reverence

“Arise, follow me” Jesus said to the fishermen. A very simple sentence, but it is filled with a world of meaning: “Arise, come, come! Stop being as you are. Put an end to this state. Change it. Be transformed. Arise! Come out of it. Follow me. Be as I am. Do as I do. I stand before you as an example. Walk in my footsteps. Live as I am living. Follow me. I am teaching you how to live.” Another Teacher also wanted His disciple to do as He told him to. And the disciple replied “*Karishye Vachanam Tava* - Yes, I shall carry out Thy word, Thy injunction.” [Gita 18.73]. And Gurudev in whose presence we are discussing these truths said: “Obedience is better than reverence.”

When Jesus says, “Arise, follow me” we must consider: “Are we arising from that which we have been? Are we following that righteous way that leads to the Kingdom of Heaven? If worship, devotion, reverence, adoration or prayer is to be fruitful, it must be accompanied by obedience. It must be accompanied by carrying out the word of Guru. Are doing it?

Gurudev says: “At the end of each day before you go to bed, introspect, think deeply, go within, search, do self-examination. Keep a spiritual diary. Keep a self-correction register.” “*Uddharedaatmanaatmaanam* - each one must uplift oneself by one’s own self.” [Gita 6.5] You have to make effort and correct yourself.

At the end of his Twenty Spiritual Instructions, Gurudev says: “This is the essence of all spiritual *sadhanas*. This will lead you to Moksha. All these *niyamas* or spiritual cannons must be rigidly observed. You must not give leniency to the mind.” If you do not observe Gurudev’s instructions strictly and rigidly and if you find that no spiritual progress is being made, then who is to be blamed? You need to blame yourself. You are blameless, because you are Atman. You must blame your disobedience. Blame your sins of omission and commission. And then stop blaming them, and start correcting them. Without a cause, you won’t have an effect. Find out! First of all look at your own life.

“Arise and follow me.” Are you following the great ones? Today is the right day, the right time to tell Swami Sivanandaji: “Yes Holy Master, I shall obey you. I shall strictly follow your spiritual instructions and teachings. I will do all that is necessary to be done. Thus I will be a good disciple, a true *sadhaka*, and then I shall rejoice and rejoice.”

God Bless You!

■ *Swami Chidananda*