



January 2020

Dear Ones,

My heart goes out to the devotees in Australia and to everyone whose lives are being affected by the devastating fires that have been burning across your country for so many months. Since we learned of these catastrophic wildfires, all of us monks and nuns in Master's ashrams began praying for those who are suffering as a result of this tragedy. We know that many of you are also praying deeply – asking God's all-protecting light to bring relief and comfort to the people of Australia, and we wanted to encourage you to continue with those efforts. When we inwardly turn to God with faith in His compassion and blessings, we tune in with that Infinite Source whence flows, as Guruji said, "the Wisdom and Power that sustain all creation."

When we face the inevitable ups and downs of existence in this physical world, or when we feel overwhelmed by the pain and suffering that individual and mass karma cause to overtake the lives of so many – of seemingly innocent people and creatures alike, all of whom are temporarily caught in the crosscurrents of those calamities – we may feel despondent and helpless. We may feel angry or frustrated with the limitations of the outer resources we may be relying upon for help. Though our Guru, in his loving compassion, understands us and sympathizes with us, he showed a higher and more liberating response than giving in to feelings of hopelessness, fear, or defeat. Through his own example in times of trials and difficulties, he showed that the unpredictable nature of this world of duality cannot victimize our consciousness when we make attunement with our Divine Father, Mother, and Protector our first and resolute priority. Gurudeva expected us to do our part and to use practical outer means to find a solution to our problems; but he urged us to hold tight inwardly to the hand of the One who bears the burden of this world. That attunement through meditation accompanied by deep prayer allows us to reach into the infinite reservoir of God's mercy and succor during times of need. When we pray to Him with the urgency of our deepest yearning and with sincere faith, we open a channel for divine aid to flow in ways that imbue all human efforts with a transcendent, boundless power. It is that Supreme Power which brings relief and neutralizes the mass and individual karmic causes of suffering and destruction.

Please be assured that I am deeply praying that our beloved God, who holds each of us in His care, will inspire in you greater hope and the confidence to move forward with renewed strength and courage. As you use the power of your positive thoughts and meditation-charged prayers, He will see you and all who are in need of His blessing and encouragement through these very difficult times.

May God and Gurudeva deeply bless, protect, and watch over your lives,

*Brother Chidananda*

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