



## BENEFITS OF SVADHYAYA

*(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)*

### WHAT IS SVADHYAYA?

**S**vadhyaya is daily study of religious scriptures and books written by realised sages. It is the daily Patha or Parayana of sacred books. It is the fourth Anga or limb of Raja Yogic Niyama. Svadhyaya is also enquiry of the nature of Atman or "Who am I". It is recitation of Mantras also. Svadhyaya forms a sort of negative Satsanga when you cannot get positive Satsanga of Mahatmas.

Svadhyaya is the study of scriptures such as Bhagavadgita, Upanishads, Ramayana, Bhagavata, etc. The study should be done with concentration. You should understand what you have studied and try to put in your everyday life all that you have learnt. There will be no benefit in your study if you do not exert to live up to the teachings of the scriptures. Svadhyaya includes also Japa, the repetition of Mantras. Constant study and its practice in daily life will lead one to have communion with God.

### WHY SVADHYAYA?

Svadhyaya means 'Self-study', Brahman is to be learnt through the Srutis and independent thinking and reasoning have nothing to do with it. Badarayana (Vyasa) seeks shelter always in the letter of the Vedas. Srutis are infallible and authoritative. Sruti Pramana is superior to perception. Perception leads to errors. Perception of a jar is really perception of jar minus the rest of the world. The jar and the rest of the world are di-

rectly presented before the mind. Then only perception is possible. How can the atomic mind see the rest of the world? It is impossible. Therefore, perception is not so authoritative and reliable as 'Srutis'. You see a blue colour in Akasa. It is a false attribution or Adhyasa. You cannot depend on the Pramana of perception. Srutis are revelations. They are the direct superintuitive experiences of Rishis, sages. Srutis give an accurate knowledge of Brahman. Srutis remove your Pramanagata Sandeha, doubt about the validity of the Vedantic text. God or Brahman is Atindriya, beyond the reach of the senses; is Avang-Mano-Gochara, beyond the reach of mind and speech. Sruti is the basis of Nididhyasana or deep meditation. The Brahmakara-vritti is generated from the hearing of the Mahavakyas, "Tat Tvam Asi," "Aham Brahma Asmi," of the Srutis. Jnana Yoga is impossible without Sravana, Manana of the Srutis. Some learned fools, big wise fools who pose to possess reason, whereas they really mistake their fancies and preferences for reason declare that they will accept that portion of the Srutis which appeals to reason. They will never get out of this Samsara Chakra. They are doomed for destruction.

If, for a moment, the aspirant relaxes his vigilance and falls into a spiritual or ethical slumber then the lower pull asserts itself and, immediately the allegiance shifts from the higher to the lower self. If, at that time, he comes into contact with sensual objects, there

takes place a setback in his spiritual life. Therefore, this alert vigilance and spiritual awareness, the state of being always awakened, has necessarily to be kept up at this stage.

One of the ways of doing this is Svadhyaya, study of scriptures. One of the most powerful methods of keeping the mind fully alive to the Ideal, is reading of scriptures and the lives of saints daily. For, when you read the lives of saints and spiritual books, a host of powerful and positive ideas rush to your mind and, at once, your mental powers are sharpened. They at once inspire the man and lift him and enable him to conquer the lower forces in his everyday life. Therefore, Svadhyaya should not be given up even for a single day in the life of a Sadhaka.

#### **BENEFITS OF SVADHYAYA**

Svadhyaya inspires and elevates the mind to high spiritual altitude. It clears doubts. It weeds out unholy ideas. It cuts new spiritual grooves for the mind to move on. It reduces wandering of the mind or Vikshepa. It helps concentration. It forms a kind of lower Savikalpa Samadhi. It serves pasture for the mind to graze upon. When you study the sacred books, you are in tune with the authors who are realised souls. You draw inspiration and become ecstatic.

When you cannot get positive Satsanga of Mahatmas, Svadhyaya clears doubts. It strengthens the flickering faith. It induces strong yearning for liberation or aspiration. It gives encouragement and illumination. It places before you a list of saints who trod the path, encountered and removed difficulties and thus cheers you up with hope and vigour. It fills the mind with Sattva or purity; it inspires and elevates the mind. It helps concentration and meditation. It cuts new Sattvic grooves

and makes the mind run in these new grooves.

To translate the precepts contained in the books of the sages and saints into action is to have your afflicted body soothed, to have your bruised soul healed and to save yourselves from all kinds of ills of life which are due to ignorance. Spiritual books act as consoling companions under all vexing circumstances, as ideal teachers in all difficulties, as guiding lights in the nights of nescience and folly, as panacea for evils and as shapers of destiny.

Scriptures contain the wisdom of sages and saints, philosophers and mystics. By Svadhyaya, master the secrets of all sciences, know the exact nature of things, and tune your localized being or individualized personality with the workings of the Divine Nature of the Laws of Truth. Wisdom is the key to the Plenitude of Power and Joy. Wisdom annuls countless sufferings, innumerable sins, cuts the root of ignorance and confers upon you the Peaceful Harmony and Absolute Perfection.

Be regular in the study of religious books, Ramayana, Bhagavata, Yoga Vasishtha and other good books. If you reflect on the ideas of the Bhagavadgita and fix the mind on these ideas this itself is a form of lower Samadhi. Gita is a unique book for Svadhyaya. It contains the essence of all the Yogas and the cream of the Vedas. You can devote half an hour to three hours daily for this purpose according to the time at your disposal. Study of scriptures is Kriya Yoga or Niyama. It purifies the heart and fills the mind with sublime and elevating thoughts.

Therefore, study of scriptures, bearing the sacred truths propounded by men of wisdom, listening to the Lilas of the Lord are never to be given up by sincere Sadhakas, at

whatever stage of spiritual evolution they may be. Are you more advanced than Sri Sukadeva who was a born sage and Parivrajaka? Are you more advanced than the great sages who assembled at Naimisaranya to listen to Srimad Bhagavata being narrated by Sri Suta? Learn a lesson from these illustrious examples of great sages. Be for ever a Sadhaka. Be for ever a thirsting aspirant after spiritual knowledge. Be for ever a student. He and he alone is an old man who feels that he has learnt enough and has need for no more knowledge. He is a man dead while alive who does not feel a compelling eagerness to listen to the stories of the Lord's Lila or to spiritual discourses. You can stave off old age and even death itself by preserving within you the youthful zeal and a devout eagerness to learn more, to practise more and to realise more deeply, the great spiritual Truth, which is inexhaustible, in spite of having been extolled and expounded by millions of saints, sages and seers from times immemorial.

#### **SVADHYAYA PREVENTS 'BACK-SLIDING'**

Moreover, forget not that on all sides you are surrounded by materialistic influences. If you are slack even for a day, the evil forces around you would find their opportunity and play havoc. The ball dropped on the top of the staircase takes less than a split-second to reach the ground, whereas it took much longer to take it up. In a moment of heedlessness, much could be lost. Life is short, time is fleeting; you cannot afford to lose an inch of the ground that you have gained with so much effort, in your battle against this formidable foe—Satan, Maya, Mara, or the evil mind.

Do not let this monkey mind have a minute's respite. It is here that Satsanga and

spiritual literature come to your great aid. They are your saviours. How many sublime thoughts are brought to your very doors by the scriptures? Study the pages of the scriptures carefully. Underline the sentences that strike you as having a direct bearing on your life. Reflect over them in your leisure moments. Thus would you find that you are able to surmount many obstacles and jump over many pitfalls. Is the mind disinclined to read these passages over and over again? That is Maya's potent weapon to put you to sleep. Beware! Are you not taking the same food over and over again? You will have to go on reading and rereading the selfsame spiritual sentences over and over again till they are indelibly engraved on the tablet of your heart, till they become part and parcel of your inner nature.

#### **REPETITION AUGMENTS INNER STRENGTH**

Then will a fortress of Nirodha Samskaras be erected within you. Repetition gives strength. Repetition pushes the ideas into the innermost chambers of your heart and mind. Then the ideas will percolate your subconscious mind. The evil thoughts lurking there will be scorched and annihilated. You may not even know what wonders have been effected within you. Such is the salutary influence of repeatedly studying the same spiritual text. That is why our ancestors insisted on our ceremoniously reading a text like the Gita, Ramayana, Bhagavata, etc., daily, regularly, with faith and devotion. They will augment your inner strength. Your will will grow stronger. When thus the entire inner nature is transformed into divine, then a single effort to meditate will lead you to Nirvikalpa Samadhi and superconsciousness. You will then realise God in the twinkling of an eye.

### SCRIPTURES THAT DEVELOP DEVOTION

A devotee should study books which place before him the ideals of devotion, the glory, the sweetness and the Lilas of the Lord, the stories of saints and the practices which help him to cultivate devotion. Devotion develops by the study of such devotional scriptures.

The most important books are Ramayana, Srimad Bhagavata, Narayaniyam, Gita, Vishnupurana, Adhyatma Ramayana, Tulsi Ramayana (Ramacharit Manas), Vishnu Sahasranama, Sandilya Sutras, Siva Purana, Devi Bhagavata, the Narada Pancharatnam, Practice of Bhakti Yoga, Essence of Bhakti Yoga, Bhakti and Sankirtan, Bhakti-Rasamritam, songs of Alwars and Nayanars, Thevaram,

Thiruvachakam, Dasabodha, Tukaram's Abhanga, Jnaneshwari, Bhakti Rasayana, Bhakti Rasamritasindhu, etc.

### SCRIPTURES THAT DEVELOP KNOWLEDGE

A student of Jnana Yoga or a seeker of Truth should study the following books regularly, reflect and meditate on their meaning with proper personal guidance of a Guru. The important books for Svadhyaya are: Atma-Bodha, Vivekachudamani, The Ten Classical Upanishads, Bhagavadgita, Panchadasi, Jivanmukti Viveka, Yoga-Vasistha, Advaita Siddhi, Brahma Sutras, Karikas of Gaudapada, The Realisation of the Absolute, Atma Purana, Sanat Sujatiya, Avadhuta Gita, Ashtavakra Gita, Adhyatma Ramayana, etc.

### INITIATION—ITS MEANING

A Bhakta will be initiated by a Bhakta saint in the path of devotion. A Jnani will initiate a student of Vedanta in the Mahavakyas. A Hatha Yogi or a Raja Yogi can initiate another in his particular path. But, a sage of perfect realisation, a Purna-jnani or Purna-yogi, can give initiation in any particular path. A sage or saint like Sri Sankara or Madhusudana Sarasvati can initiate a Sadhaka in any particular path for which the aspirant is fit. The Guru will find out by close study of the aspirant his tastes, temperaments, and capacity, and decide for him the most suitable path. If his heart is impure, the teacher will prescribe selfless service for a number of years. Then the Guru will find out for what particular path the student is fit and initiate him in that.

Initiation does not mean reciting a Mantra into another's ears. If Rama is influenced by the thoughts of Krishna, the former has got initiation already from the latter. If an aspirant treads the path of truth after studying the books written by a saint, and imbibes his teachings, that saint has already become his Guru.

—Swami Sivananda

## GURU PURNIMA MESSAGE

*(Sri Swami Chidananda)*

**O**m Namō Bhagavate Sivanandaya!

Salutations and worshipful Pranams to the sacred lotus-Feet of the Guru whose form is to be an object of our meditation, whose feet are to be adored, whose words are most holy truths and whose Grace grants us supreme Divine beatitude!

Guru is one who has destroyed his mind and who knows how one has to destroy it. The only thing that stands in the way of our spiritual realisation is our own mind and it is to remove this obstacle that one comes to the Guru and surrenders himself unto him. But then, Guru-Kripa has not only to be bestowed, not only to be given; it has also to be received. In receiving it, we immortalize ourselves, divinise ourselves. We must be ready to receive it; then it will flow into us and raise us to the highest realm of immortality, eternal light and infinite bliss. But, then, how can we receive it? How should we conduct ourselves if we are to be ready to receive this Grace.

Carry out the teachings of the Guru; and this should be our Sadhana day in, day out. There may be certain inner qualifications which are necessary for the full and effective reception of divine grace; even after having attained all the qualifications of the ideal disciple, we have to wait in humility and in patience. There is no loss here, for the goal is immortal life, freedom. If we have become

willing servants and willing, obedient disciples, then it is the natural law that Guru-Kripa will flow into us unasked. Guru-Kripa may come in an unpleasant form. It may come in the form of a series of disappointments. We may think that Guru has not bestowed his Kripa upon us; but that disappointment itself will be his Kripa. We are not fit to judge whether we are ready to receive Guru-Kripa or not, and what form it would take. The best thing is to humbly leave everything to the Guru.

“I do not know whether I am a disciple or not. Therefore, O ocean of mercy and compassion, pray make me a proper disciple. Generate in me that Mumukshutva which makes me a disciple and give me the spirit of willing obedience.

“Help me in trying to follow thy instructions. Help me in trying to mould myself upon the pattern set up by thee”; this must be our constant prayer. And, by this alone shall we be able to draw the Kripa of our Guru and make our life fruitful. And the perfect way of praying is trying our best to be real disciples.

Beloved follower of Sri Gurudev, to send this message into you, is a great privilege and a joy to me. It is a rare blessedness to think of the Satguru, a rarer blessedness to speak about Him, to glorify and praise Him and a supreme good fortune to worship Him. To medi-

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tate upon the Guru is the greatest blessing that can come into the life of a seeking soul. Our Soubhagya was verily great when God granted us all, the living and life-transforming contact and association with a Mahapurusha like Gurudev Sivananda. Our supreme and unique Soubhagya would still be this same living contact if we earnestly endeavour and sincerely strive to keep alive and maintain this link with Sri Gurudev even now by our regular worship of His Living Presence. To keep alive this vatal contact worship is the spiritual method.

Worship is the means of approaching the Invisible. It takes us closer to the Intangible Divine Essence in which form Gurudev now abides after setting aside the physical form in which He dwelt and through which He moved with us all on a physical plane. By regular worship, the seeker strengthens his spiritual bond with the Guru even beyond the time of his physical existence. By preserving such a bond, the disciple is able to draw upon himself the continued Guru-Kripa. He is blessed with guidance and protected by His benedictions in a mysterious way. Adore thy Guru and pay homage unto Him who has opened thy eyes to the glorious purpose of life, and who has shown you the true path to blessedness and bliss. This is your foremost duty now, O Seeker after Peace and Joy! Herein lies thy Supreme Welfare.

The most holy Guru Purnima is a great annual occasion that provides you an invaluable opportunity of reestablishing this vital inner contact with Gurudev. It is a day when all devotees and disciples earnestly put forth special efforts to experience their oneness with the Nirakara Guru Tattva. It is an occasion, a holy and auspicious occasion for re-

newing your inner ties with the Guru upon the spiritual plane. To us all, this day assumes an added solemn significance this year, because now—more than ever—we need to invoke, recreate and strengthen the spiritual contact. For, upon last Guru Purnima Day Sri Gurudev still lived in His physical form. But this year, for the first time in all our long years of blessed contact and spiritual association with the Guru, this blessing is no more. The Guru exists; Sri Gurudev is with us. In the depths of our spiritual being, we must experience the presence of His pure spiritual Self. This we shall do in a special way upon holy Guru Purnima Day.

Renew this contact. And then plunge into a period of spiritual Sadhana. Crown that Anushthana with an inspiring worship of His glorious radiance abiding in His Samadhisthana. Thus has been conceived the holy spiritual programme for this ensuing Guru Purnima on 24th July. The Sadhana Anushthana following the Purnima worship is to culminate in the sacred Aradhana upon the 1st Anniversary of Gurudev Sivanandaji's Maha-Samadhi on 2nd August. I have no doubt that all those disciples and devotees who come and participate with sincerity, faith, devotion and reverence will experience without fail the blessedness of His living contact and loving Kripa.

May all those who have had the unique good fortune of receiving Mantra Diksha from Satguru Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj try to participate in this holy programme; or observe these two great days by conducting a similar spiritual programme at their own places. Jai Sivananda! May Gurudev's grace be upon you all.

With regards, Prem and Om!

## THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH

(Sri Swami Krishnananda)

[Continued from the previous issue]

### X

To recall our memories to the subject of meditation, we noticed that there are principally three approaches to the technique of meditation. There is the subjective method, the objective method and the transcendent method. There are also ways of approach which synthesise all these envisagements. The system of Yoga propounded by Patanjali, particularly, touches upon all these aspects, and so we shall reserve this subject to a later time, because it is the most popular system, and it has also the special advantage of being a blend of all these avenues of approach to Truth. The objective method borders finally upon the universal method, and this, again, is a subject we have to set aside for a later consideration, as it entails an entry into advanced techniques.

We shall touch upon a system of thinking in meditation which is peculiar to the philosophies and religions in India, particularly. It is not so much in vogue in other countries, though a suggestiveness of this type can be found also in the mystical doctrines of the Western saints and sages. But it is predominant in the Indian systems, not only in Hinduism, but also in Buddhism and Jainism. It is a special feature because it comprehends within its perspective the essential relationship of the individual with the whole of creation. The central emphasis laid by almost all the philosophies in India is the co-ordination

of the individual with the universal. Whether it is a metaphysical system or a psychological one, every system of thought has, as the ultimate objective of all its approaches, the bringing together of the apparently diversified facets of the individual and the cosmos. For this purpose an analytical technique is being adopted.

The individual, the *jiva*, as it is usually called, the person, 'You' and 'I' is a complex structure of body, mind and spirit. The spirit which is the deepest essence in the individual ramifies itself as a controlling power through the various functions of the individual or the personality.

If we could bring to our memories certain interesting points, which we noted earlier, we would recollect that we observed by analysis that there is a permanent relationship of an inextricable nature between the individual and the universe. We need not repeat the theme here because we have already touched upon it. But what is this relationship that involves a threefold linkage by which the individual is connected to the universal or the cosmic, in the process of knowing? In the process of knowing there is an undercurrent of activity going on without our being conscious of what is happening.

Let us take a gross example, of looking at a tree and becoming conscious of its exis-

tence. This simple, commonplace cognition of the presence of an object outside is not so simple as it appears on the surface. It is a very complex activity that manifests itself as the end result, viz., knowledge of the object, the tree, for instance. For the simple act of even standing on our legs, about 450 muscles are supposed to work simultaneously, a fact of which we are not always aware. When we throw into our mouth even a little piece of raisin, the whole body is set into activity, like a dynamo working in a factory. It is not a simple act of a little stuff being put on the tongue. The entire alimentary canal and the respiratory system, the bloodstream and every cell of the body is set into motion because of the entry of a particular object, which is there for the purpose of absorption into the system.

Likewise is the perception of things, knowledge of objects, awareness of anything. We become aware of the objects by the interaction of three facets of reality,—the subjective side, which is known as the “Seer”, the objective side which is the object “Seen”, and a third element which is absolutely essential for establishing a conscious connection between the “Seer” and the “Seen”. In Indian theological systems or epistemological analysis, it has been discovered that the very consciousness of an object, even if it be the simple consciousness of an insignificant thing in the world, is a universal phenomenon. There is no such thing as an individual function, anywhere.

The whole world is active when even a single event takes place at any point in space, just as the whole body is active even if a little thorn is to prick the sole of the foot. It is not a local effect merely; it is the entire body-organism getting energised into the requisite action. The whole world becomes aware of even the wisp of a wind, the fall of a

leaf or even the movement of a bird, and this is not merely a gospel that you hear in the New Testament, the sermon of the Buddha, or the Upanishad; it is a scientific fact. This is a great revelation which came to Seers of such profundity as the Upanishads, for instance, where we are awakened to the fact of a cosmic interconnection of things, which sets itself into motion at the time of the occurrence of any event, perception, or whatever it is.

This takes us deep down into its further implications, which have direct relevance to our practical life. We are not really independent individuals. We are not isolated persons with no connection among ourselves. We are participants in a government which operates as the central system of the universe. When we become the citizens of a particular nationality or country, we automatically get transformed into a vital relationship with that organism of administration called the government, whether or not we are always conscious of this circumstance. Likewise, the revelation of these great sages brought before their eyes a mysterious circumstance of the inter-relationship of things, so that everything that we are, let alone what we have, belongs to the whole cosmos. We have no personal property; we may call it a universal communism or socialism, wonderful even to contemplate! We have no personal belongings. We cannot say that even the body is our own property. Everything belongs to the All, at once.

The physical body of ours is constituted of the five elements, and how do we say it is our property? Just as all the walls of a building are made up of bricks, mortar, etc., our body is made up of earth, water, fire, air and ether. We cannot say it is ‘our’ body. The very substance of the body belongs to the struc-

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ture of things, and the body can be resolved back into the cause from which it has come and out of which it is manufactured. Now we are discussing a very important subject in meditation. The very first step that we take in the direction of the assessment of the circumstances of our physical body will take us to a point of concentration, where we will lose the sense of individuality.

Let us just imagine, as persons endowed with a little commonsense, a situation where the cells of the body and everything that our body is made of,—the flesh, bones and marrow,—all belong to the world outside. What does remain to belong to us afterwards? We will be stunned even to imagine this situation. We cannot breathe for a moment. It appears that we have borrowed all things from others, to whom they belong, and we have unnecessarily appropriated them and got introduced into that false apprehension of a sense of consciousness which is called egoism, an unwarranted assessment of proprietorship. When we assert our consciousness in the direction of a false proprietorship, we are supposed to be egoistic persons or, can we say, thieves?

So, our awareness or consciousness or mind or reason or intellect, whatever we call it, somehow wrongly reconciles itself to the appropriation of things which do not really belong to it, and then we find ourselves in hot waters in a second. We have dragged into our own personal cocoons of individual life things which belong to somebody else. The five elements are the owners of this body, and they are everywhere. Everyone's body belongs to them, so that none of us has an independent physical existence. We have lost our physical personality in a moment. This is one step in meditation, even without our going further into the greater implications of this sys-

tem of self-analysis. We will be surprised even to realise this initial fact of the dissolution of our physical existence into the cosmic elements. Our breath will cease because of the shock that has been injected into our minds by the realisation of this tremendous, unexpected revelation.

Apart from the body that we are endowed with, we have the sense-organs. The cosmology of the Vedanta philosophy, the Samkhya, and even the yoga system of Patanjali accept that there are subtle layers of our personality. Apart from the physical body is the subtle body, the astral system in which the mind is located and through whose operation the sense organs begin to work in the direction of objects. Different from the physical body constituted of the five elements, we have the subtle body inside, in which there is the *prana* with its fivefold activity, there are the senses of perception, and also the mind and the intellect. All these are present here as one organisation. In fact, what we call the subtle body is only a name that we give to the total of all these internal functions,—psychic, sensory and vital.

These may appear to be 'ourselves' just as the body appears to be 'ourselves'. But in the same way as we falsely imagine that the body is ours, we also falsely imagine that the mind is ours, the senses are ours,—for even these do not belong to us. We may be further surprised here and may not be able to stomach all these things. We now realise that the body has gone, and the mind even seems to go, and then what remains? The cosmological deduction in the systems of thought tells us that the sense-organs are controlled by certain deities and they are the owners of the sense-organs, even as the five elements are the owners of our body.

The theology and the cosmology mention that the solar system centralised in the Sun is the divinity or the deity presiding over the eyes. There is a subtle system of connection between the eyes and the Sun. We cannot physically observe what this connection is. Something about this mystery we learn from the Upanishads. So is the case with the ears,—by ears we do not mean the fleshy eardrum but the particular capacity of hearing within, which operates through the eardrum and enables us to hear sound. So are the other sense-perceptions: smelling, tasting, touching. They have all their central governing systems behind them and these so-called perceptual organs are only instruments operated by powers that are cosmically set up in various directions,—powers known as deities, the angels that govern and guard us.

This is just to indicate the principle behind the recognition of a relationship between the individual and the cosmic even in the subtle body, and not merely the physical body. The eyes have gone to the Sun, the ears have gone to some other divinity; the smell and the taste and the other senses, even the powers of grasping and locomotion, all go to the presiding principles which are internal to the physical universe. Even as there are layers of the individual personality, internal to the physical system of ours, there are planes of the cosmos. The planes are the levels of existence; we call them *lokas*, the different densities of the manifestation of the cosmos, internal to the physical, and functioning as the vital, the mental and the intellectual realms. These cosmic vital, mental and intellectual planes are internal to and transcending the physical cosmos which we see with the physical eyes.

So, the whole physical universe is the owner of our physical body, and the whole as-

tral or the causal or the subtle universe is the owner of our subtle body. We have technical terms for these cosmic principles, as we find them in the Vedanta philosophy. The whole physical cosmos animated by a co-ordinated function is called '*Virat*'. The internal subtle universal co-ordinating principle is called '*Hiranyagarbha*'. The individual layers of personality are inseparable, not merely in spirit but even literally, from the existing system of the universe. The physical body having gone to the five elements, the senses going to their divinities, the mind to the moon and the intellect to Brahma, and so on, we will find that there is practically nothing remaining in us, to call our own. We have not only become beggars with nothing belonging to us, but it appears as if our very existence is getting threatened. We cannot exist, even. This seems to be the point towards which we are slowly heading, a most uncomfortable thing for every one of us. We are not going to get even the least recognition of even being an existent entity, let alone as a person with property and individual status. What can be worse for the ego than this?

When all the property has gone, a person would at least want to live, but even that we are not going to be conceded. We cannot even live. What does one say to this? The universe wants to swallow us completely even to the utmost extent, and meditation is nothing but a conscious awakening of ourselves to this great truth of our reality belonging to a different order of things and not suddenly getting perplexed or surprised at the revelation of this fact thrust into us by force, by the process of universal history. All the processes of events we call history, even the processes of birth and death, are only the forceful introductions into ourselves of the law that operates in the universe. If we would not abide by the law,—we are not prepared to

abide by the law voluntarily and honourably,—we are perforce brought into its acceptance by the sufferings through which we pass in life, the sorrows we call our fate, and the penalty of reincarnation.

It is nothing but the urge of the individual to unite itself with the universe that manifests itself as all these events, visible or otherwise. Now we revert to the point with which we started in the beginning. This system of meditation has a cosmological suggestiveness, whereby we may be seated in a calm and sober posture and rouse ourselves to this consciousness of our belonging to all things. We belong to everybody. Literally, we are a property of all things. We are not supposed to have any personal property, because we are a property of all. Nothing belongs to us, but we belong to everybody.

What a change of affairs! Earlier I thought I am the owner; now I realise I am owned by somebody else, and by everyone everywhere. This is the death blow dealt by knowledge to the ego's complacency. The ego cannot tolerate these things any more. It resents vehemently even a talk about these possibilities. It will hush you up and say "talk not", and then the vehemence of the affirmation of the personality will get stirred up so intensely that, if we are not careful enough to go stage by stage without being in a hurry, there is likely to be a revolt from the ego, a revolt from everything that we are, because we have been accustomed to think in terms of personality and self-affirmation, and today there is none to do it reverence. Our parents teach us false values: "This is your friend, this is your enemy." We are told this from the very childhood. "This is your land, this is not yours, this is your uncle's property, that is your enemy's business." We are told this, and it is told so many times that we get totally brain-

washed early. We are taught these very same things in our schools and colleges, so that we become embodiments of stupidity and we know nothing of the true nature of things.

We can imagine what an effort is necessary to counteract this erroneous notion that has become an incrustation on our personalities, a part of our false being. What an effort is necessary! Do you think a few minutes of sitting with closed eyes will be of any avail? We have taken many births. In all the births that we have undergone, down to this incarnation, we have been thinking wrongly, and a mountain of errors has grown over our personalities; and now, today, since a few years, or months, or a few days, we have been trying to rectify these errors. If we do not recognise any tangible progress in our practice, we should not be disappointed. We should be able to understand our position. After all, since how long have we been trying to think rightly? For ages and ages we have been thinking wrongly and now since five years or so we have been trying to think at least rightly. Well, it is a good attempt, and praiseworthy, and we must be happy about it that we are blessed with a proper thought. But we should not be in a mood of melancholy, or disappointedness that no success has come. How can there be visible success when the effort has started only a few years back and there is a huge ocean-like atmosphere which has to be encountered in our meditation? We have to be, however, confident that we are on the right path. Part of the success is in the confidence that we have in our minds. "Yes, now I have understood what the matter is."

This satisfaction of certainty and confidence in our minds is a large percentage of our success, and we will gradually realise that things are not so bad as they appear on the surface. If our heart is really given to this

practice with a sincerity that arises on account of a hundred-percent conviction of our going to achieve success, this truth will triumph, and under the law we are bound to succeed. It may be that we may take years to realise tangible results, or it can be that we may achieve results more quickly by the ardour and intensity of the practice. What is conducive to the success is not merely a study of books or listening to discourses but the welling up of feelings, the stirring of the spirit and the ardent longing that we evince in ourselves for the realisation of this truth, which alone is, and nothing else can be.

This ardour of consciousness is the principal prerequisite for success in Yoga, and, in fact, no other qualification is necessary. There is no need for a great academic qualification or a learning in the manner of a library. Nothing of the kind is the essential in Yoga. It is a concentratedness of the whole spirit due to the realisation of this great fact and awakening that matters finally, and in reality.

We have already observed that there must be regularity in practice. There should not be a slipshod approach to the things of the spirit. Habit strengthens the practice. Anything that is continued daily becomes strong, by the very continuance of it in a systematic manner. What do we think every day? Among the many methods of meditation that may be there, we are to choose only a few, because there is no use burdening our heads with hundreds of techniques. A few essentials will do, from which each individual can select what is suitable to one's own predilection and make-up of the psychic personality.

This, then, is the peculiar technique adopted in Indian systems, by which the various components of the individual personality are recognised to be part and parcel of the different orders of things altogether. To reca-

pitulate, the earth-element in the body goes to the earth; the water-element goes to water, the fire element goes to fire, the air-element goes to air, and what remains is space, which is everywhere. We have heard chemists and physicists telling us that if one is pumped out of all the space that is within, one's whole material body would be compressed into a cubic centimetre of substance. You are not six feet tall, as you are imagining. There is the space inside, and so you look bulky. If you remove all the space and compress yourself, you will be so little, less than the pigmy of Lilliput. We are not really so important as we appear to be. There is nothing in us, ultimately. We are unnecessarily imagining ourselves and pompously parading our false show in this world of vanity. We would, on analysis, turn out to be empty shells, vainglorious individuals, patting ourselves on the back for nothing, while there is the danger of our being threatened out of our wits by the law that operates.

It is up to us to realise the presence of this universal law, transfer this body to the five elements, and transfer the senses, mind and intellect to the deities. Let the sun take the eyes, the ears go to their divinities, the mind end in the moon, the intellect go to Brahma, the ego merge in Rudra, and the conscience go to Narayana. All things that we are have gone to their causes. 'Pure Being' remains, and there is only an awareness of Being, not the awareness of being so-and-so or such-and-such, but an impersonal characterless continuity of Being as such. This is the point we noted earlier also, the fact of Existence-consciousness-bliss, *sat-chit-ananda*, which is our essential nature. We are God-Being in essence.

We are not the body, not the senses, not the mind, not the intellect, not anything of the kind. These are all expressions of the higher

order of the universe. What remains in us is not a property or a substance or an object but that basic residuum of truth, which is commensurate with the truth of All-Being. When we go deep down into the base of any wave in the ocean, we will find that we are touching something which is everywhere, that which is at the root of all the waves. When we go down into the barest minimum of our personalities, at the root, we touch that which is within everything also, at the same time, and we, then, need not have any difficulty in universal communication. When this end is achieved, one is supposed to become cosmic-conscious, like the wave becoming ocean-conscious because of the entry of itself into the very substance of it.

At present, we are individually conscious, 'I'-conscious, 'You'-conscious, 'This'-conscious, 'That'-conscious. It is like a this-wave-consciousness, to the exclusion of that wave, but when the wave subsides into the very base of them all, it touches that root, which is the root of all other waves, all individualities. Try to meditate like this. Let the whole wave of your individuality subside into the ocean of Pure Being, and then you be-

come, not merely your being or somebody's being, but All-Being, and this is what is called God-Consciousness. This is what they call *samadhi*, in technical Yoga terms. This is *moksha* or liberation. There is no rebirth afterwards, because the causative factor of rebirth, which is the clinging to personality, has gone altogether; it has been dissolved in meditation.

Why should you be reborn into phenomena? Who will force you when you have become the very cause of the entire manifestation of things? This is freedom in the real sense of the term. Until this is achieved, you cannot be regarded as a free person. You are always under the thumb of the universal law that compels you to abide by its requirements. Our so-called political independence or social freedom is no true freedom. We cannot be regarded as really free until we are absolutely independent. And that independence is called *kaivalya*, Aloneness, with no counterpart of other's aloneness, in which every other aloneness gets subsumed and included. This is the Supreme Goal to which meditation directs us.

The purpose of life on earth is the realisation of this stupendous depth of the Being of all beings, without which life becomes a failure.

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Consciousness is never limited, for the very consciousness of the fact of limitation is proof of its transcendental unlimitedness.

\* \* \*

The most fundamental experience is consciousness or awareness, pure and simple, free from the self-contradictory divisions and fluctuations of thought.

\* \* \*

The love for the Eternal is the essential passion that burns in the heart of all things.

—**Swami Krishnananda**



## CONCENTRATION IS GOD

(*Sri Swami Atmaswarupananda*)

“Concentration is God,” Pujya Swami Chidanandaji once said. Pujya Swamiji didn’t elaborate; therefore, we cannot say exactly what he meant, but perhaps he was referring to a situation where—by concentrating on the object of our devotion—all other thoughts are eliminated, and finally one thought alone remains. The subject-object relationship has simply faded away until One alone is.

In any case, one thing that we can say for certain is that doing our spiritual practices without a degree of concentration puts them on a lower level. There is a tremendous difference between repeating God’s name verbally with our mind going where it will, and repeating it with concentration. The same, of course, applies to all our worship. It is also useless to do *svadhyaya* without concentration, and the definition of meditation is that it must be done with concentration. Therefore, whether or not concentration, as we understand it, is God, it certainly takes us closer to God. It greatly deepens our spiritual practices.

It is here that we run into a great difficulty in modern life. There is so much to do, so many distractions. It is only with great difficulty that we find time for spiritual practices,

let alone have the ability to concentrate on them to a degree that enhances their value. Is there a solution to this difficulty? Perhaps not with our normal spiritual practices, but there is one spiritual practice that we can do in our daily life that would not only benefit us spiritually, but secularly as well. That would be to have an underlying determination to do what is right to the very best of our ability under all circumstances.

That means that we live a life of awareness, awareness of what we are doing, awareness of what we are saying, awareness of the movement of our mind and of the decisions that we are making. In other words, we concentrate on our daily life to make sure that we are acting in the highest way possible—according to truth, according to non-injury, according to purity.

This each one of us can do, and it is the practice of concentration. It is also purification, and, in fact, it will likely take us closer to God than having the freedom to do spiritual practices all day long if we don’t concentrate on them. “Concentration is God,” Pujya Swamiji said. Let us practise concentration in our daily life by trying our very best at all times, in all circumstances to do what is right.

Faith and belief are the twin wings, as it were, of the bird of your spirit. Faith and belief are the two legs that have to take you to your destination. Faith and belief are the left and right hands that can enable you to achieve anything, take up any task and do it. Faith and belief are like the two eyes that enable a person to see correctly, wholly, with the right perspective. Faith and belief are the indispensable twin factors that succeed in making you what you wish to become, a person with deep faith, deep belief.

—*Swami Chidananda*

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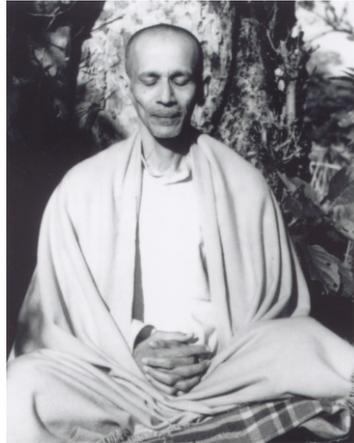
## Yoga for Health

# MEDITATION

*(Sri Swami Chidananda)*

Meditation is the seventh limb according to the Yoga Sutras of sage Patanjali, the eighth being Samadhi. There are many methods of practice of concentration which lead to meditation. The purpose of meditation is to understand the real nature of the object of meditation. The mind is the instrument with which we meditate. A certain amount of the study of the nature of activities of the mind is necessary before one takes up to meditation. The existence of the mind can be found only during its activities. The thief can be found out only during the act of thieving, for at all other times he may look like an ordinary person. When the thief comes to know that the police are after him, he restricts his movements. Similarly, if you begin to study the mind, the mental processes or the activities of the mind will be reduced. There are mainly two stages of meditation. They are: (1) Constantly thinking on one object or thought, to the exclusion of all other objects and thoughts; and (2) keeping the mind free of all thoughts.

In the first stage one must concentrate one's mind on an object, or engage oneself in the repetition of the Mantra into which he is initiated by his preceptor. If one starts repeating the Mantra with concentration on the Mantra, then alone one will come to know the



innumerable other thoughts which lie submerged in one's subconscious and unconscious levels of the mind and which rise to the conscious level and cause disturbance to concentration on the Mantra. When the concentration on one Mantra together with Bhava (feeling of its meaning), is increased through a long and continued practice, the mind reaches the state of meditation.

In the second stage, one should sit in a comfortable posture, close the eyes and relax all the limbs of the body from the toes to the crown of the head. The ears being open, external sounds naturally will impinge on them. One should be a witness to these external sounds and also be a witness to the inner thoughts that may arise one after another in endless succession. One should not go after those inner thoughts, nor should one pay any serious attention to the external sounds. By complete relaxation in the sitting posture and by remaining as a witness of the internal and external activities of the mind, the mind will become non-objectified, after continued, unbroken practice for a long period. In the early stages care should be taken that one does not go to sleep. Sincerity, earnestness and purity of thought, word and deed, are the important factors for success in the practice of meditation.

## LUST AND PASSION

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

[Continued from the previous issue]

### DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PHYSIOLOGICAL POLLUTION AND PATHOLOGICAL POLLUTION

Spermatorrhoea is involuntary seminal discharge. Nocturnal discharge, night pollution, Svapna-Dosha, wet dream are all synonymous terms. Ayurvedic doctors call this disease Sukra-Megha. This is due to the evil habits in youth. In severe cases, discharges occur in daytime also. The patient passes semen along with urine during micturition. If there is occasional discharge, you need not be alarmed a bit. This may be due to heat in the body, or the pressure of loaded bowels or bladder on the seminal bags. This is not a pathological condition.

Night pollution is of two kinds, namely, physiological pollution and pathological pollution. In physiological pollution, you will be refreshed. You should not be afraid of this act. You should not mind if the discharge of semen is very occasional. You need not worry about it. This is also a slight flushing of the apparatus or a periodical cleansing through a slight overflow from the reservoir in which the semen is stored up. This act may not be attended with evil thoughts. The person may not be aware of the act during the night. Whereas, in pathological pollution, the act is accompanied by sexual thoughts. Depression follows. There is irritability, languishment, laziness, inability to work and concentrate. Occasional discharges are of no consequence, but frequent nocturnal pollutions cause depression of spirits, debility, dyspepsia, low spirits, loss of memory, severe pain in the

back, headache, burning of the eyes, drowsiness and burning sensation at urination or during the flow of semen. The semen becomes very thin.

### CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

Wet dreams and spermatorrhoea may be due to various causes like constipation, a loaded stomach, irritation-producing or wind-producing food, impure thoughts and long self-abuse done in ignorance.

Seminal weakness, nocturnal emissions, lascivious dreams and all other effects of an immoral life will surely lead one to a miserable state of living, if not checked by proper Sadhana. Nocturnal discharges can be easily checked by a few doses of *Camphor Monobromata pills* and other mixtures of *Spt. Camphor, Tr. Belladonna*, etc. But these medicines cannot produce a permanent cure. One can get a temporary relief during the time one takes the medicine. Even doctors of the West admit that such medicines cannot effect a permanent cure. The moment the medicine is discontinued, the patient will find his disease all the worse. In some cases, the patient becomes impotent by the use of these drugs. The only effective permanent cure can be had through the system of ancient Yoga. *Naasti yogat param balam*—There is no strength higher than that of Yoga. The different methods given in this book will enable you to get success if practised regularly.

Do not be carried away by the pompous advertisements made by quacks and charlatans. Lead a simple natural life. You will become all right soon. Do not spend any money in buying the so-called patent medicines and specifics. They are worthless. Quacks try to exploit the credulous and the ignorant. Do not go to the doctors. Endeavour to qualify yourself as your own doctor. Understand the laws of nature, the principles of hygiene and health. Do not trespass against the laws of health.

### **A WARNING AGAINST EVIL SEX HABITS AND OUTBURSTS OF ANGER**

Avoid all kinds of self-abuse. They drain away your vital energy and leave you like a dead man or like the sugar cane from which the juice has been extracted. Veerya is indeed a priceless possession. Do not waste it for the sake of a momentary excitement and sensation.

Give up the evil habit at once. You will be entirely ruined if you continue the practice. Open your eyes. Wake up now. Become wise. Shun evil company. Do not cut jokes with women. Practise chaste look. Upto this time you were blind and ignorant. You were in the

dark. You had no idea of the disastrous effects of this evil practice. You will lose your eyesight. You will have dimness of vision. You will have shattered nerves.

Do not look at the reproductive Indriya. Do not also touch the generative organ with your hands now and then. This will aggravate your Kama Vasana (sexual desire). When it gets erection, do Mula Bandha and Uddiyana Bandha. Repeat 'Om' mentally several times with meaning. Think of purity. Do twenty Pranayamas. The cloud of impurity will pass off soon.

Sexual excesses and outbursts of anger and hatred should be given up. If the mind is kept cool and calm at all times, you will have wonderful health, strength and virility. Energy is depleted by fits of anger. The cells and tissues are filled with morbid poisonous materials when one loses his temper and entertains deep hatred. Various sorts of physical ailments crop up. The blood becomes hot and thin, and consequently, night pollution results. Various sorts of nervous diseases are attributable to excessive loss of the seminal energy and frequent fits of explosive anger or wrath. *(To be continued)*

### **AN ANNOUNCEMENT**

#### **SADHANA SHIBIR AT RAJKOT, GUJARAT**

The Annual Sadhana Shibir of the Divine Life Society, Gujarat will be held from 30th October to 1st November 2009 at Rajkot, Gujarat.

H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj, President of the Divine Life Society Headquarters (Rishikesh), H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj, General Secretary and other senior Swamijis from Sivananda Ashram, Rishikesh will grace the occasion with their holy presence. All devotees are cordially invited to participate in the functions.

For enrolment and information please contact: Sri Janakbhai P. Mehta, Organizer, The Divine Life Society, Rajkot, "Sivananda Bhavan", 6/9 Junction Plot, RAJKOT-360 001, (Gujarat), Phone: 0281-2477010, 2442940, Mobile: 09825082245.

**—THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY**

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Sivananda's Gospel of Divine Life

## FOUNDATION OF YOGA AND REALISATION

### RIGHTEOUSNESS

1. Righteousness forms the bedrock of all religions.
2. Righteousness is the divine path.
3. Bliss is for him who is righteous.
4. God is righteousness.
5. Righteousness is good and noble.
6. Wealth, beauty, honour and youth fade away, but a life of righteousness and wisdom never decay.
7. Keep up the love for a life dedicated to perfect righteousness.
8. The wisdom of the Self is the ripe fruit of the beautiful flower of virtue.
9. "Do as you would be done by"—this is the gist of ethics.
10. Virtue conduces to happiness, vice to pain.
11. Supreme goodness is God. Lead a life of goodness. To lead a life of goodness is to lead the lives of all.
12. This body is meant for the good and welfare of others. Righteousness is the support of the entire world.
13. Righteousness is the best acquisition of man. It is the world's highest wealth.
14. To live in perfect goodness is to dissolve in the Infinite.
15. Purity is the very first requisite for God-realisation. Therefore, cultivate purity.
16. In purity is the secret of God-realisation; in self-restraint, the strength of character; and in dispassion, spiritual progress.
17. Purity is the pathway to the kingdom of God. Therefore, be pure in thought, word and deed.
18. The study of sacred scriptures without purity of mind, reflection and meditation is only a waste of time.
19. The mere reading of Vedantic scriptures, like the Upanishads and the Brahma Sutras, without purity of heart, will bring neither true understanding nor fruitful results.
20. A pure heart is necessary to know the Will of God.
21. If you wish to be strong, be pure.
22. Mere bodily purity without the purity of the heart is absolutely useless.
23. Mental purity is of paramount importance for Self-realisation.
24. Purity is freedom from desire.
25. Purity is the passport to the foreign land of eternal bliss.
26. Purity is the best jewel of a Yogi. It is the greatest treasure of a sage. It is the best wealth of a devotee.
27. Only the pure in heart can attain the state of God-realisation.

The universe is something like a powerful radar system that is set up from all sides to record every action and every event that may take place anywhere, even of the least intensity or momentum.

—**Swami Krishnananda**

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*Children's Page*

## LOOK AT YOURSELF

*(Sri Swami Ramarajyam)*

This incident happened in the state of Orissa. A devastating famine had occurred there in the year 1880. There lived in a famine-stricken village a poor family—a mother and her two children. The mother used to beg food for her family. Whatever she got, she would feed to her children first, then she would eat whatever was left. Several times she would go hungry as nothing would be left after feeding the scanty alms to the children.

It never rains but pours. Misfortunes usually come in large numbers. One day the younger child died of starvation. The mother fell ill. Now the elder child had to beg for food. Whatever he got, he would feed to his mother first and then would eat whatever was left.

Once he could not get anything to eat for days together. Somehow he stumbled in front of a house. The master of the house said, "I have got some rice and if you eat it here, I shall give it to you."

The boy replied with folded hands, "My mother is sick. She has not eaten

anything since last week. How can I eat here without feeding her?"

The master said, "I will give you nothing to carry home."

The boy said again, "My mother never eats anything without feeding me. Now she is sick. How can I eat without feeding her?"

The master shut the door.

The starving boy said nothing. He thought he should try again to get from the householder some food for his mother. He knocked at the door, but the door was not opened.

The night fell. It went by. In the morning the passers-by saw that the boy was lying dead.

What a son! He chose to die but did not eat without feeding his mother. Look at yourself. Compare yourself with that boy. How much do you differ from him—a little or more? Are you also prepared to put your life at risk for the sake of your mother, your father?

## THE NEED FOR A GURU

*(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)*

For a beginner in the spiritual path, a Guru is necessary. To light a candle, you need a burning candle. Even so, an illumined soul alone can enlighten another soul.

Some do meditation for some years independently. Later on, they actually feel the necessity of a Guru. They come across some obstacles in the way. They are unable to know how to obviate these impediments or stumbling blocks. Then they begin to search for a Master.

Only the man who has already been to Badrinath will be able to tell you the road. In the case of the spiritual path, it is still more difficult to find your way. The mind will mislead you very often. The Guru will be able to remove pitfalls and obstacles, and lead you along the right path. He will tell you: "This road leads you to Moksha; this one leads to bondage." Without this guidance, you might want to go to Badrinath, but find yourself in Delhi!

The scriptures are like a forest. There are ambiguous passages. There are passages which are apparently contradictory. There are passages which have esoteric meanings, diverse significance, and hidden explanations. There are cross-references. You are in need of a Guru or Preceptor who will explain to you the right meaning, who will remove doubts and ambiguities, who will place before you the essence of the teachings.

A Guru is absolutely necessary for every aspirant in the spiritual path. It is only the Guru who will find out your defects. The nature of egoism is such that you will not be able to find out your own defects. Just as a man cannot see his back, so also he cannot see his own errors. He must live under a Guru for the eradication of his evil qualities and defects.

The aspirant who is under the guidance of a Master or Guru is safe from being led astray. Satsang or association with the Guru is an armour and fortress to guard you against all temptations and unfavourable forces of the material world.

Cases of those who had attained perfection without study under any Guru should not be cited as authority against the necessity of a Guru; for such great men are the anomalies of spiritual life, and not the common normality. They come into existence as spiritual masters as a result of the intense service, study and meditation practised in previous births. They had already studied under the Guru. The present birth is only its continuative spiritual effect. Hence, the importance of the Guru is not lessened thereby.

Some teachers mislead their aspirants. They say unto all: "Think for yourself. Do not surrender yourself to any Guru." When one says, "Do not follow any Guru!", he intends to be the listeners' Guru himself. Do not approach such pseudo-Gurus. Do not hear their lectures.

All great ones had their teachers. All the sages, saints, prophets, world-teachers, incarnations, great men, have had their own Gurus, however great they might have been. Svetaketu learnt the nature of Truth from Uddalaka, Maitreyi from Yajnavalkya, Bhrigu from Varuna, Narada from Sanatkumara, Nachiketas from Yama, Indra from Prajapati; and several others humbly went to wise ones, observed strict Brahmacharya, practised rigorous discipline, and learnt Brahma-vidya from them.

Lord Krishna sat at the feet of His Guru Sandeepani. Lord Rama had Guru Vasishtha who gave Him Upadesha. Lord Jesus sought John to be baptised by him on the banks of the river Jordan. Even Devas have Brihaspati as their Guru. Even the greatest among the divine beings sat at the feet of Guru Dakshinamurti.

A neophyte must have a personal Guru first. He cannot have God as Guru to begin with. He must have a pure mind. He must have ethical perfection. He must be intensely virtuous. He must be above body-consciousness. Then alone can he have God as Guru.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### NEWS FROM THE HEADQUARTERS

#### SEVA THROUGH SIVANANDA HOME

The Divine Life Society Headquarters continues rendering its humble service through Sivananda Home, situated in Tapovan near Laxman Jhula. It is a Home with medical facilities for sick destitute people.

“Please close my eyes, I am going, I am going Home, He is calling.” Upon hearing this patient uttering his last words, Holy Ganga Jal was offered to him and indeed a few minutes later he passed away quietly. This Babaji was admitted a couple of weeks earlier in a medically incurable stage of pulmonary disease and heart failure. He was brought from the Headquarters of Gurudev’s Ashram, where he was lying on the street, aged, dehydrated, helpless. Pray that his soul rests in ever abiding peace, bliss and unity with the Source, the Sustainer, and the Supreme. Om Sri Gurudevaya Namah!

Though a complete different case, another inmate of Sivananda Home got reunited to his family this month and was welcomed back home with joy. It is an amazing real story, in which the lamentation of a 13-year-old mentally retarded boy, who could not speak, was truly heard. Once he had a fall, when he was playing, and got a minor injury on his leg. While coming down from the stairs, he was crying profusely. This cry was heard and recognized from more than a hundred meters away by laborers who were working on a roof. One of them happened to be the uncle of this boy, and when he arrived the next day with the father and mother, tears of joy were flowing from his eyes and the mother’s heart was singing in ecstasy. It seemed that the family moved from one

place to another living area and in this process the boy got lost. He was from a small village, about thirty-five kilometers away from Rishikesh and it remains a secret how he spent his time after leaving the house and before being admitted in Sivananda Home, five months ago. But amidst those things we do not know, besides the things we cannot see, it is shown right in front of our eyes: His immeasurable and unimaginable love for the least of His dear children.

Reunions between those who disappeared from the house and their progeny are indeed extremely rare, especially in the case of women who suffer from a mental disorder. Mental illness is, due to its stigma, still one of the reasons for being abandoned by the family and the village. At the same time, life on the outskirts, alone and lost on the road, exposed to violation and abuse, is a huge breeding ground for destabilizing the mind and intense heart wrenching. Most of the female patients who are admitted straight from the streets, are in an extremely strained and stressed frame of mind, mentally challenged or with delusions, schizophrenia or behavioural problems. Quite a few of the inmates were admitted in mental hospitals earlier in their lives. Though in a home-setting the symptoms decrease and the inmate might become more responsive and communicative, this silent pain of being rejected, of missing her own children so badly, this pain is written in the eyes of each of the mothers in the home. May the Almighty One shower His Grace and Consolation upon one and all and heal us with His Divine Balming Touch. Om Sri Satkarunaya Namah!

Feed the hungry. Clothe the naked. Serve the sick. This is Divine Life. (Swami Sivananda)

## TRADITIONAL BHAJANS AND KIRTANS AT D.L.S. HEADQUARTERS

The Divine Life Society Headquarters has organised a three-day Sampradaya Bhajan programme from 15th to 17th June 2009 as part of the Shraddhanjali Programme in connection with the FIRST PUNYA TITHI ARADHANA ANNIVERSARY of Most Worshipful H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj.

The devout excellent singers of Sri Gopalakrishna Bhajan Mandali based at Trivandram visited Sivananda Ashram upon our invitation. Incidentally it is worth mentioning here that Brahmaleen Sri Gopalakrishna Bhagavata who introduced and taught Sampradaya Bhajan visited Sivananda Ashram in 1953 and sang Bhajans before Most Worshipful Satgurudev H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. The Bhajan Mandali headed by Sri Ramdasji rendered traditional "Gita Govindam (Ashtapati) of Jaya Deva" in three segments on three different days. Besides this, Abhangas of Maharashtrian saints of Varkari Sampradaya, Bhajans of Sant Kabir Das, Meera Bai and selected Bhajans and Kirtans of South Indian saints, viz. Sri Purandara Dasa, Sri Thyagaraja, Sri Bhadrachala Ramadasa Sri Kanaka Dasa, etc. were sung. On 16th evening Deepa Pradakshina, i.e. dancing around, circumambulating the lighted lamp singing the Divine names was performed. On 17th night "Dolotsva" as composed by Sri Thyagaraja was performed. The Bhajan Mandali was very much moved for



having got the opportunity to perform traditional Sampradaya Bhajan before Worshipful Gurudev's Holy Spiritual Presence just as Brahmaleen Sri Gopalakrishna Bhagavata had performed before Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's living presence way back in 1953.

These three days' programme was a unique experience to all those who witnessed it. Everyone was inspired by this wonderful experience. The Bhajan and Kirtan singers and the audience had become one throughout the performance. Tangible peace, happiness and harmony prevailed in the Sacred Samadhi Shrine of our Beloved and Worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj.

Members of the Mandali were honoured by H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj, President, H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj, General Secretary and Sri Swami Advaitanandaji Maharaj, Treasurer of the Divine Life Society.

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### **BHAGAVAT SAPTAHA AT THE ASHRAM FROM 23rd TO 29TH MAY 2009**

In connection with the First Punnyathiti Aradhana of Revered and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, a Bhagavat Saptaha by Revered Dr. Shyam Sundar Parasar Shastriji Maharaj of Brindavan was held at the newly built Swami Sivananda Satsang Bhavan (Sivananda Auditorium), Sivananda Ashram from May 23rd to 29th, 2009.

Sadhus, seekers and Sadhaks of the Ashram along with the devotees attended this programme. Besides, there were a large num-

ber of visitors who came especially to attend this programme. The Auditorium was full every-day.

The seven days' sacred Bhagavat Katha was successfully concluded on 29th May 2009. The President and the Vice-President of the Divine Life Society thanked Dr. Shyam Sundar Parasar Shastriji Maharaj for having accepted our invitation and held the Katha for the benefit of the devotees. They also thanked all those who worked hard in various capacities to make this Saptaha a grand success.

### **CULTURAL TOUR OF H.H. SRI SWAMI PADMANABHANANDAJI MAHARAJ**

Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj, General Secretary of the Divine Life Society Headquarters went on a brief cultural tour to Orissa from 24th to 29th May 2009. Br. Sri Malayji accompanied Sri Swamiji throughout the tour.

The Divine Life Society Branch, Bhubaneswar organised a Satsang in the Branch building on 24th May 2009. Sri Swamiji visited the Branch and addressed the gathering and spoke on the role of mothers in upbringing the children by giving them good Samskaras and also spoke on Gurudev's mission and its importance in the present-day situation.

On 26th May representatives of the Divine Life Society Branches of Orissa assembled at Chidananda Hermitage Shanti Ashram, Baliguali, Puri, to felicitate Sri Swamiji and also to apprise Sri Swamiji of the functioning of the Branches. Prof. Hrudananda Ray presided over the meeting. Sri Swami Jitamohanandaji, In-charge of the Chidananda Hermitage Shanti Ashram, Sri Swami Sivachidanandaji Maharaj, Sri Bipra Charan Patraji, Sri Kailash Chandra Sahuji, Sri Bhagirathi Mahapatraji, Sri Gaurahari Mishraji and other senior devotees attended the meeting. Swamiji interacted with the representatives of the Branches and also

gave them a broad guideline for the efficient functioning of the Branches and remarked the importance of spreading the message of Gurudev. The meetings helped to inspire the Branches.

Swamiji visited the Divine Life Society Branch, Puri, on 27th. In the Satsang Swamiji spoke on Bhakti Sadhana and also invited the youths to come forward to participate in Branch activities and carry forward the message and teachings of Worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. On 28th May Swamiji visited the Cuttack Branch and attended the Satsang organised by the Branch and blessed the devotees. On the 29th May, before leaving for Delhi, Sri Swamiji visited the Divine Life Society Branch, Khandagiri, and also the Sivananda Centenary Boys' High School, Khandagiri, Bhubaneswar. The students, faculty members and the Management Committee of the school organised a Satsang to felicitate Sri Swamiji. Sri Swamiji spoke on the Gurukula System of Education in the Satsang.

Swamiji's brief cultural tour in Orissa which has a large number of Branches of Divine Life Society helped to activate the Branches to spread the message of Gurudev.

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### CULTURAL TOUR OF SRI SWAMI RAMARAJYAMJI MAHARAJ

At the invitation of the Gurjar Divya Jivan Sangh Samiti (a coordination Committee of the Divine Life Society Branches of Gujarat) Sri Swami Ramarajyamji Maharaj conducted five Divine Life Courses for Children and Adolescents in the State of Gujarat in the months of April and May 2009 on behalf of the Divine Life Society Headquarters. These courses were conducted successively at Baroda, Bhavnagar, Surendranagar, Jamnagar and Ahmedabad. About 225 children in the 12 to 18 age group possessing the minimum mental ability of the students of class VIII took part in these courses.

Each course was conducted for five days. The daily schedule of the courses commenced at 6.30 a.m. with Yoga classes. They were followed by lectures-cum-discussions on the Gita, Cultural Heritage of India and Practical Ways of Divine Living. Other features of the daily schedule were story telling sessions and educative games (both twice a day). The activities of the courses concluded every day with what was called the 'Children's Programme'. This programme was specially designed with a view to encourage the participants to unfold and express their talents of oration, singing, etc.

Yoga classes and the classes on the Gita, Practical Ways of Divine Living and Story-telling sessions were conducted by Swamiji. Local guest lecturers were invited to speak on various aspects of Indian Culture and on other topics useful to the participants in their daily lives such as Vedic Mathematics, Adventure, Nutrition, Patriotism, Higher Values of Life. Some of the guest lectures conducted educative games classes also.

A 'Diary' was developed specially for the participants of these courses. It contains 36 Do's and Don'ts that help children lead a Divine

Life. It has been designed in such a way that children themselves can assess their own progress in their effort to lead a Divine Life. Swamiji explained the method of maintaining this Diary to the participants. He encouraged them to make a habit of maintaining this Diary as a part of their daily routine.

Swamiji also provided practical guidance on telling the rosary beads and writing the Mantras. Many of the participants started practicing Japa (both rosary Japa and written Japa) during the courses. In one of the courses (the Ahmedabad course) Swamiji guided the participants through the proper method of eating food and of reciting the verses in the beginning and at the end of the meals. This he did while the participants were taking food.

Breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack were provided to the participants in all the courses.

On this occasion the Gurjar Divya Jeevan Sangh Samiti brought out a Hindi booklet entitled "Balkon Ke Liye Divya Jivan Sandarshika" (A Guide to Divine Life for Children). The Ahmedabad Divine Life Society Branch also brought out a Gujarati booklet entitled "Svadhya".

Each participant of the courses was given one set of Divine Life reading material and accessories that contained one copy each of the above-mentioned booklets, a copy of the Gita, Gujarati versions of a few Divine Life Society publications, one notebook, one copy for Mantra-writing, one rosary and one pen.

After conducting these courses, Swamiji took part in a 3-day Spiritual Conference organised by the Gandhinagar Branch of the Divine Life Society which concluded on May 25, 2009.

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## REPORTS FROM THE D.L.S. BRANCHES

**Ahiwara (Chhattisgarh):** Special Rudrabhishek was conducted on the Holy occasion of Mahashivaratri. Mahamrityunjaya Japa 108 times was done for World Peace on every Ekadashi.

**Ambala (Haryana):** Regular weekly Satsangs with special hymns to the deity of the day continued along with daily homeopathic medical services and Jalseva.

**Badakuani (Orissa):** Regular monthly Satsangs and weekly Guru Paduka Puja along with daily Puja and Sahsrnam Archanas continued. Bhajans and Kirtans continued in the evening Satsangs.

**Barbil (Orissa):** Four weekly Satsangs and four mobile Satsangs were organised. Homeopathic clinic continued to serve 443 patients as in the past.

**Bangalore (Karnataka):** Vasanta Navaratri was celebrated with talks on the Ramayana with special references to Gurudev's works. April 18th saw the installation of the internet in the Branch by H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj. Regular and daily Satsangs continued.

**Bellary (Karnataka):** Special Satsang on the occasion of the Ramanavami on 3rd of April, 2009, Jayanti celebrations of H.H. Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj was performed on 26th of April, 2009. All Satsangs concluded with chanting of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra, Mahamantra, Shanti Mantra and

prayer for World Peace. Prasad and Jnana Prasad were distributed after Mangalarati.

**Bhilai Nagar (Chhattisgarh):** Regular Satsangs and Matri Satsangs were conducted.

**Bhimkhand (Orissa):** Weekly Satsangs were conducted on Sundays. Hanuman Jayanti celebrations on the 14th of April was conducted with Akhand Hanuman Chalisa chanting for twenty-four hours.

**Bikaner (Rajasthan):** Special Satsangs on the occasions of Vasanta Navaratri and Hanuman Jayanti were conducted. A series of special Satsangs on occasion of opening of the Yajnasala on Akshay Tritiya, which was marked with the visit of H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj were also conducted from 26th to 28th of April, 2009. Regular Satsangs and Yogasana classes continued.

**Burla (Orissa):** Sri Ramanavami, Hanuman Jayanti, Adi Shankara Jayanti and Buddha Purnima were celebrated. Regular weekly Satsangs continued.

**Chatrapur (Orissa):** Five weekly Satsangs, daily evening Satsangs, four special Satsangs and special Ramnavami celebrations were conducted at the Branch premises.

**Faridpur (Uttar Pradesh):** Regular weekly Satsangs on Wednesdays were conducted. Special Bhandara and Annadan was

conducted to mark the Punya Tithi of Sri Swami Premanandaji Maharaj on the 7th of May along with evening Satsang with Mahamrityunjaya Yajna.

**Gandhinagar (Gujarat):** Regular thrice-a-week Satsangs, daily Yogasana sessions separately for men and women, homeopathic clinic twice a month and financial support to leper colony continued. Narayana Seva on the 8th and Bal Narayan Seva on the 24th of March was done. Moreover, 1st of March saw Gayatri Havan. Ramnavami and Hanuman Jayanti were celebrated in April.

**Jaipur, Raja Park (Rajasthan):** Ramnavami celebrations on the 3rd of April, Hanuman Jayanti on the 9th of April, Ram Katha from 20th to 26th of April, Punyatithi Aradhana of Sri Swami Premanandaji Maharaj, and Bhagvata Saptah for the commemoration of the same were performed in the months of April and May. Regular activities include daily morning talks on Devi Bhagvata, evening Satsangs, Sundarkand Parayana on Saturdays, Sunday morning Satsangs. Homeopathic clinic, Yoga classes and spiritual library went on as usual. Financial assistance is provided to widowed women, Daily Narayan Annakshetra Seva and Seva for leprosy patients was done. Scholarships for economically challenged children continued.

**Jeypore (Orissa):** Regular Puja, weekly Satsangs at the Branch premises and mobile Satsangs at the houses of the devo-

tees were organised. Gita Yajna on the 19th of April, Jayanti of H.H. Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj on the 25th April and Adi Shankara Jayanti on the 29th of April were celebrated.

**Khedbrahma (Gujarat):** Monthly Satsang was conducted at Sri Ambati Mandir with chanting of Ashram hymns and Guru Stotram. Jnana Prasad was also distributed.

**Khurja (Uttar Pradesh):** Separate Yoga classes for men and women, weekly Satsangs, Ekadashi Satsangs were conducted. Jnana Prasad was distributed and financial assistance was provided for sick and needy mothers. A three days' health protection camp from 18th to 20th of April was conducted.

**Langthabal (Manipur):** A spiritual discourse was organised on the 9th of May on the Life and Teachings of Bhagavan Buddha. The Satsang culminated with prayers for World Peace.

**Madhavapatnam (Andhra Pradesh):** Regular Yoga classes, weekly Satsangs and homeopathic medical Seva were conducted on Sundays.

**Nandini Nagar (Chhattisgarh):** Regular Brahmamuhurta Satsangs, Mahamantra Kirtan on 3rd February, weekly mobile Satsangs, Matri Satsangs on every Saturday and Ekadashi and a special Ramanavami Satsang on the 3rd of April was celebrated with a 12-hour Hanuman Chalisa culminating with Havan.

**Vasant Vihar, New Delhi:** Four weekly Satsangs were conducted in the month of April.

**Patiala (Punjab):** Regular monthly Satsang on the 24th of May was conducted. Monthly contribution was made for running of a local Goshala.

**Phulbani (Orissa):** Regular Puja and Satsang at the Branch, Paduka Puja on the 8th, 23rd and 24th of April, apart from weekly Satsangs and mobile Satsangs, were conducted. 28th of April was dedicated for Narayana Seva (Anna Dana).

**Raigarh (Chhattisgarh):** Ramnavami on 3rd of April and Hanuman Jayanti on the 9th of April were celebrated.

**Raipur (Chhattisgarh):** Regular and weekly Satsangs for the month of April, special Ramanavami celebrations were held from the 3rd to the 5th of April and Hanuman Jayanti on the 9th of April, was conducted along with Bhandara.

**Rourkela (Orissa):** Weekly Satsangs, daily meditation, Yoga and Pranayam classes, along with Paduka Puja on the 8th and 24th of April and homeopathic medical services continued. Special Ramnavami and Hanuman Jayanti and Swami Krishnananda Jayanti celebrations were conducted in the month of April. Monthly journal publication and construction of Annapurna Bhavan continued.

**Rourkela, Fertilizer Township (Orissa):** Weekly, regular and mobile

Satsangs have been conducted in the month of April.

**Salipur (Orissa):** Regular morning and evening Satsangs with special chantings on weekdays as per the deity of the day were performed in the month of April. Ramnavami, Hanuman Jayanti, Swami Krishnananda Jayanti, Adi Shankara Jayanti and Ramanujacharya Jayanti were celebrated in the course of the month. More than 260 patients were served in the month of April at the Charitable Medical Centre.

**Sunabeda Ladies Branch (Orissa):** Regular and weekly Satsanga were conducted. Special Ramnavami and Hanuman Jayanti were also celebrated.

**Sunabeda (Orissa):** Regular evening Satsangs, Yogasana classes separately for men and women were conducted. Ramnavami, Hanuman Jayanti and Jayanti celebration of Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj were conducted.

**Vadodara (Gujarat):** Weekly Satsangs, Mantra Japa and Guru Paduka Puja on Sivananda Day and Chidananda Day on the 8th and 24th of the Month were done. Public talk on spiritual life, five days' special course on Divine Life for Children by Sri Swami Ramarajyamji Maharaj and a guided meditation session on the 26th of April by Sri Jitenbhai Pandit, were conducted during the course of the month.