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The DIVINE LIFE



What
is Sadachara?

To speak the truth, to practise Ahimsa, not to hurt the feelings of others in thought, speech and deed, not to speak harsh words to anyone, not to show anger towards anyone, not to abuse others or speak ill of others (Ninda), and to see God in all living beings is Sadachara.

Swami Sivananda

APRIL 2021

THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER

O Adorable Lord of Mercy and Love!
Salutations and prostrations unto Thee.
Thou art Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient.
Thou art Satchidananda (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute).
Thou art the Indweller of all beings.

Grant us an understanding heart,
Equal vision, balanced mind,
Faith, devotion and wisdom.
Grant us inner spiritual strength
To resist temptations and to control the mind.
Free us from egoism, lust, greed, hatred, anger and jealousy.
Fill our hearts with divine virtues.

Let us behold Thee in all these names and forms.
Let us serve Thee in all these names and forms.
Let us ever remember Thee.
Let us ever sing Thy glories.
Let Thy Name be ever on our lips.
Let us abide in Thee for ever and ever.

—Swami Sivananda

CONTROL OF MIND

One of the most common habits of the mind is the wandering habit. It cannot stick to one point as it is of the nature of air. Sri Krishna says, “O mighty armed (Arjuna)! The mind is hard to curb and is restless, but it may be curbed by constant practice and by dispassion.”

Destruction of desires and control of Indriyas are the essential steps for the control of mind. It is the desire that makes the mind restless. The Indriyas run after objects and the mind also follows the Indriyas just as a dog follows the master. Therefore, if you want to check this wandering mind, you will have to renounce all sorts of desires and control the Indriyas first. Then alone will you be successful in the practice of concentration, meditation, will-culture, memory-culture and thought-culture.

Swami Sivananda



THE DIVINE LIFE

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No. 01

PRASNOPANISHAD

PANCHAMA PRASNA (QUESTION V)

SATYAKAMA AND PIPPALADA

अथ हैनं शैब्यः सत्यकामः पप्रच्छ ।

स यो ह वै तद्भगवन्मनुष्येषु प्रायणान्तमोँकारमभिध्यायीत ।

कतमं वाव स तेन लोकं जयतीति ॥१॥

1. Then Satyakama, son of Sibi, questioned him: O Bhagavan! What world does he, who among men meditates on 'Om' until death, attain by that?

महागुरुवर्णमातृकास्तोत्रम्

MAHAGURU-VARNA-MATRIKASTOTRAM

Jnana Bhaskara Mahamahopadhyaya Sri S. Gopala Sastri

रम्ये राजितहैमशैलनिकटे भागीरथीपावने

राधावल्लभसन्निधानमहिते रामामृतास्वादिनि ।

रूढानन्दकुटीरधामनि लसन् रिक्तश्च रोषादिभिः

रुक्माभोगुरुराट् प्रसीदतु रवी रौद्रान्धविद्रावणे ॥२५॥

25. May our Beloved Gurudev be propitiated, who dwells in the holy hermitage called 'Ananda Kutir' at the sacred banks of Mother Ganga near the glorious Himalayas in the divine presence of Lord Krishna, who enjoys the nectar of Ramanama, who is free from anger, whose beautiful form glitters as gold, and who is like sun dispelling the darkness of dreadful ignorance.

लक्ष्मीशे लब्धभक्तिः ललितमृदुवचाः लालिताशेषशिष्यः

लिप्तो भूत्या न भीत्या शुभगुणसुगमो लीनचित्तः परस्मिन् ।

लुप्ताशो लूनपाशो नियमितकरणो लोकपूज्यो गुरुर्मे

लौल्यं चित्तस्य घोरं शमयतु सुयशस्त्रधरो दिव्यतेजाः ॥२६॥

26. Who has great devotion towards Lord Vishnu, who speaks simple and sweet words, who is very affectionate towards all his disciples, whose forehead is smeared with the holy ash, who is fearless, who is the repository of all the sublime virtues, whose mind is ever absorbed in Brahman, who has renounced all desires and worldly ties, who has restrained his sense-organs, who is deeply revered all over the world, who shines with divine luster and who is adorned with the garland of fame, may such a great preceptor graciously remove the terrible fickleness of my mind.

(To be continued)

*Sri Ramanavami Message***FOLLOW THE PATH OF RIGHTEOUSNESS****Sri Swami Sivananda**

The noblest lesson embodied in the Ramayana is the supreme importance of righteousness in the life of every human being. Righteousness is the spiritual spark of life. Cultivation of righteousness is the process of the unfoldment of the latent divinity in man. The glorious incarnation of the Supreme Truth, Sri Ramachandra, has exemplified through His own life how to follow the path of righteousness. Let mankind follow in His footsteps and practice the ideals cherished by Him, for it is only thus that there can be everlasting peace, prosperity and welfare in this world.

No one but the righteous can be truly happy. No one but he who has the correct sense of duty and the will for its implementation can be said to live worthily. One must be imbued with a definite conviction about the supremacy of moral

principles, ethical values and spiritual ideals, which should guide one's day-to-day actions and serve as powerful means for the culture of the human personality. That is the purpose of life. That is the way to Self-realisation.

Do that which promotes harmony, good-will and peace, and do not do that which inspires a contrary effect. Do that which is universally considered to be true, just and proper, that which is bound to produce positive effects, and do not do that which will bring negative results. This is the yardstick of judgment. This is how you could decide between right and wrong.

Blessed aspirants! Swerve not from the path of truth. Do not be negligent to follow the course of Dharma. Let not material considerations outweigh spiritual values. Let not personal gains over-

step general good. Allow not selfishness to rule your conduct. Permit not the dictates of the senses to over-rule the judgment of reason and wisdom.

First consider the welfare of others, and last of all your own. Look into your own character and conduct. Read your own heart. Find out whether your thought, speech and action are in accordance with the principles of Dharma. Discipline the body, mind and senses. Enlighten yourself with useful spiritual knowledge. Eradicate gradually evil thoughts, evil speech and evil habits, and cultivate pure thoughts, correct speech and good habits.

Eliminate that which produces a negative reaction in others and strengthen that which is quick to generate a sense of well-being within you and in others, too. But do not be carried away by the exhilaration of doing good and being good. It is nothing special that is expected of you. It is your duty.

The only way you can make tomorrow a better day is to think

and do today what would be conducive to make a better tomorrow. Have an open heart, an open mind, but accept only that which is good, proper and worthy of remembrance. At least one good action every day – let this be your motto.

What you dislike in others, take care to correct that in yourself first. Accept only what is good in others and ignore the rest. Your own happiness depends on how you conduct yourself. Do not complain about circumstances. Try to make best of everything.

Spiritual seekers! Reflect, cogitate, analyse and ratiocinate what should be aspired for and what should not be, what ought to be done and what ought to be abstained from. Meditate on the Lord. Pray to Him for light and guidance. Sing His holy name. Think rightly. Speak gently, truthfully. Act honestly, justly, selflessly. Thus grow and evolve and improve yourself every day, every moment.

May the grace of Sri Ramachandra be upon all.

LET IDEALISM BE BORN IN THE HUMAN HEART

Sri Swami Chidananda

Adorable Divine Presence, Thou Who art the one all-pervading, ever-present Reality behind the ever-changing, vanishing names and forms that constitute this world appearance, this projected phenomenon in time and space! Adorable Divine Presence, Thou Who art without and within and everywhere, Thou Who art interconnected in the innermost cells of our body, Thou Who art the Eye of our eyes, the Ear of our ears, the Breath of our breath, the Mind of our mind, the Heart of our heart, the Prana of our prana, the very Soul of our soul, Thou Who art seated within us as our own inner, eternal being, bless us dear Lord that we may ever be aware of Your Presence! This is all we ask of Thee, that we should never lose the awareness that we live, move and have our being in Thy glorious, holy, sacred Divine Presence and that our life is lived in You.

May there be peace in the whole world. May there be harmony

and oneness between individuals, communities and nations. May there be peace in the East and in the West, peace in the North and the South and peace all over the universe. Give us this day the guidance necessary to make this day a fit and worthy offering at Thy Feet. Let this day be lived with noble deeds, sublime feelings and with right understanding, good intentions and pure thoughts.

Beloved and Worshipful Gurudev, thou who has granted to us once again the grace of being in your spiritual presence at this early morning hour. Bless all your children, who are gathered together in this sacred Samadhi Hall of your holy Ashram! Bless them that their eyes are opened and from darkness they may see light. Remove spiritual blindness and grant them all divine sight.

Bless them all that they may grasp the message of these past nine days of Vasanta Navaratri and the reason why our ancients had

ordained that a new year commences with nine days of continuous worship, adoration and prayerfulness. For nine is the fullest number beyond which numbers cease and then combinations start, all permutations and combinations are of this mystical culminating figure of nine. For these nine days, our ancients wisely ordained that we observe a period of fast, prayer, worship, adoration, chanting of the Divine Name and reading of the scriptures. Thus they gave us an unmistakable direction that the full year should be filled with worship, adoration and diligent reading of the scriptures, so that we get guidance upon the pathway of life through the wisdom teachings and so that the air should be filled with all that is conducive to the highest human welfare here and hereafter.

What a great love for mankind our ancients had! What a great concern for posterity they harboured in their hearts! Through their universal love and compassion, they made the provision for these nine days, so that we may know how to live in order that the whole year may be a great

step in our spiritual evolution towards divine perfection, illumination and ultimate liberation. How can we ever repay this debt of gratitude they have put us into by this great consideration for our highest welfare?

Radiant Atman! What are your thoughts about the way in which the year has commenced and you have been blessed to participate in? Have you reflected upon it? Have you tried to understand its meaning and the depth of its significance? Have you tried to grasp the message it has for you and your life, what it seeks to convey to you? Or have you, like millions of other people in India, just passed through it mechanically, in a routine manner, as a habit, because it is a tradition? Or have you tried to understand it in a special way, because you are a special group of people who have chosen the spiritual path and have made God-realisation the goal of your life?

You are Sadhakas, you are seekers. You are expected to be full of Vichara, full of Viveka, spiritual enquiry, spiritual discrimination, and Jijnasa, a keen hunger for Knowledge. Therefore, in your

special capacity as Jijnasus, Mumukshus, Sadhakas, as spiritual people, try to understand the message that Vasanta Navaratri has for you. Otherwise, it will have come and gone and you will be where you are and what you were before. That was not the purpose with which these great sacraments and occasions of worship were instituted. They were instituted with a different purpose—that they may awaken you from time to time, inspire you, give you the right guidance, point out the direction in which you must go. All this and more is contained in these great occasions set up for us by our illumined ancestors.

We bemoan the condition of the world, the condition of present-day mankind. We regret the deterioration in the individual's character. But we seldom try to see wherein lies the cause, wherein lies the reason for this that we bemoan. We seldom seek to know why this has come about or how it can be corrected. We seldom seek to know.

Gossip is just talking about things one sees and hears. But serious deliberation and discussion

takes into consideration why these things are happening, what is the cause or causes, how can they be remedied? And what can I do as a contemporary individual in today's society in order to remove the causes? What can I do? What can be my contribution? This is deliberation. This is not gossip.

And Gurudev has given us the key: "As a man thinketh, so he becometh." Thought leads to action. Action is the outer manifestation of the thought that has arisen in the mind. A person thinks something and then does what this thought impels. Thought is the origin of all human conduct, all human behaviour, all human actions the world over. Thought is the key, it is the source of human life and conduct, of human action and reaction and interaction also. If thought is properly taken care of, then everything that results from it will also be properly taken care of. You sow a thought and reap an action. If you continue to sow such an action, you will reap a habit. Such habits repeated bring about character, and your future destiny depends upon your present

character. At the root of it all is thought, what we think. Thought leads to action, action leads to habit, habit leads to character and character decides destiny.

Therefore, what is to be done? We have just completed the Vasanta Navaratri, where after nine days of continuous reading of the Avatara Lila of the Maryada Purushottama Bhagavan Sri Ramachandra, we have celebrated the birth of Lord Rama, Ramajanma. Do you not see the significance of it? Clearly there is indicated that the very purpose for which we devoutly read the scripture is that the ideal of Rama may be born in our heart. This is the only solution to the disease of sorrow, conflict, clash, immorality, impurity and Asuric conduct that prevails in the world today. That is the only solution, the only right remedy, the only right key.

There should constantly be a renewal of the human heart. Noble thoughts should be generated. Sublime ideas and motivations should be created in the hidden interior of the human heart and mind. Then alone the human world will change, human conduct will

change, human character will assume new, sublime dimensions; man will become what he is destined to be—divine, a child of God. It will not be possible unless we bring about a revolution in our thoughts, unless we make idealism to be born in our hearts every moment, every day.

Let idealism be born each day in the human heart. Let idealism be born again and again. That is the one way. All other efforts are bound to fail if this fundamental process is not initiated in the human nature, in the human mind, in the human heart. An abandonment of base, wicked thoughts and a deliberate encouragement and determined attempt to sow sublime thoughts, great thoughts, noble intentions and pure motivations, is indeed the key. Let idealism be born in the human heart every moment, each day.

If the inner man is ideal, if the mind thinks sublime thoughts and ideas, if the heart harbours noble emotions, if these intentions are at the back of each action, then the human being will behave like a true human being; he will begin to live like a God on earth. Then alone a

new era will dawn for mankind in the human world. For the key lies in what the human mind thinks and what sentiments the human heart harbours. And this can be of the highest, sublimest, holiest quality only if idealism is kept alive in the human heart.

When idealism vanishes, darkness envelops the human world. Man's mind becomes a dark factory for the manufacture of ignoble thoughts, dire thoughts. Man then creates a hell upon earth; he creates his own undoing, his downward descent. The key lies, therefore, in taking great care about how the mind functions, how it behaves, what thoughts it generates and what is the quality of those thoughts. Idealism alone can keep these thoughts lofty, noble and sublime. In this way only will man become a source of all that is auspicious and blessed. All other solutions will be symptomatic solutions, patching-up symptoms, not eradicating the root cause.

Therefore, let idealism be born in the human heart every day. This is the great significance and the message of the Jayanti of Lord Rama

who was the ideal divine human individual. Reflect deeply over this facet, this aspect of what you have just now gone through. Know that its message is: Let idealism be born in the human heart each day, freshly, vigorously. This is the solution to the problem of human character, human conflict and human unhappiness created by human thought, the wrong type of thought, and not doing the right thing to bring about a change.

You have been told. An indication has been given about the solution. Now it is up to you—*yathe'cchasi tatha kuru*—it is up to you to make use of the solution or not. If you want to see a better world, a better humanity, a better future for the world, there is but one way—Let idealism, lofty, noble, sublime idealism, ethical and spiritual idealism, humanitarian idealism be born in the human heart each day, every moment.

Our human thought is the key to human destiny. *Srotavya, Mantavya, Nididhyasitavya*—this is to be heard, reflected upon and pondered deeply! God bless you!

Hari Om Tat Sat!

KRISHNANANDAJI IS A WONDER TO ME!

Sri Swami Sivananda

It is very rare to find such a Synthetic Yogi as Swami Krishnanandaji. One may be a Vedantin condemning Bhakti and Karma Yoga. But Swami Krishnanandaji is like myself; he is like Lord Krishna. Integral perfection can be had only when you combine service and devotion with Jnana. You can declare: "There is no world in the three periods of time." But if you find a sick man on the roadside, you must rush to relieve his suffering, giving up your meditation. That is the sign of a Jivanmukta. Externally, he appears to be only a Karma Yogi; but he views the whole world within himself. Lord Jesus, Lord Buddha and Sri Sankaracharya—how much service they did! It is because Swami Krishnanandaji is also a Synthetic Yogi that I have got the greatest admiration for him.

He is very quick in his work. He has a vast and deep knowledge of Vedanta. It is all God's grace. It is not merely due to study in this birth. It is all due to Purva-Samskaras. His

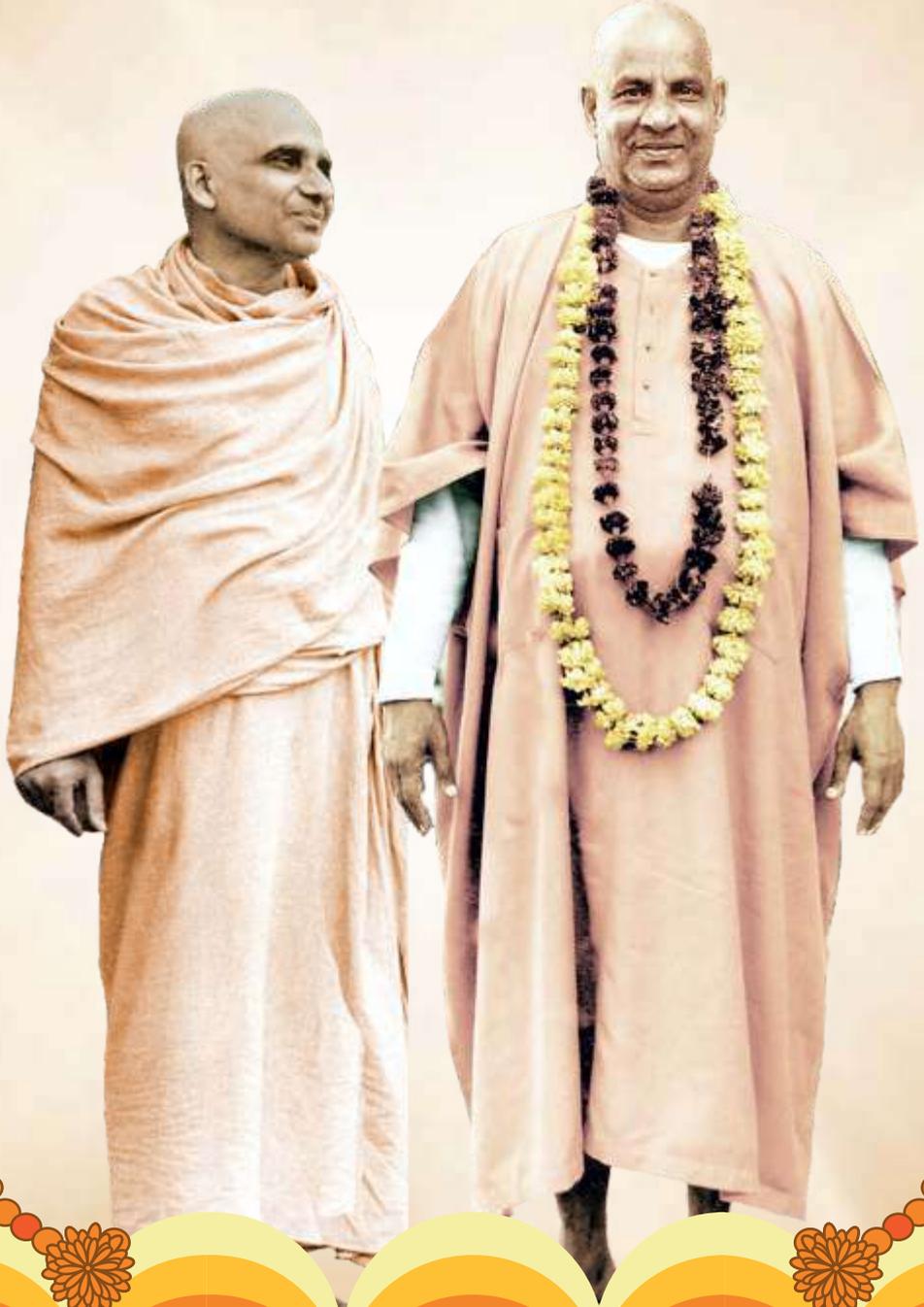
knowledge is a treasure for those aspirants who care to learn, study and imbibe the knowledge from him.

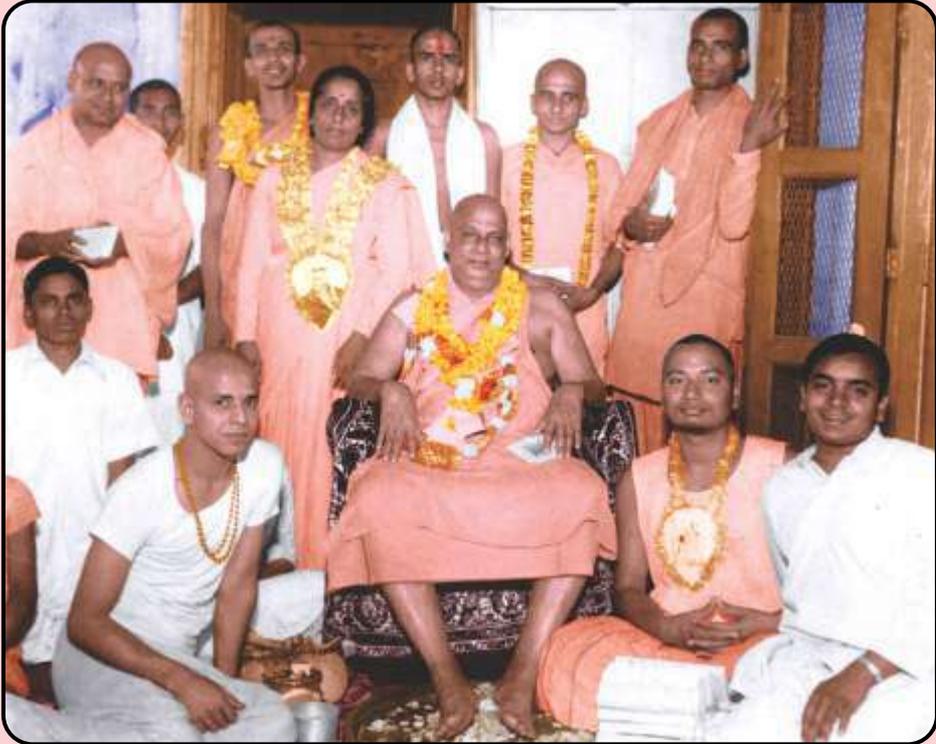
Krishnanandaji is a wonder to me! He has excelled me. He has excelled Sankara. He has excelled Dakshinamurthy. He came a few years ago. As usual, I asked him to stay in the Ashram. After six or seven days, he told me, "I know the Gita a little." I asked him to recite the Gita. And he recited a chapter of the Gita beautifully. Then, gradually... how he evolved and grew in knowledge and wisdom is a wonder to me!

Swami Krishnanandaji is a master of Western philosophy also. This is because of the intense thirst for knowledge that he has. He wants to compare Western philosophy with Indian philosophy. It was because he was proficient in both philosophies that he was of great help to Prof. Edwin A. Burt of the Cornell University, when the latter was here. We should study Western philosophy also and find out the grandeur of that philosophy. Of course, Western philosophy cannot



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satisfy an absolute idealist like Krishnanandaji. People are stunned by his knowledge. With poor nutrition, ill-health, and many inconveniences, how Swami Krishnanandaji has done so much is a wonder; it is all due to God's grace. It is all due to his Purva-Samsakras. One lecture of his is quite sufficient to inspire and elevate you.

Not a single harsh word he has spoken. He never becomes angry. He never complains. I think there is none in this Ashram of his type. These are all divine attributes. He has more divine qualities than are mentioned in the Gita. Lord Krishna was in a hurry; therefore, He enumerated some major virtues only, and we have to add to them the virtues that Krishnanandaji possesses.

He is the proper man to go to the West. But if that is not to be, even his mere presence in the world is sufficient. His books are treasures for us. I am sending them all over the world. A man remaining in his own Kutir can send powerful thoughts that would stir the whole world. It is not necessary to go here and there, delivering lectures; it is not necessary even to write books. It is

good that a great man remains in his own place; bees will come when the flowers bloom. Swami Krishnanandaji is silent dynamism.

Celebration of Krishnanandaji's Birthday is worship of Brahman. Many people's faculties are developed. Every man's eyes are opened. Everyone begins to think. Such celebrations are very necessary. Today we have only talked of Brahman. It gives us all inspiration. It produces a drastic change in the minds of people. You will be greatly benefited. You should note down in your diary the noble qualities of Swami Krishnanandaji. You should become like him. You should become like Shuka. You can learn something from everyone. This world is a vast university: it is a great teacher. Chidanandaji has talked very nicely. He is an intuitional lecturer. I am much benefited by his talks. He is a saint. You should worship him. He is your Guru. Only if you have this attitude, will you be benefited. You will have to take down notes of his lectures. Krishnanandaji is a treasure; Chidanandaji is a treasure. God has been so gracious that He has given me so many precious gems.

SWAMI KRISHNANANDA – AN IDEAL SPIRITUAL GUIDE

Swami Yogaswarupananda

The great Acharya Sankara states that it is very difficult to get a human birth and it is only with the grace of the Almighty Lord that one can get an ideal spiritual guide. Those who have the good fortune to have contact with worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji are, therefore, really blessed souls; for, they have no more fear of this Samsara. Adorable Gurudev His Holiness Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj himself had said more than once that Swami Krishnanandaji was an Avatara of Acharya Sankara and wondered how this young Swami held in his small head the vast ocean of knowledge and also remembered all that he had read in the scriptures!

In spite of having digested the essence of all religious and spiritual literature, Swamiji is still regular and punctual in his Svadhyaya, Japa and meditation. He also attends to all the daily routine activities of the Ashram. He solves very quickly all the administrative problems of the Ashram, as he is very clear in his thoughts and actions. Swamiji becomes very serious when he detects any negligence on the part of

anyone in the performance of his duties, and sometimes, he puts on a severe and harsh attitude if it concerns any financial loss to the Ashram. Even on such serious occasions, Swamiji never fails to give spiritual advice such as can be never forgotten throughout one's life.

AN INCIDENT AND A LESSON

During the annual functions of Gurupurnima, Sadhana Week and Punyatithi Aradhana of the Worshipful Gurudev in the year 1966, Swamiji asked me to vacate my room in order to provide accommodation to the guests, and stay in his office room instead. While handing over the office key to me, Swamiji said: "This is the first time I am giving the office key to anyone; keep it carefully." The key being a small one, as a precaution against its loss, I put it in a key-ring and tied the ring in the sacred thread on my body; and every now and then I satisfied myself that the key was safe in its place. On the Gurupurnima Day, I had to finish my bath in the Ganges before 4 a.m. After the bath, when I verified whether the key was safe, I found to my utter surprise and

bewilderment, that only the ring was in my sacred thread. The little key was missing. I waited up to 6 a.m. on the Ganges bank so I could make a thorough search in the clear sunlight. My search was fruitless. When I went up to report the loss of the key, Swamiji was in Gurudev's Kutir on the Ganges bank, where he was staying in those days.

On the holy Gurupurnima Day, it is the custom for everyone in the Ashram to go to the senior Swamijis to pay homage and receive blessings. But as I was in a miserable condition, I could not do this like the others. Not knowing what to do, I felt nervous and had not the courage to report the loss of the key to Swamiji. I stood in my wet clothes shivering with cold in front of Gurudev's Kutir. Due to fear and grief, I could not speak a word. On seeing my pathetic state, Swamiji asked me what had happened and the cause of my staying there with wet clothes. With a choked voice, I told Swamiji that the office key was lost in the Ganges in the early morning, from the key-ring which was tied to my sacred thread. Swamiji became very serious and said: "What is the purpose of the sacred thread? Is it for tying the keys? In spite of my warning, you have lost it. Now, there is no other way except to break the lock. If every

inmate does the same thing, from where can you get money for purchasing new locks and keys? In the first test itself, you have failed. In your spiritual life, Lord Yama, Satan and other forces will come and test you. You are not able to keep a small key without losing it. How is it possible for you to face Yama and Satan and get over the obstacles put by those terrible forces? It is better you go home now itself and eat and sleep there. This holy Ashram is not the place for you. You are unfit for Sadhana." Saying this, Swamiji went in and bolted the door.

With profuse tears, I stood at the entrance of the Kutir for more than half an hour. In the meantime, Swami Hridayananda Mataji and Swami Dayanandaji came to the Kutir to meet Swamiji and pay their respects. On their enquiry, I narrated the entire story. Both of them pleaded for me before Swamiji. After a little while, Swamiji gave me the duplicate key of the office and said: "Go and change the clothes." As I found that Swamiji was still very serious, I thought of leaving the Ashram that day itself, for he had said earlier that the Ashram was not a fit place for me. I went to Swami Hridayananda Mataji to return Dr. Radhakrishnan's Commentary on the Bhagavad Gita which I had

borrowed from her. Hearing my decision to leave the Ashram, Mataji laughed and said: "For a silly thing, you are losing your confidence and going back home leaving the spiritual path. Repeat the Lord's Name. Today is Gurupurnima, pray to Gurudev, surely he will help you." I observed fasting and prayed throughout that day. In the early morning, I dreamt that the key was there near a rock on the Ganges bank. I woke up. It was about 5 a.m. I went to the particular place where I had taken bath the previous day. To my surprise, the water level of the Ganges had receded and I saw a small piece of white metal lying there in the wet sand. It was the key!

I thought of God. The office key appeared as the key to the realm of God. With confidence and jubilation, I ran to Gurudev's Kutir and prostrating before Swamiji, told him the recovery of the lost key. With a serious tone, Swamiji asked me to return the duplicate key. I at once returned it. Receiving it Swamiji said: "God is with you. Be careful in future." With hesitation, I stood there. I wanted to ask Swamiji whether he would permit me to stay in the Ashram. His harsh words, "The Ashram is not a fit place for you; it is better that you go home now itself", were ringing in my ears.

But to my great surprise, he brought a big tin of biscuits, and with a smile on his face, presenting it to me, said: "Be happy."

From that time onwards, I became more vigilant and more careful. For the benefit of spiritual aspirants, Swami Krishnanandaji very often puts on a serious mien. Spiritual and moral instructions are given by him through appropriate anecdotes. Good work he praises and encourages in such a way that the Sadhak concerned is tempted to do more Sadhana.

Swamiji's thinking is always on the import of the scriptures. Quite often, when I went to him in the mornings, instead of giving me some work, Swamiji used to put some questions very difficult to answer. "What is the difference between doing and happening?" he asked me once. On another occasion, he said: "As per the aphorism of Patanjali, in the presence of one who is established in the practice of Ahimsa, there will be no feelings of enmity and hatred and peace would prevail. Lord Krishna was a great Yogi, but in His very presence, there were so many wars and battles. Either Patanjali is wrong or Krishna is not a Yogin. What do you say?" "If Atman is everywhere and in all

beings, it should be in the cow also; and if the cow turns its neck, do you mean that Atman also bends? Think and tell the answer,” said Swamiji on another day. On still another day, he said: “As per the declaration of Lord Krishna in the Gita, '*Mattah parataram na anyat kinchidasti dhananjaya. Nothing exists other than Me, O Arjuna!*', you must see only Krishna everywhere. But you are seeing so many things in the world. Just look here—table, chair, doors, windows, you and me. Do you perceive 'things' or Krishna alone? What is your understanding of this statement? Go and meditate on this verse and then come and tell me your experience.” Repeating some of the phrases in the Gita verses, he used to laugh loudly and wholeheartedly like an innocent child.

Swami Krishnanandaji is a friend of all and a well-wisher of everyone. Some devotees, with an intention of offering something to Swamiji, used to ask me: “Do you know what Swamiji likes most?” My reply to them used to be in the negative. One day, when Swamiji was in a humorous mood, I put the question to Swamiji himself. What was it that he liked most? The reply was: “Nothing.” Nothing he likes or

dislikes. It is very difficult to understand Swamiji.

LIKE PRAHLADA IN SAHAJA SAMADHI

Here I recollect a beautiful narrative in the Shanti Parva of the Mahabharata about the spiritual status of Prahlada, the great devotee of the Lord who had the rarest privilege of sitting on the lap of Lord Narasimha. This occurs in the course of a conversation between Bhishma and Yudhishtira. Bhishma says: “Prahlada was unattached to all worldly objects. His sins had been washed away. He was possessed of great learning. Free from all evil qualities, he was a repository of the quality of goodness. He took praise and censure equally. Realising the transitory nature of all beings and things, he was never angry with what displeased him and never rejoiced at what pleased him. Steadily engaged in the study of the scriptures, firm in knowledge, he had arrived at the right conclusions in respect of Truth. As he was seated one day in a solitary chamber, with his senses under complete control, Indra, the king of the celestials, approached him and said: “O king, I behold in you all those qualities by which a person wins the esteem of all. Your behaviour is like that of a

child, free from attachment and aversion. You have realised the Self. What is the best means by which the knowledge of the Self may be attained?" To him Prahlada replied: "He who is acquainted with the true nature of all beings, mobile and immobile, is never deluded. All entities and non-entities come into being and cease to exist in consequence of their own nature. He who regards himself as the doer of acts, good or bad, possesses a wisdom that is vitiated. Such a person is unacquainted with the Truth. If the person were really the actor, then all acts undertaken for his own benefit would certainly be crowned with success. But it is not so at all times. Even among persons struggling their utmost, the avoidance of what is not desired and the attainment of what is desired, are not seen always. What becomes then of personal exertion? In the case of some, we see that without any exertion on their part, what is not desired is avoided and what is desired is accomplished. Therefore, this must be the result of Nature. He who is acquainted with only transformation of Nature, but not with Nature itself, which is supreme and exists by herself, feels stupefaction in consequence of his

ignorance. But he who understands the difference between Nature and her transformations is never deluded. All existing things have their origin in Nature. In consequence of one's certainty of conviction in this respect, one would never be affected by pride or arrogance. When I know the origin of all Dharmas and when I am acquainted with the instability of all objects, I am incapable of indulging in grief. Without attachments, without pride, without desire and hope, freed from all bonds, and disassociated from everything, I am passing my time in great happiness, engaged in witnessing the appearance and disappearance of all created objects. I behold all things with the light of Self-knowledge, and therefore, no trouble or anxiety exists in me. I do not behold anyone as my foe or friend. Hence I desire nothing."

Now the reader will have a fair knowledge of the supreme state of Sahaja Samadhi of Prahlada. If he has understood Prahlada, he can understand Sri Swami Krishnanandaji. Revered Swamiji is an ideal example to emulate for Sadhaks who wish to lead the divine life and attain God-realisation.

THE SIX SYSTEMS OF PHILOSOPHY IN INDIA

Sri Swami Krishnananda

What we consider as a school of philosophy is a system of investigation into the ultimate cause and meaning of any thing or event. The essential feature of philosophical investigation is that it goes to the root of the matter—what are the causative factors behind the occurrence of an event or the appearance of any form, sentient or insentient. There are various attempts in this direction, carried on both in the East and in the West.

We have in India the famous six systems of philosophy known as Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Samkhya, Yoga, Mimamsa and Vedanta. We may say that these six represent a kind of gradational advance in the vision of things, and one is not supposed to contradict the other. The higher vision may supplant and supersede the vision that is a little lower, but the lower is not rejected by the higher. Therefore, it would be an erroneous approach on the part of any deep thinker to imagine that schools of thought which vary are self-contradictory. They are facets of perception, and there can be any

number of facets and phases in the perception of anything whatsoever.

For instance, in ancient times, Plato and Aristotle form one group of thinkers; in the medieval period, St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas go together; and in the modern period of Western thought, we have Kant and Hegel. I was reminded of this wonderful similarity in comparison with the schools of thought in India.

All these systems—Nyaya, Vaisheshika, etc.—were originally written down in very short, pithy notes, called Sutras. In those days when these systems were initiated, there were no large textbooks. Everything had to be memorised, and in order to keep in memory the essential foundational features of any particular school of thought, the originators put them in brief, knotty sayings, called Sutras.

Nyaya Sutra and Vaisheshika Sutra confined themselves to the ancient system of physics and logical induction and deduction. The Nyaya is primarily concerned with syllogism, including inductive

processes and deductive processes. The Vaisheshika is pure physics, enumerating the categories of ultimate realities, considering that there is a multitude of realities, or manifold realities. We can note how the thought advances. There is logical argumentation to establish the principle of the multitude of realities, as a sense of perception would reveal, and intellectual arguments would confirm.

The Samkhya is of a different nature. There are not many realities for Samkhya. It also has its own logic. Every school of thought has its own logical system to establish the validity of its proposition. While many realities are posited by the Nyaya and the Vaisheshika, only two are recognised in the Samkhya. The entire experience, cosmic or individual, is explicable through the interaction of two realities: consciousness and matter. There is nothing anywhere except these two things. There is a knowing individual, a consciousness that is aware, and an object of which consciousness is aware. The Samkhya has its own terminology. The object of perception, which is inert in its nature, is by Samkhya

designated as *prakriti*, the matrix of all things. The knowing principle, consciousness proper, is called *purusha*. *Purusha* does not mean 'man'. It is only a way of putting things for the purpose of explanation. It means the primary intelligence which observes, interprets, and comes in contact with the matter of the universe.

I am briefly introducing you to the methodology adopted by the six schools of thought. The Samkhya considers that matter is ubiquitous. Everywhere there is matter. Matter is immeasurable and permanent, and it cannot be destroyed. Its constituents change and modify themselves in the process of evolution and involution, but matter is not destroyed. It stands as it is, and as it shall always be.

The peculiarity of the Samkhya that consciousness is manifold in its nature is contrary to expectations. That is to say, the observers of the object are many in number. They have made a mistake here in confusing psychological consciousness with metaphysical awareness. However that be, we are not here to argue for or against Samkhya. It is only a statement of the position made by the Samkhya.

There are multiple perceiving centres of consciousness, called *Purushas*, and there is one inert matter, called *Prakriti*.

Hence, there are the twins Nyaya and Vaisheshika on the one hand, and Samkhya and Yoga on the other hand. Yoga adds one more principle to the existing or accepted two principles of Samkhya. For Samkhya, only two things are sufficient. There is no need for any other principle. Consciousness and matter, and their interactions, explain everything, every situation, in any condition. By 'Yoga' here I do not mean the actual practical side of it — *Asana*, *Pranayama*, *Pratyahara*, *Dharana*, *Dhyana* and *samadhi*. This is not what we mean when we think of the Yoga school of thought. The school proper is a logical foundation. The Yoga considers that the two principles of the perceiver and the perceived cannot explain matter.

For instance, there is action and reaction in every experience, and every action produces a result which pounces upon the experience, even if it be a thought, speech or deed. These reactions are to be properly dealt with. That

is to say, there should be a dispenser of justice. If an individual has done good deeds, those deeds have to be rewarded. Otherwise, if the action has gone in a wrong way, it has to be rectified by necessary recompense, by punishment. Now, a person who commits the deed cannot reward or punish himself or herself. There must be a judiciary for that. A third principle is essential. This was noted by the Yoga metaphysicians. An all-knowing Ishvara, or creative principle, was posited by the Yoga System. Here we must note that the Ishvara of Yoga is quite different from our idea of God. For us, God is the creator of the world. But the Ishvara of Yoga is not the creator of anything. He is a witness of the operations of *Purusha* and *Prakriti*; and, according to the nature of the deeds of the *Purusha*, rewards and punishment will be meted out by the ordinance of Ishvara.

Now we come to a very difficult twin school of philosophy, known as Mimamsa and Vedanta. The Mimamsa and the Vedanta schools are founded, basically, on the Vedas and the Upanishads. Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Samkhya and Yoga

have nothing to do with the Vedas or the Upanishads. They are purely intellectual schools. Their basis is pure rationality, argumentation, and syllogism. Purva Mimamsa and Uttara Mimamsa are the two schools of Mimamsa, also known as Karma Mimamsa and Brahma Mimamsa. Mimamsa means investigation.

What is the investigation carried on by the Purva Mimamsa and Uttara Mimamsa? In the case of the Purva Mimamsa, the investigation is pure ritual, as enumerated in the ritualistic sections of the Vedas, known as the Brahmanas. Here, the word brahmana does not mean the Brahmin caste. It is a series of textbooks. There are four Vedas: Rik, Yajur, Sama and Atharva. Each of the Vedas has four sections, known as Samhita, Brahmana, Aranyaka and Upanishad. Samhita is a prayer book. The Purusha Sukta, Rudradhyaya, etc., that is recited in temples comes under the Samhitas, which is a collection of prayers. These are the most prominent part of the Vedas. When people say they are studying the Vedas, generally they mean they are studying the Samhita or the prayer, the hymn aspect of the Vedas.

The next section of the Vedas is called the Brahmana, which is a descriptive catalogue in prose of all the methods to be employed in using these mantras, or hymns, of the Vedas in sacrificial or ritualistic performances. The Purva Mimamsa mainly concerns itself with ritual, how a particular mantra or a hymn of the Veda is to be utilised to invoke a particular God. “*Indraya svaha, Varunaya svaha,*” etc., we say. There is a very complicated and mathematical process of the Purva Mimamsa, which gives great details of the method of performance of these sacrifices for the satisfaction of the gods in heaven. Every mantra of the Samhita portion of the Veda is an invocation of a divinity. It is a prayer to a particular god, and it is believed that the form of the deity is hidden in the structural pattern of the mantra itself. We may say that the mantra is a geometrical pattern which explains the nature of the deity—so much so, that when we recite the mantra properly, the deity immediately manifests itself. The deity is summoned, provided our recitation has the correct intonation and pronunciation, which is to be very exact, very precise. If we make a change in the intonation of the

mantra, it will produce adverse effects.

In this connection, there is a story of an event which took place in heaven. There was a battle between the gods and the *Asuras*, and someone who was against Indra wanted the celestial priests, the rishis, to perform a sacrifice by which a deadly foe of Indra would rise from the fire and destroy him. But the rishis did not want such a sacrifice to be performed. Why should they participate in a sinister sacrifice which attacks Indra, who is the god of the heavens? But they agreed to perform the sacrifice. What they did was, they uttered the mantra, which literally meant “enemy of Indra, rise from the fire”: *Indra shatro, vivardhasva*. But “enemy of Indra, rise” can have a dual meaning. What is the meaning of “enemy of Indra”? It may be an enemy to be devastated by Indra, or it may be something which will devastate Indra. It is like the Oracle of Delphi. People used to ask the Oracle of Delphi whether the Greeks would win or the Romans would win, and the oracle would say, “The Greeks the Romans shall conquer.” What do we make from this statement? Who will conquer

whom? It can be either way. Likewise, in an equivocation the rishis changed the tone of this invocation. Though according to the literal pronounciational aspect of the chant, it looked as if a destroyer of Indra would be produced, due to a change in the intonation, what happened was the reverse. Something was produced which was to be destroyed by Indra. This is the greatness of the Veda mantra.

These investigations are carried on by the Purva Mimamsa, though our subject is something different. All that I have told you is only a kind of preliminary introduction to the main theme—namely, the Brahma Mimamsa, investigation into the nature of the Supreme Being. It is called the Brahma Sutras. As I mentioned, the sutras are pithy statements; and especially the Brahma Sutras very difficult. If we read just the Sutra, we will make no sense out of it because it is only two or three letters. Without the help of a commentary, the Sutra on Brahman cannot be understood. While the Purva Mimamsa, or Karma Mimamsa, is concerned with the mantras, the Samhitas and the Brahmana portion of the Vedas, the

Brahma Sutras is concerned with only the Upanishads, which deal with the nature of the Ultimate Reality, or the Absolute.

The Brahma Sutras have four chapters, and the total number of Sutras is five hundred and fifty-five. What does the First Chapter of the Brahma Sutras deal with? There are many statements in the Upanishads whose meaning is difficult to make out. They can mean one thing or another thing. The specification of the true meaning of a particular statement in the Upanishad is necessary so that we may not mistake its import. The First Chapter of the Brahma Sutras engages itself entirely in interpreting the true import and meaning of certain knotty passages in the ten major Upanishads. There are minor Upanishads also, totalling one hundred and eight or so, but the Brahma Sutras is concerned only with ten: Isa Upanishad, Kena Upanishad, Katha Upanishad, Prasna Upanishad, Mundaka Upanishad, Mandukya Upanishad, Aitareya Upanishad, Taittiriya Upanishad, Chhandogya Upanishad, and Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. These are the principal foundations of

philosophical metaphysics in India. It is a very difficult subject. Many people do not go into the Chhangogya and Brihadaranyaka Upanishads, and confine themselves only to the lesser Upanishads. But the Brahma Sutras goes into the depths of these knotty passages occurring in the Upanishads. The First Chapter is not a commentary on the Upanishads. It is only the interpretation and explanation of the true meaning of certain unintelligible portions, statements, in the Upanishads.

The Second Chapter of the Brahma Sutras is entirely devoted to the refutation of contrary doctrines. There are schools of thought which do not believe in God, and such schools are refuted by proper argument. The logic of Nyaya, the physics of Vaisheshika, the dualism of Samkhya, the ritualism of Purva Mimamsa, and even the atomism of Jainism and the schools of Buddhism are dealt with elaborately, and every theme that is propounded by these godless schools is set aside as not in conformity with the ultimate nature of things. Generally, only the Second Chapter of the Brahma

Sutras is prescribed in colleges and universities because it is intricate, highly argumentative, and intellectual in its nature. We shall not go into these things, as our purpose is mainly spiritual edification. We shall confine ourselves to the subject of the building up of our true self, the various efforts that we have to make in freeing ourselves from the bondage of Samsara, and finding out ways and means of the salvation of the soul.

The Third Chapter deals with a very interesting aspect of the subject, namely, which passages of the Upanishads can be combined for the purpose of meditation. The Third Chapter deals with meditational processes according to the Upanishads. Every statement in the Upanishads is a prescription for meditation. In all the ten Upanishads, several such statements are made, and many of them of a similar nature and import can be brought together for the purpose of meditation. Which point of the Upanishad can be combined with which other point for the purpose of meditation is the subject of the Third Chapter.

The Fourth Chapter is the most important for us, as it deals with the cause of bondage and the release from bondage.

Thus, the Brahma Sutras is a pinnacle of Indian philosophic thought, which deals with and tackles every existent school of thought in India. It points out their inadequacies, rejects them wholesale, and substitutes for all these thoughts a more comprehensive vision of life, integrated in its nature, complete in every aspect, and wholesome in every means. The question is about our own selves. The Brahma Mimamsa, or Uttara Mimamsa, is also sometimes called Sharirik Mimamsa. A Sharirik is a being who has embodied physicality. Whoever has a body is a Sharirik. Inasmuch as it studies the nature of the embodied soul, it also is called Sharirik Mimamsa. As it is concerned with the establishment of the Supreme Absolute, it is called Brahma Mimamsa; because it is posterior to the Karma Mimamsa, which is Purva, it is called Uttara Mimamsa. Varieties of names are given to this wonderful, spiritual, metaphysical textbook called the Brahma Sutras.

RAMANAVAMI SADHANA

Sri Swami Venkatesananda

28th MARCH, 1950

The Ramanavami Sadhana commenced on the 21st March. The Ashramites had been asked to do some Malas of 'Om Sri Ramaya Namah' (Rama Shadakshara) Japa and take part in the Ramayana-Navanha-Parayanam.

Siva added to this the daily 'enactment' of one Kandanam from his 'Ramayana Drama.'

“Sadhana on such special occasions should be intense, even though it is for a short period. These nine days, everyone should be Ramayam – Rama Nama Japa, reading of the Ramayana (both the Tulasidas Ramayana and the Valmiki Ramayana), and at night Ramayana Drama also. Thus will the Sadhana, even during these nine days, be an intense one. Everyone will be filled with the glory of Rama. Whatever you do, you should have intense application to it. That is the secret of success. If you serve, serve intensely, with all your heart and soul. If you worship the Lord, give your heart and soul to Him. If you meditate, meditate intensely. That is the secret of rapid progress in the spiritual path.”

This morning, as soon as Siva entered the office, he greeted us 'Jaya

From Sivananda Day-to-Day

Ram ji ki'. Thus began the Ramanavami day. We had morning meditation class and a Prabhat Pheri with 'Sri Ram Jaya Ram Jaya Jaya Ram' Kirtan.

This morning's office-Kirtan was also full of Rama. During the entire week on every occasion, Siva has been reciting the Sloka—

*Sri Rama Rama Rameti Rame Rame
manorame*

*Sahasranama tat tulyam Rama
Nama varanane*

In the temple, the Havan of Rama Mantra is going on. Alongside sit Siva and the devotees while Sri Purnabodhji, Swami Krishnanandaji and Sri Ramprem give readings from Stotra Ratnakara, Tulasidas Ramayana and Valmiki Ramayana. Siva's gramophone records of 'Sangeeta Ramayana' were played. Sri Rao Saheb N.G. Venkatesa Iyer of Salem recited Siva's 'Hanuman Chalisa'.

WHERE IS EVIL?

After Kirtan, Siva delivered the following discourse:

“Rama is Para Brahman. Sita is Maya. Rama minus Sita is Para Brahman alone. Worship of Rama is adoration of Brahman. Through Rama's worship, one can easily attain

knowledge of Brahman. Sita is the illusory power of the Lord Himself that veils the Jiva's realisation of the real Swaropa of Rama. The 'why' of this illusory power you cannot know.

How did Karma arise? How did evil come about? What is the origin of phenomena? From the Satchidananda Para Brahman, how did Asat, Jada, Duhkha come? If Rama is Satchidananda Para Brahman and He and He alone pervades all, why do we find evil and misery in this world? These questions are transcendental. They are Atiprashnas. The finite intellect cannot understand the mystery, which is beyond the speech and the mind. Intellect can grasp only things relating to the senses and the mind. One cannot get a solution to these eternal questions except through the realisation of the Satchidananda Para Brahman Rama.

In reality, evil does not exist. There is no evil except in your imagination. All is that Satchidananda Para Brahman Rama.

The existence of evil is due to your wrong perception. It is only in the Vyavaharic sense that there is evil. And that evil exists to glorify the good. This evil has co-existed with good in all periods of time. In Satya Yuga, the percentage of evil might have been less. In Kali Yuga, the percentage may be more. But there has always been evil in the world.

There is, besides this external evil, the ceaseless fight between the Shubha Vasanas and the Ashubha Vasanas within man.

Similarly in the world also, there are Daivic societies and Asuric societies. The Daivic forces always work for the welfare of humanity and for the final emancipation of man from the bondage of Samsara. They work for the establishment of real communism in the world.

Real communism is Vedanta which preaches oneness and equality. Real communism is divine life which ennobles every man and prompts him to see his own Self in every living creature. Real communism is divine life which demands of everyone to share what he has with others, to work for the welfare of all. It is not this Asuric communism which destroys temples and burns the devotees of the Lord.

There is another Asuric movement in the South. It is the self-respect movement. Real self-respect is also good. That is divine life which respects all as one's own Self. It strives to take man towards God through worship of His Form and repetition of His Name. But, this Asuric self-respect movement pulls down temples and burns Ramayana.

At the same time, there spring up Daivic institutions which strive to establish Dharma, to bring about real communism and self-respect.

These institutions are run by the devotees of God, Sadhakas and Siddhas. They lead the people along the path of divine life. Through conferences and propaganda, they uphold Dharma, devotion to God and knowledge of the Self. The Theosophical Society has been holding regular conferences. There are other institutions conducting Sankirtan Conferences and spiritual conferences. The Divine Life Society has also been conducting such conferences. The first Conference was held at Villupuram by Dr. Mani. Three conferences were conducted by the pious and noble Venkataramiah (Swami Ramananda). The great work was given new life to by Dr. Mangalam and Sri S.V. Iyer of Tambaram. The thread was taken up and the work is carried on by others. Sri Rao Saheb N.G. Venkatesa Iyer conducted the Second Divine Life Conference last year at Salem.

Rao Saheb V. is a noble pious soul who is trying his level best to spread the glory of the Lord's Name. He is a dynamic selfless worker with a noble and magnanimous heart. The Conference was a great success. Sri V. went from lane to lane, from house to house and stirred the people to tread the path of divine life and attain the Lord's Sayujya. To such a noble soul, I give this little love-offering of mine in the form of an award—M.S.G.S.

which means 'Member, Sivananda Gyana Sabha'.

The Sivananda Gyana Sabha is there where people sing Lord's Name. The Sabha is there where man runs to the aid of his sick and ailing brother. The Sabha is where man meditates on the Almighty. The Sabha is there where Atma-Vichara is done.

Sri Venkatesa Iyer is a great Karma Yogi. Living in the world, carrying on his worldly duties amidst worldly distractions and family burdens, he has been boldly working for the spiritual uplift of the world.

It is very easy to retire to a cave. You will pretend to meditate for some time: after six months, Tamas will set in. You will not know where you are. How easy it is not to tell a lie when you have no one to talk to! How easy it is to control your anger when no one approaches you, much less opposes you! What is there in controlling the mind when there are no distractions at all? The real glory of a real Yogi or Jnani lies in being able to control the mind and to engage himself in Karma Yoga for the good of humanity, while yet living in the world. Even a little of the practice of this Yoga at once purifies you. Sri V. is a Dheera who has been serving humanity and leading the divine life, while yet living in the world. May God bless him! May God bless you all! May you all become Rama-Swaroop!"

FREEDOM

Sri Swami Venkatesananda

13th MARCH

Freedom is the life of the soul of man. Human pre-history begins with man's rebellion against bondage. The life in the seed breaks the shell, splits the earth and peeping above the earth proclaims its freedom. The human being rebels even against "the realities of life" by withdrawing into himself, by seeking freedom in reverie, dream or insanity.

In spite of all semblances to the contrary, we have not progressed much further than the primitive man. Our tools have changed, our technique has changed, our terrain has changed, but our motives have remained unchanged; we seek freedom, total freedom, absolute freedom. And yet we are unwilling to

Taken from 'Daily Readings'

pay the price of self-discipline.

In modern society, the freedom of man's spirit is restricted all around, and it seeks to express itself through escape valves — sex and money. But to escape is not to solve; here are no ready-made solutions. Real discipline is self-discipline and everyone has to find his own solution to his own unique problem. Only when he realises, that, while sex and money provide him with an escape from present limitations, they will ultimately rob him of all freedom, and then he will discipline himself. Only then will he surrender his lesser freedom for attaining the greater freedom — freedom from the inner tyrants of lust, anger and greed.

BIRTH CENTENARY YEAR OF SRI SWAMI VENKATESANANDA JI MAHARAJ

Victory over mind is certainly victory over death. Triumph over the tyranny of matter or flesh is undoubtedly triumph over death. This is the attainment of Atma Svarajya or Immortality. This is the goal of life. This is Kaivalya of Vedantins or Absolute independence of Raja Yogins. This has to be achieved through intense spiritual practice or constant meditation on the Imperishable Self.

—Swami Sivananda

SWAMI VENKATESANANDA

Sri Swami Sadananda

"The last and best thing that can be said of him is that he lives only to serve Swami Sivananda. In him, we find a living commentary on the maxim 'Service to the Guru is worship of the Lord'."

In September 1945 came a young man to the presence of Swami Sivananda from Delhi, with a fixed resolve to become Swamiji's Sevaka. I am using the word Sevaka and not disciple because from then up till now that young man wants to be only a Sevaka. We know he is more than a disciple; he is the right-hand man of our Guru. But in Venkatesananda's mind, no such consciousness has yet dawned, and I am sure it never will. When he left Delhi, he was holding a decent job in the Imperial Secretariat with a salary of which any young man could be proud. There were also excellent prospects of promotions to posts of higher status and salary. But Sri Parthasarathy had long decided that his was to be only the life of service to Sivananda, and not one of power, position, prestige or worldly prosperity to himself. When he

resigned his job, he had not completed his 25th year — the age which is prescribed as the limit for entry into government service — but a dozen years before that, little Parthasarathy had heard of Swami Sivananda and developed a desire to come to him. He was only thirteen years old then, and he could not command courage enough even to mention this desire to his parents. He passed the School Final Examination when he was fourteen or fifteen. One would have expected such a brilliant lad to have entered college for University education; but Parthasarathy had already decided that his service was to be for a saint and not for the government. So, he spent some years earning a salary, though there was no need for it, because his father was holding a very good job in the Madras Corporation, and qualified himself as a stenotypist, precis-writer, and what not. It is surprising that his inclinations led him that way, though he could by no means have guessed that these were needed when he came to serve

Taken from 'Life of Swami Venkatesananda'

Sivananda. One cannot help seeing the hand of God in this, for it was God alone who could know that a few years of such training were needed by young Parthasarathy before he could place his services entirely at the disposal of our Gurudev. The beauty is that even the last job that he held in the Imperial Secretariat was that of Personal Assistant to one of the most prominent officials in the government. So he was qualifying in that way also to become what he is now, the Personal Secretary to our Swamiji.

It is one thing to be an officer in Government service and quite another to be in the active service of Swami Sivananda. The nature of work in the latter case demands not merely intellectual capacity but a very high degree of physical fitness. To serve Sivananda satisfactorily, one has to be disease-proof, nay more – one must have the capacity to get on without food or sleep for a day or two, and also the capacity to eat and digest any amount of food at any time without due notice. The body must be able to bear any strain. God has endowed Swami Venkatesananda with these qualifications. He has a fine physique. He has an attractive personality. His features are well-formed and he is so made as to be

very agile and active. Quite naturally and without much effort, he has made himself proficient in Hatha Yoga, and there is no Asana or Mudra or Bandha which he cannot display to perfection. It is especially in Nauli that he has surpassed all others, because he is able to move his abdominal muscles not only from side to side but also from top to bottom. More wonderful still is the way in which he keeps himself floating in the Ganges without making any movement of his limbs. He also knows the tricks relating to the movement of his muscles (biceps or triceps, etc.) called muscle control. In short, he has been gifted with a physical condition that is just suited for maximum intellectual service for Swamiji.

Analysing the qualities of Swami Venkatesananda, we can divide them into two groups: 1) those that go to make up his character, and 2) those that are helpful for the efficient performance of the tasks assigned to him. When we speak of the former, the most pronounced trait in him is his absolutely unruffled temper. Whatever happens to upset him, he will never lose his balance. One may go to any length to insult him, he will move away without

a wrinkle in his face. This equanimity is due to his unshakeable resolve which must be mentioned as another quality of his. When he has come to a decision about what he should do, he does not care for anybody's opinion. He will carry the thing through, and in doing it, he will conserve all the energy at his disposal. It is for such conservation of energy that he never loses his temper. It is a matter of common experience that the person, who has no control over his temper, will be losing his energy tremendously. Swami Venkatesananda knows this very well and acts upon that knowledge. Because of his proper mental control, his judgements of men and things do not go wrong. In fact he evidences a wonderful capacity that way. But because he is never impulsive, his face will never betray his thoughts. He can go on judging people, estimating them at their proper worth, without their ever suspecting what he is doing when he is carrying on a conversation with them. Even in the matter of anticipating future events, his common sense serves him well. He is very shrewd in the calculation of chances. Sometimes it would be difficult to foresee what would happen. But Venkatesananda

usually comes out correct in his judgement. Another of his traits is his fertile imagination. This enables him to have broad views. He can easily get over the ordinary limitations which trouble common people. He has a broad outlook. That helps him to forgive, forget, look at the good and reject the evil.

Passing on to the qualities which are helpful to him in carrying out his work, we come to his unrivalled equipment as a steno-typist. His ability as a stenographer is outstanding. There are many who are experts in writing fast and without mistakes. But they will not be able to write for a long time. Swami Venkatesananda is accurate, fast and what is more, he can go on taking notes continually for eight hours at a stretch. His vast knowledge of all branches of spiritual literature is a great help to him in stenography. As for typing, his execution is perfect. The outstanding merits are neatness and correctness. He can type in the dark and automatically his hand will be inserting the papers and carbon sheets.

The next thing to note is his untiring energy. His brain never refuses to function however long it is taxed and on whatever subject it is exercised. But for this quality of his, it will be impossible for him to carry out

the work that Swamiji gives him. The main work he does is correspondence. It is enough if Swamiji gives him some suggestions indicative of what he desires should be written. Venkatesananda has sufficient grasp of the subject and also of Swamiji's nature and modes of thought to do everything necessary without further instruction. He has developed a good style of his own. It is simple to the point and crystal clear. When a description has to be given, he can do it in a very attractive way. His observation is keen and he knows the striking feature of any scene that is witnessed. His ability as a reporter is marvellous and the account that he gives in the Forest University Weekly of what transpires in the Ashram is brilliant. He knows how to economise words and yet to preserve all that has to be preserved in the narration. He is up-to-date in information; he has to be and he has the capacity to be. But the most praiseworthy quality is his memory. There are thousands of tit-bits to be kept in the fore-front and not one item will be forgotten by him. He can be surpassed in this respect only by Swamiji himself. We have yet to see another so good in remembering every detail about everything.

Over and above the work that is assigned to him by Swamiji, Venkatesananda finds time in maintaining a daily chronicle of all that transpires in the Ashram. This record is bound to be of immense historical value in the future. I have read portions of it here and there and I must express my admiration for the style of writing. His words flow freely; there is great coherence in the thoughts and the general effect created in the reader is that he is witnessing the things that he is reading about. Venkatesananda is also good in writing dramas. When he has time, some fine productions will come out of his pen.

As a man, he is loved by one and all. It is especially the children that take a fancy to him. He never tires of playing with them. He is a bit of an artist, too. He is more than a novice in music. He is greatly interested in handling musical instruments. He has good knowledge of homeopathy and has perhaps effected some good cures.

The last and best thing that can be said of him is that he lives only to serve Swami Sivananda. In him, we find a living commentary on the maxim 'Service to the Guru is worship of the Lord'!

EMPTY THYSELF

Swami Atmaswarupananda

The scriptures declare that our fundamental error is wrong identification. Therefore, our fundamental purpose in life should be to correct that wrong identification. What is the best way to correct a wrong identification? The logical answer is to concentrate on the right identification.

The scriptures make it clear that our right identification is Brahman alone without a second. That thou art, the scriptures declare. Brahman alone, knowable and unknowable, is our true identity. Thus, Lord Krishna tells Arjuna: “Fix your mind on Me, bow down to Me, sacrifice to Me.” In all ways, we are meant to constantly think of the Lord.

However, in Chapter 12 of the Gita, Lord Krishna tells Arjuna that although He is transcendental, it is much easier for an embodied being to worship Him in His manifest form. And the Lord is very generous. We can worship Him in so many different ways: in service to others, through repeating His name, through meditation, through enquiry, even enquiring into who we really are.

All these things we can do with our mind and heart, and it is the way that Lord Krishna recommends. But finally we have to recognize that as our purpose is to get rid of any objective identification, whether it is the body, the mind, the ego, the witness, or even Brahman, that ultimately we have to

empty ourselves and rest in That which the mind can never know. We have to rest in Brahman beyond manifestation, transcendental. This is the only way that we can come to empty ourselves of any possible identification. Otherwise, we are maintaining a second when our goal is to be that One alone without a second.

How do we truly worship that One alone without a second? The scriptures indicate that ultimately it is through silence, but it isn't a silence where we just still the mind. That is an objective silence. It has to be a silence of knowledge. We cannot reach the transcendental with our minds or anything objective. It has to be through knowledge, through faith, through understanding, through a refusal to make any object of Brahman or ourselves whatsoever. We just are. It is from that emptiness that we are meant to function in this world.

Pujya Swami Chidanandaji, Pujya Swami Krishnanandaji and our late revered Vedanta teacher, Swami Brahmanandaji, all used to quote Gurudev's saying that came from the Bible: “Empty thyself and I will fill thee.” No matter how we approach the Divine—which is the only way of ridding ourselves of our wrong identification—ultimately the purpose is to empty ourselves so that the Lord alone can fill us.

CHILDREN'S WORLD

STUDENTS' SUCCESS IN LIFE SELFLESS SERVICE

Blessed Immortal Selves!

Kindle the light of love in your heart. Love all. Cultivate all-embracing, all-inclusive, cosmic love. Charge every action with pure love. Kill cunningness, greed and selfishness. Hatred, anger and jealousy are removed by continuous service with a loving heart. You will get more strength, joy and satisfaction by doing kind acts. You will be loved by all. Practice of compassion, charitable acts and selfless service will purify and soften the heart.

Service to the country, service to society and service to parents and Mahatmas are



all Nishkama Karma Yoga. Serve any society, religious and charitable institutions and dispensaries for two hours daily in any way you like. Feel that the whole world is a manifestation of the Lord. Be ever ready to serve others. Take delight in service. Watch for opportunities. Create a field for good service. Do not expect anything in return for your services.

—**Swami Sivananda**

CULTIVATION OF VIRTUES

COURTESY

Courtesy is elegance or politeness of manners. It is politeness combined with kindness.

Small kindness, small courtesies, small consideration habitually practised in your social intercourse give a great charm to your character.

Courtesy charms at first sight and leads on to great intimacy and friendship.

A man of courtesy is a man of fine and polished manners. All people love him.

Show courtesy to all. Let it be artless, continuous and uniform. Have courtesy in your heart.

—**Swami Sivananda**



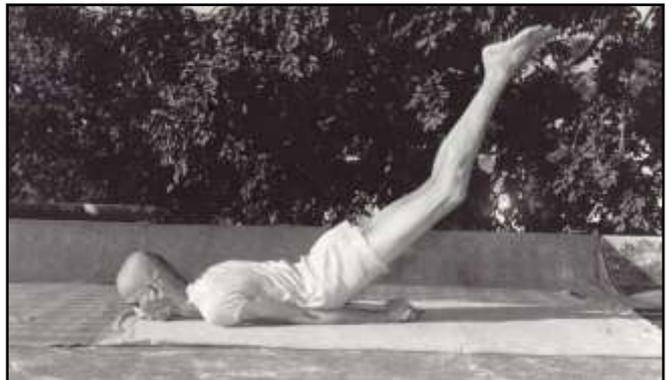
ERADICATION OF VICES CROOKED-MINDEDNESS

Crooked-minded people also are to be found in abundance in the world. Such people are always crooked in talking and arguing. They indulge in quibbling and wrangling. They are always fond of vain talks. They will assert emphatically that only their statement is correct and the statements of others are false and absurd. They cannot keep quiet even for a single minute. Their arguments are very peculiar. They will not argue with any person in a respectable manner. They will take to vituperation and fall out in the end. Cultivation of nobility, politeness and straight-forwardness will eradicate this evil quality.

—Swami Sivananda

SHALABHASANA (Locust posture)

Technique: Lie flat on the floor with face downwards and keep the hands by the side of the body with the fingers clenched into fists. Rest the chin on the ground by raising the head. Inhale and stiffen the body by pressing the fists against the floor. Slowly raise the legs as high as possible. Keep the legs in a straight line, while the two thighs, knees and ankles touch each other. The weight of the legs must fall on the body and hands. Contract the muscles of the buttocks, stretch the muscles of the thighs and further extend the position of the legs. Retain the posture for a few seconds in the beginning and gradually increase the duration. Concentrate on the



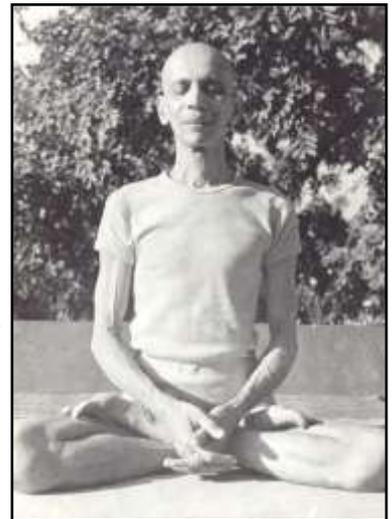
upper portion of the body, i.e., above the waist. Slowly lower the legs to the floor and simultaneously exhale. Relax with normal breathing. Repeat the posture two or three times. Relax in Makarsana.

Benefits: The practice of this Asana renders the spine supple and elastic. It relieves backache or strain on the spine caused by hard work, etc. It also tones up the muscles at the back and the intestinal organs in the abdominal region and relieves pain in the lumbar and sacral regions. Above all, it aids digestion and relieves gastric troubles.

—**Swami Chidananda**

UJJAYI PRANAYAMA

Technique: Sit in a comfortable posture. Close the mouth and eyes and concentrate on the sound produced during inhalation due to the partial closure of the glottis. Inhale through both the nostrils in a smooth, uniform manner. The sound produced during inhalation should be continuous and of uniform pitch. Expand the chest when you inhale. The passage of the incoming air is felt on the roof of the palate and makes a sibilant sound. Care should be taken not to bloat the abdomen in the process of inhalation. Then, exhale slowly, deeply and rhythmically through both the nostrils. After some days of practice, you can also exhale through the left nostril after closing the right nostril with the right thumb. Repeat the process five to ten times to start with, and increase the number according to your capacity.



Benefits: This Pranayama aerates the lungs, soothes the nerves and tones up the entire system. It is good for persons suffering from high blood pressure or coronary troubles, when done in a reclining position.

—**Swami Chidananda**

SRI MAHASIVARATRI CELEBRATIONS AT THE HEADQUARTERS ASHRAM



गङ्गातरङ्गरमणीयजटाकलापं गौरीनिरन्तरविभूषितवामभागम्।
नारायणप्रियमनंगमदापहारं वाराणसीपुरपतिं भज विश्वनाथम्॥

Devoutly worship Vishwanath, who is the Lord of Varanasi, whose matted locks look charming with the ripples of the Ganga, who is ever adorned on His left by the Divine Mother Gauri, who is beloved of Lord Narayana and who is the destroyer of Cupid's pride.



The sacred occasion of Mahasivaratri was celebrated with great devoutness at the Headquarters Ashram on 11th March 2021. As the auspicious commencement of the celebration, the chanting of



Panchakshari Mantra 'Om Namah Sivaya' was done daily for two hours from 7th to 11th March at Sri Vishwanatha Mandir by the Sannyasis, Brahmacharis and Sadhakas of the Ashram.

On the Mahasivaratri day, the Ceremonial Puja

commenced at 8 p.m. in the beautifully decorated shrine of Lord Sri Vishwanatha. Four grand worships in four Praharas of the night were offered to the Lord to the sonorous chanting of Namakam and Chamakam and soulful singing of Kirtans and Bhajans. The celebration concluded at 4.00 a.m. with Mangala Arati and distribution of holy Prasad at Annapurna Dining Hall. This sacred celebration provided to all present the blessed opportunity to be in divine communion throughout the night.

May the all-merciful Lord Siva and Sadgurudev shower their grace upon all.

SEVA THROUGH SIVANANDA HOME

'Sivananda Home is a Centre for the loving care of the destitute and the dying people who are found by the roadside, with no one to care for: the people who are homeless, temporary or permanent, fell sick, got lost or were abandoned'.

(Swami Chidananda)

A casual question about an old scar on the middle of his back revived old memories of trauma and pain, even though many years passed by. Each and every detail he remembered, how much he had to pay to the Rikshawala to bring him from one hospital to the other. How he was sent away time and again with a few tablets in his hand, because he had no cash and no contacts. How he shuffled on the bare streets to find a place to take rest, since his legs stopped supporting and he could only move forward while sitting on the ground. How streams of current ran through his legs, due to the injury in his spine. How people rejected and rebuked him, cheated on him and stole his last 190 rupees which he kept in the upper pocket of his shirt. Each and every detail he recalled, so too the aid he received from complete strangers, the directions which were pointed out to him, from Delhi to Haridwar to Dehra Dun and finally to Rishikesh. A farmer by profession, who would love to put his hands in the soil, observe the seasons with its grills and grimes and the miracles of God's wonderful creation at close sight.

The Home is like a complete opposite movement. The ways of the world with its present lockdowns, its demonstrations, where one feels like being cut off, limited and restricted and where the outgoing tendencies are hardly able to meet. The Baba who got newly admitted this month formulated it very strikingly when he said, "it is so warm here in this room, where hardly any wind comes inside, the doors and windows protecting me, I am safe, I am secure, I feel contented." For him it did not matter that even the outside door was locked, he was literally locked in for the time being, waiting till his lab report would be revealed. Where he used to be locked out from society, he now experienced a new concept of freedom. He remains in isolation, with the door open though, because of the severity of the infectious wound on his foot, the undeniable damage due to long term smoking and other substance used. Under medical treatment with high doses of antibiotics, cleaning and dressing ongoing, improvement can be seen day by day.

By Gurudev's Grace, a vaccination team visited Sivananda Home, and those eligible, received their first dose of the Covid vaccine. Jai Gurudev! Jai Sivananda!

"Let us behold Thee in all these names and forms. Let us serve Thee in all these names and forms. Let us ever remember Thee. Let us ever sing Thy glories. Let Thy Name be ever on our lips. Let us abide in Thee for ever and ever."

—Swami Sivananda

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING DONATIONS

Due to administrative reasons, and also to simplify the existing complex accounting system, it has been decided in the 'Board of Management' Meeting held on 10th March 2021 and subsequently in the 'Board of Trustees' Meeting held on 11th March 2021 that any donations to The Divine Life Society will be received only under the following 'Heads of Accounts' with effect from 1st April 2021: –

General Donation

1. Ashram General Donation
2. Annakshetra
3. Medical Relief

Corpus Donation

Sivananda Ashram Corpus (Mooldhan) Fund

Therefore, devotees are requested to send donations to the above mentioned account heads only.

Further, it is hereby conveyed to all the devotees and well wishers of the Ashram that

- The income from the **ASHRAM GENERAL DONATION** shall cater to all the spiritual, religious as well as charitable activities of the Divine Life Society viz. care for the homeless and destitute through Sivananda Home, serving lepers through Leprosy Relief Work, providing educational aid for poor students, running of Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy, printing of free literature, dissemination of spiritual knowledge, worship in Ashram temples, maintenance of the Ashram and Goshala, conducting regular religious and spiritual activities of the Ashram and also to any other spiritual, religious or charitable activities taken up by the Society from time to time.
- The donations for the **MEDICAL RELIEF** shall be utilised towards the treatment of sick and needy patients at Sivananda Charitable Hospital and also towards other medical relief works undertaken by the Society.
- Similarly, Interest income generated from **SIVANANDA ASHRAM CORPUS (MOOLDHAN) FUND** shall be utilised towards all the activities (spiritual, religious as well as charitable) of the Society.
- It is to be noted that the Society is not dispensing with any of its

activities; it will continue to conduct its regular Ashram activities and Charitable activities as usual, though the 'Heads of Accounts' to receive donations have been reduced.

- Donations towards the Divine Life Society may be made through 'Online Donation Facility' by accessing directly to the web address **<https://donations.sivanandaonline.org>** or by clicking the 'Online Donation' link provided in our website **[www. sivanandaonline.org](http://www.sivanandaonline.org)**.
- Donations can also be sent through cheque/D.D. /E.M.O. drawn in favour of '**The Divine Life Society**', **Shivanandanagar, Uttarakhand**, payable at Rishikesh. A covering letter mentioning the purpose of donation, Post Mail Address, Phone No., Email Id and PAN should accompany the same.
- Further, devotees are informed that Puja in Ashram temples shall be done free of cost for all those who would like to perform Puja in their name or in their family members' name. They may do so by sending a written request well in advance with requisite details either by email or letter addressed to the General Secretary or the President.
- There is no change in guidelines regarding Remittance towards Fee for Membership, Admission, Life Membership, Patronship, Branch Affiliation and SPL advances as well.

**MEMBERSHIP FEE AND BRANCH AFFILIATION FEE OF
THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY HEADQUARTERS
SHIVANANDANAGAR—249 192, Uttarakhand**

1. New Membership Fee*	₹ 150/-
Admission Fee	₹ 50/-
Membership Fee	₹ 100/-
2. Membership Renewal Fee (Yearly)	₹ 100/-
3. New Branch Opening Fee**	₹ 1,000/-
Admission Fee	₹ 500/-
Affiliation Fee	₹ 500/-
4. Branch Affiliation Renewal Fee (Yearly)	₹ 500/-

* Application for Membership should be sent with Photo Identity and Residential proof of the Applicant.

** Prior written permission has to be obtained from the Headquarters for opening a New Branch.

⇒ Kindly send Membership Fee and Branch Affiliation Fee by Cheque or by DD payable at any Bank in Rishikesh.

REPORTS FROM THE D.L.S. BRANCHES

INLAND BRANCHES

Bangalore (Karnataka):

During the Covid lockdown period, the Branch conducted Bhagavad Gita chanting classes online. About 225 people participated, out of which 4 people memorized the entire Bhagavad Gita. On 17th January, the winners of Gita chanting were honored and awarded with certificates, cash prize and memento.

Bargarh (Odisha): The Branch conducted daily Puja, Swadhyaya, Rudrabhishek on Mondays, Guru Paduka Puja on Thursdays and weekly Satsang on Saturdays. The Annual Day of the Branch and Viswanath Mandir Pratistha Diwas was celebrated on 16th February with Abhishek, Bhajan, Kirtan and Paduka Puja etc.

Bhubaneswar (Odisha): The Branch arranged online Satsang on Thursdays and Sundays with discourse on Sadhana Panchakam and Tattwa Bodha. Punyatithi Aradhana day of H.H. Sri Swami Devanandaji Maharaj was observed on 7th January. Sri Ramataraka Mantra Japa was held on 24th.

Chandapur (Odisha): Daily Puja, weekly Satsang on Saturdays, Guru Paduka Puja on Thursdays

and mobile Satsang on 8th and 24th of every month were the regular programmes of the Branch. Sundarakanda Parayan was done on 12th February and Srimad Bhagavat Parayan was conducted from 23rd to 1st March.

Kanpur (U.P.): The Branch arranged monthly Satsang on 17th January, and Bhandara and clothes distribution to the needy people on 24th. Besides this, daily chanting of Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra, Bhajan and Sankirtan continued for world peace. There was Sundarakanda Path and Hawan on 26th January.

Khatiguda (Odisha): The Branch continued its daily Puja and weekly Satsang on Thursdays. On 1st January New Year's Day was celebrated. Sadhana day was observed on 3rd with Paduka Puja and Swadhyaya etc. There was recitation of Vishnu Sahasranam on Ekadasis. For the success of forthcoming Birth Centenary Celebration of Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj Gita Path was offered on 31st January.

Nandinagar (Chattisgarh): The Branch had daily morning prayers with Gita Path and chanting of Hanuman Chalisa, and in the

evening, Satsang with Parayan of Vishnusahasranam. There was Mahamantra Kirtan on 3rd February. Besides this, weekly Satsang was held on Thursdays.

Nayagarh (Odisha): The Branch conducted Satsang on 14th January with Paduka Puja, chanting of Hanuman Chalisa and Sundarakand Parayan. Besides this, weekly Satsang was held on Wednesdays and special Satsangs on 18th and 22nd.

Puri (Odisha): Daily Prayers, weekly Satsang on Thursdays and Sundays, Paduka Puja on 8th and 24th of every month were the regular programmes of the Branch. There were chanting of Vishnu Sahasranam and Gita Path on Ekadasis and recitation of Hanuman Chalisa on Sankranti day. On 13th January, the Branch arranged Gita Parayan, and on 28th chanting of "Om Namō Narayanaya".

Rourkela (Odisha): Daily Yoga class, weekly Satsang on Thursdays and mobile Satsang on Sundays continued with Paduka Puja, Archana and chanting of Vishnusahasranam etc.

Steel Township - Rourkela (Odisha): In the month of February, the Branch had daily Satsang with Swadhyaya, free Yoga and Music classes on Mondays and Guru

Paduka Puja on Thursdays. Sadhana day was observed with Guru Paduka Puja, Pravachan, Gita Path, and recitation of Hanuman Chalisa and Vishnu Sahasranam etc.

South Balanda (Odisha): Daily Puja, weekly Satsang on Fridays, and Guru Paduka Puja on 8th and 24th of every month are the regular programmes of the Branch. The Branch Anniversary day was celebrated on 3rd January, and special Satsang held on 14th. Gita Path, recitation of Vishnu Sahasranam and Hanuman Chalisa were observed on Ekadasis. There was Akhanda Mahamantra Sankirtan on 30th January.

Sunabeda (Odisha): In the month of January, weekly Satsang was held on Thursdays and Sundays with Paduka Puja, Bhajan, Kirtan and Swadhyaya, and Matri Satsangs on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Ekadasis were observed with recitation of Vishnu Sahasranam and Archana on Sankranti day. Sundarakanda Parayan was arranged on 14th January and 12th February.

Visakha Rural Branch (A.P.): The Branch had daily Puja and Abhishekam on Mondays. Special Satsang was conducted on 7th February with Prayers, Bhajan, Kirtan and Pravachan. It was concluded with Anna Prasad.

AVAILABLE BOOKS ON YOGA, PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

By H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj

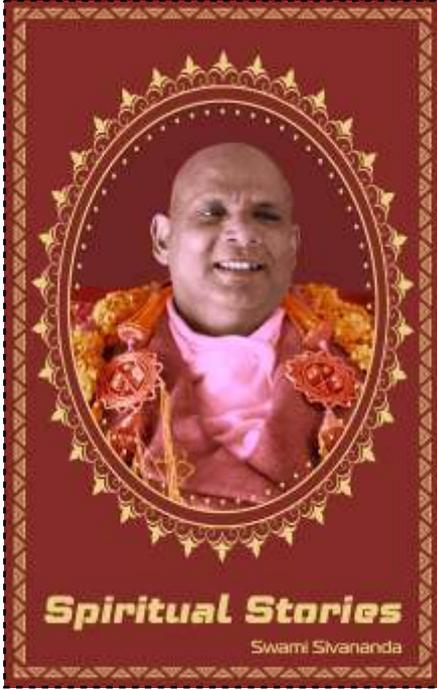
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Analects of Swami Sivananda	55/-	Inspiring Songs & Kirtans	130/-
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Bhagavadgita (Text & Commentary)	110/-	Kingly Science and Kingly Secret	165/-
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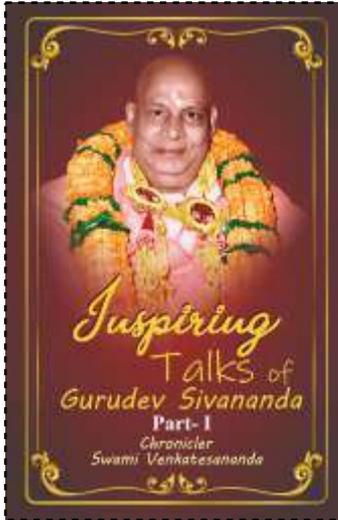


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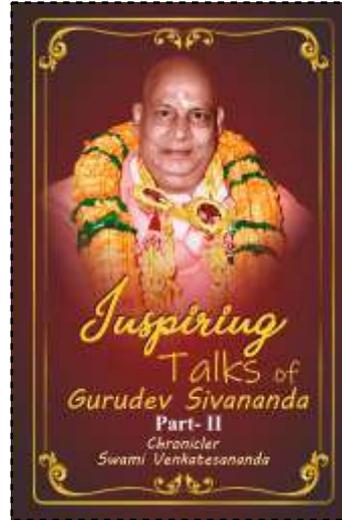


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TWENTY IMPORTANT SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTIONS

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- 1. BRAHMA-MUHURTA:** Get up at 4 a.m. daily. This is Brahmamuhurta which is extremely favourable for meditation on God.
- 2. ASANA:** Sit on Padma, Siddha or Sukha Asana for Japa and meditation for half an hour, facing the east or the north. Increase the period gradually to three hours. Do Sirshasana and Sarvangasana for keeping up Brahmacharya and health. Take light physical exercises as walking, etc., regularly. Do twenty Pranayamas.
- 3. JAPA:** Repeat any Mantra as pure Om or Om Namo Narayanaya, Om Namah Sivaya, Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya, Om Saravanabhavaya Namah, Sita Ram, Sri Ram, Hari Om, or Gayatri, according to your taste or inclination, from 108 to 21,600 times daily.
- 4. DIETETIC DISCIPLINE:** Take Sattvic food, Suddha Ahara. Give up chillies, tamarind, garlic, onion, sour articles, oil, mustard, asafoetida. Observe moderation in diet (Mitahara). Do not overload the stomach. Give up those things which the mind likes best for a fortnight in a year. Eat simple food. Milk and fruits help concentration. Take food as medicine to keep the life going. Eating for enjoyment is sin. Give up salt and sugar for a month. You must be able to live on rice, Dhal and bread without any Chutni. Do not ask for extra salt for Dhal and sugar for tea, coffee or milk.
- 5. MEDITATION-ROOM:** Have a separate meditation-room under lock and key.
- 6. CHARITY:** Do charity regularly, every month, or even daily according to your means, say six Paisa per rupee.
- 7. SVADHYAYA:** Study systematically the Gita, the Ramayana, the Bhagavata, Sri Vishnu-Sahasranama, Lalita-Sahasranama, Aditya Hridaya, the Upanishads or the Yoga Vasishtha, the Bible, the Zend Avesta, the Koran, the Tripitakas, the Granth Sahib, etc., from half an hour to one hour daily and have Suddha Vichara.
- 8. BRAHMACHARYA:** Preserve the vital force (Veerya) very, very carefully. Veerya is God in motion or manifestation—Vibhuti. Veerya is all power. Veerya is all money. Veerya is the essence of life, thought and intelligence.
- 9. PRAYER SLOKAS:** Get by heart some prayer Slokas, Stotras and repeat them as soon as you sit in the Asana before starting Japa or meditation. This will elevate the mind quickly.
- 10. SATSANGA:** Have Satsanga. Give up bad company, smoking, meat and alcoholic liquors entirely. Do not develop any evil habits.
- 11. FAST ON EKADASI:** Fast on Ekadasi or live on milk and fruits only.
- 12. JAPA MALA:** Have a Japa Mala (rosary) round your neck or in your pocket or underneath your pillow at night.
- 13. MOUNA:** Observe Mouna (vow of silence) for a couple of hours daily.
- 14. SPEAK THE TRUTH:** Speak the truth at all cost. Speak a little. Speak sweetly.
- 15. PLAIN LIVING:** Reduce your wants. If you have four shirts, reduce the number to three or two. Lead a happy, contented life. Avoid unnecessary worry. Have plain living and high thinking.
- 16. NEVER HURT ANYBODY:** Never hurt anybody (Ahimsa Paramo Dharmah). Control anger by love, Kshama (forgiveness) and Daya (compassion).
- 17. DO NOT DEPEND UPON SERVANTS:** Do not depend upon servants. Self-reliance is the highest of all virtues.
- 18. SELF-ANALYSIS:** Think of the mistakes you have committed during the course of the day, just before retiring to bed (self-analysis). Keep daily diary and self-correction register. Do not brood over past mistakes.
- 19. FULFIL DUTIES:** Remember that death is awaiting you at every moment. Never fail to fulfil your duties. Have pure conduct (Sadachara).
- 20. SURRENDER TO GOD:** Think of God as soon as you wake up and just before you go to sleep. Surrender yourself completely to God (Sharanagati).

Om Santih Santih Santih!

This is the essence of all spiritual Sadhanas. This will lead you to Moksha. All these Niyamas or spiritual canons must be rigidly observed. You must not give leniency to the mind.

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FICTITIOUS DISTINCTIONS

Distinctions of caste, creed, colour have absolutely no place in matters of faith. A true devotee recognises the equality of all men. When the inner eye of wisdom is opened, when the aspirant beholds oneness everywhere, when he feels the presence of the Lord in every atom of the universe, where are the distinctions of caste, creed, colour? It is the fleshy, dirty eye of a worldly-minded man, that perceives these illusory distinctions.

See life as a whole. The Lord breathes in all life. The world is one home. All are members of one human family. Cultivate cosmic love. Include all. Recognise the worth of others. Destroy all barriers that separate man from man.

Swami Sivananda

To