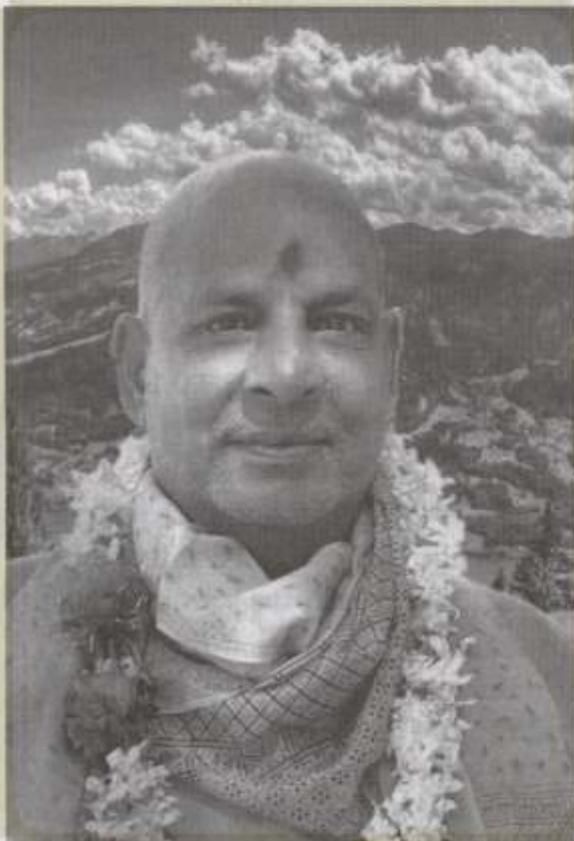


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The DIVINE LIFE



Serve
the sick. Console
the distressed. Live in
God. Preach the gospel of
Love. Lead a life of self-
sacrifice and service. Be pious
and pure. This will lead you to
the attainment of God-
consciousness.

Sri Sri Sivananda

MARCH 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

POSITIVE OVERCOMES NEGATIVE

You will have to transmute the impure Vasanas into pure ones through constant efforts. You will have to change the current of impure Vasanas and allow them to run in the channel or river of pure Vasanas.

There is no harm if you have abundance of pure Vasanas. Pure Vasana is also a fetter. Just as you remove a thorn with the help of another thorn and throw both of them when the thorn is removed; so also, you will have to destroy the impure Vasanas through the help of pure Vasanas and then abandon these pure ones also. The desire for liberation or Moksha Vasana also must die eventually. Then only will you become That.

Swami Sivananda



THE DIVINE LIFE

Vol. LXXIX

MARCH 2021

No. 08

PRASNOPANISHAD

CHATURTHA PRASNA (QUESTION IV)

SAURYAYANI AND PIPPALADA

विज्ञानात्मा सहदेवैश्च सर्वैः प्राणा भूतानि संप्रतिष्ठन्ति यत्र ।
तदक्षरं वेदयते यस्तु सोम्य स सर्वज्ञः सर्वमेवाविवेशेति ॥११॥

11. O beloved one, he who knows the imperishable Atman in whom rests the knowing Self with all the Devas, the Pranas and five elements, becomes omniscient, and indeed enters into all.

महागुरुवर्णमातृकास्तोत्रम्

MAHAGURU-VARNA-MATRIKASTOTRAM

Jnana Bhaskara Mahamahopadhyaya Sri S. Gopala Sastri

मानातीतमतिप्रभावमहितं मान्यैस्सदा मानितम्

माध्वीसन्निभवाग्विलासमुदितप्राज्ञावलिं मित्रभम् ।

मूलं धर्मतरोर्मृडाऽऽहितहृदं मेधाविनं सद्गुरुं

मोक्षाध्वैकनिदर्शकं भज सुधीमौलिं ध्रुवश्रेयसे ॥२३॥

23. To be blessed with your everlasting welfare, devoutly worship Sri Gurudev, who is endowed with immeasurable intellect, is always revered by the venerable persons, who delights the scholars by his honeyed eloquence, who is resplendent as the sun, who is the root of the tree of righteousness, whose mind is ever fixed on Lord Siva, who lovingly guides the aspirants on the path of salvation and who is the greatest among the wise ones.

यज्ञेशाश्रितमानसं यमितवागक्षावलिं याचक-

स्तोमस्वस्तरुमादरामृतनिधिं युक्तान्तरं ब्रह्मणि ।

योगारूढमतिं यशस्सितदिशं ध्यायन्ति ये सद्गुरुम्

तेषां मानसपद्ममात्तसुषमं सद्यः प्रसन्नं भवेत् ॥२४॥

24. Who is devoted to Lord Vishnu, who has perfect control over his words and senses, who is a Kalpataru to the seekers, is a treasure-trove of sweetness and reverence, whose mind is ever absorbed in Parabrahma, whose intellect is rooted in Yoga, and whose glorious fame is worldwide; those fortunate ones who meditate on such a Sadguru, will soon be blessed with divine illumination.

(To be continued)

SIVARATRI MESSAGE

Sri Swami Sivananda

The Sivaratri festival falls on the 14th of the dark half of Phalguna, viz., about the end of February or beginning of March. This year Mahasivaratri falls on 4th March. The name Sivaratri signifies the 'night of Siva' and the ceremony is chiefly performed at night.

The human being has his life on this earth for the sake of evolving into the Divinity that he is essentially. This truth is brought out in the observance of the Vratas and Niyamas connected with the Sovereign of this universe, the Creator, the Almighty. These vows and Pujas are meant to open the eyes of the sleepy man, now and then, and awaken him to his supreme purpose in life. In the night of ignorance, the man of the world does not see the daylight of the Atman. The gross man is turned towards God through repeated exhortations and persuasions to bring to his mind, at least occasionally, the knowledge of the fact that God is the only Reality and that the attainment of Him alone is the meaning of existence. This is done through advising man to observe disciplinary vows and perform worship.

Sivaratri is the night during which an aspirant tries to free himself from the normal day-to-day activities and practise perfect self-restraint and attune himself to the Lord. In other words, the aspirant completely resigns his personality to the Supreme Siva and discards his lower nature. He observes 'Upavasa' meaning 'fast' in the obvious sense, and 'living near the Lord' in the esoteric sense. This is coupled with keeping vigil during the night. Hence it is a physical as well as a mental fast. It is denying food to the body as well as to the mind.

This divine consciousness is not easily generated in a person through ordinary means. Even as the body and the internal organs are negatively made to forego their natural objective food, they should be positively engaged in the service of the Lord. Otherwise, they will not cease from their habit of becoming barriers to one's ascent to the higher consciousness. With this end in view, the devotee or the aspirant performs the worship of Siva physically, verbally and also mentally, so that no aspect of the

lower nature may find a chance to manifest in normal activity what is obstructive and even directly injurious to the spiritual aspiration of man.

Rudra-Abhisheka with Namaka and Chamaka, Sahasranama-Archana or Laksha-Archana, Kirtan of the hallowed Name of the Lord, reading of the Puranas extolling His glories, observance of fast, vigil, doing Japa of His Mantra, meditation on His Swarupa—all these form the various methods through which the devotee offers his worship, with Shraddha and Bhava, to Lord Siva in His Saguna aspect in the form of the Idol, Sivalingam.

I wish to convey to you all on this occasion the Glory of Idol Worship. Idols are not the idle fancies of sculptors but shining channels through which the heart of the devotee is attracted to and flows towards God. It is the appalling ignorance of the modern man that clouds his vision and prevents him from seeing divinity in lovely and enchanting idols of His form. The very scientific advancement of the century ought to convince you of the Glory of the Idol Worship.

A rock or a piece of stone that lies inert and lifeless is not really so, it has a life and existence peculiar to itself. There is an inner essence

underlying all objects we see in this world. If from any object, we take away 'Nama and Rupa' (the name and form), that which remains is the inner essence or reality. It is 'Nama' and 'Rupa' of the objects that make the difference. If we remove these two differences of name and form, the whole visible universe ought to be one. This inner essence, one infinite Existence (or, in the language of non-dualism, the Brahman) is appearing as manifold by the interposition of name and form. All things that are, have, in fact, this element of Existence which is not lifeless or inert, because the whole universe is throbbing with life. This inner life and consciousness, this underlying existence pervading all through the creation, is called God. Under some aspects or certain conditions it appears as man, under others as a plant, under others as an animal, under others as a stone and under others as a planet, and so forth. That existence, that ultimate unity is God. And this common unity manifests itself in an infinite variety of conditions and forms, which we call the universe. All the unending differences which we find are differences only of conditions, differences of name, form and causality. In reality, and in essence, all is one.

The divinity of the All-pervading God is vibrant in every atom of creation in this universe. There is not a speck of space where He is not pervading. How can we then say that He is not in the idols?

Some would glibly say, "Oh, God is all-pervading and formless being. How can He be confined to this idol?" These people do not seem to be conscious of His Omnipresence. It is their ego and ignorance which prevent them from seeing God and God alone in everything, and from bowing to the idols of God. Just as you can catch the sound waves of the people, talking or singing all over the world, through the Radio receiving set, it is possible to commune with the All-pervading Lord through the medium of an idol. Just as a picture of a famous warrior evokes heroism in your heart, a look at the picture or a stone image of God will surely elevate your mind to divine heights.

Regular worship, Puja and other modes of demonstration of our inner feeling of the recognition of divinity in the idol unveils the divinity latent in it. The idol speaks. It will answer your questions and solve your problems. The God in you has the power to awaken the latent divinity in the idol. It is like a powerful lens that focuses the sun's

rays on to a bundle of cotton which is set fire to; the lens is not fire, the cotton is not fire either, nor can the sun's rays by themselves burn the cotton. When the three are brought together in a particular manner, fire is generated and the cotton is set on fire. Similar is the case with the idol, the devotee and the all-pervading divinity. Puja and worship make the idol shine with divine resplendence. God is then enshrined in the idol. The place where the idol is installed is transformed into a temple, nay a Kailasa or Vaikuntha in reality. Those who live in such a place are freed from miseries of diseases, from failures and from Samsara itself. The awakened divinity in the idol acts as a guardian-angel blessing all and conferring the highest good on all the devotees who bow to it and worship it.

May the Almighty re-incarnate Himself in the hearts of all devotees and believers all over the world and infuse in them strength and courage to stick tenaciously to the tenets of their religion, and to work for the triumph of the divine over the undivine forces. May the Lord Siva bless all. May there be Peace, Plenty and Prosperity all over the world. May He bestow knowledge and wisdom upon all men and women in the world.

Sivanandanagar, 22nd
February, 1962

WORSHIPFUL SRI SWAMI CHIDANANDAJI MAHARAJ'S LETTER TO THE DEVOTEES

Beloved Sadhakaras on the path of Yoga, May God shower Grace upon you and grant you health, long life, prosperity, success and happiness. I pray to beloved and worshipful Guru Maharaj, Sri Swami Sivanandaji, to bless you and grant you the supreme gift of Divine Life that can confer peace, joy and spiritual illumination upon everyone who faithfully follows it.

May this New Year bring to you a life full of fresh aspiration and enthusiasm, greater inner strength, spiritual courage and energy, new hope and dedication to worthy ideals in spite of all the ominous predictions and utterances that are being made regarding possible upheavals and calamities which are said to be expected because of certain inauspicious features in the present year. However, no matter what the truth of these pronouncements and expectations may be, they only present one side, one aspect of this world's human situation.

There is another side to it, a brighter aspect to which you cannot

close your eyes: the all-auspicious Universal Presence of the Divine Being here and now! The reality of God is the undeniable fact that prevails everywhere as the centre of every human situation. If you resolutely abide in this Truth, you shall overcome all unfavourable events and occurrences. I strongly believe and have the firm conviction that if you trust God and root yourself in His Divine Name, then by His protecting Grace, you will be able to come through all ordeals, unscathed and unharmed. There is no power that can confront or oppose the Divine Power of God's Grace! Therefore, take up the earnest practice of God's Divine Name. Repeat the Divine Name. Chant and sing the Divine Name. Constantly remember the Divine Name! Establish the Divine Name in your heart, in your mind and upon your tongue. No negative force can stand before it or work against it. The Divine Power of God and His Name will be to you a strong armour that will secure you from all danger.

The blessed Lord Gauranga Mahaprabhu or Sri Krishna Chaitanya is very much in my thoughts at this moment of my writing this. This great saint of supreme devotion and divine love for Bhagawan Sri Krishna brought about a tremendous revival of the Bhakti cult throughout Bengal as well as all over India. Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu propounded the supremacy of the chanting of the all-powerful Divine Name above all other forms of spiritual practices. He proclaimed the greatness and the glory of the Divine Name and propagated the practice of Nama-Sankirtan through the inspiration of his own personal example. He also proclaimed the great sanctity and glory of the shrine of Lord Jagannath at Puri in Orissa.

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is the source of inspiration of our present-day Krishna-Consciousness movement, initiated in America by His Holiness Divine Grace Prabhupada Bhakti Vedanta Goswami. This movement is bringing about a world-wide revival of a Bhakti-Yoga Sadhana as well as the practice of Nama-Sankirtan.

The sacred birthday anniversary of worshipful Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu occurs upon this fullmoon day. May we all make it a day of devotion, adoration and the chanting of the supremely sanctifying Name of the Lord. Thus may we make ourselves recipients of the grace and blessings of this great prince among Bhaktas who is regarded by some as the very incarnation of Sri Radhaji, the unequalled devotee of Lord Krishna of Brindavan. Cling to the all-powerful Divine Name. May it ever protect you and save you from all danger, calamity and harm. Make the Divine Name your unassailable fortress in these troubled times.

Peace be unto you. May faith, love and devotion fill your heart and mind and be your greatest treasures during your earth life. Glory be to the Divine Name. All glory be to God, the Supreme Goal of life. Om Tat Sat!

With regards, Prem & Om,

Swami Chidananda
ॐ

1st March, 1982.

SRI GAURANGA MAHAPRABHU JAYANTI: LOVE OF GOD

Sri Swami Krishnananda

Today is specially known as Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu Jayanti, the advent of a great devotee of God who lived in the bliss and the love of God, and propagated the love of God for the sake of the joy and the bliss of God. The day of love of God may be said to be Gauranga Mahaprabhu Jayanti.

We know what love is, but our concept of love is contaminated by a trade relation that we establish between the lover and the beloved. Have you ever thought of why anything is loved at all? The most initial, abrupt answer to this question would be that the object is attractive, and that which attracts evokes the sentiment of love for that particular object. But, why does that object attract?

One of the answers may be that it is beautiful, but what do we mean by 'beauty'? Here is something which everyone seems to know but no one can understand, because human understanding, which is intellectuality, operates on the basis of calculation, a kind of mathematical judgment of things, and measures the geometrical pros and cons of the relationship of what appears to be beautiful. But beauty is a subject of art. It is not a mathematical equation.

There are two things in the world which attract us immensely—the beautiful and the sublime. Nothing else can attract us. The full moon is beautiful; a lotus or rose blossom is beautiful. Our mind goes to it, and we look at it again and again. Even the face of a newborn baby is beautiful. Whether it is the baby of a king or of a beggar, it makes no difference; it is attractive. On seeing a little child, we cannot know whether it is a king's child or a beggar's child. One becomes a king and another a beggar later on, due to social and other types of circumstances.

Apart from that which is called beautiful, there is another thing called sublime, which attracts by grandeur, majesty, power, force, magnificence—like the elephant. In the same way as we would not like to turn our eyes away from a beautiful full moon in the night sky, we would also like to go on looking at an elephant if we are actually aware of what happens to us when we see it.

There is a total difference between the manner in which a beautiful thing attracts and a sublime thing attracts. The elephant and the ocean attract us due to their terrible vastness, majesty and power. Before

the majesty and the power of the elephant and the vast ocean, we look very small. Our importance is brought down to a very low level and the ego, which is usually prominent in a human being, diminishes almost to the point of abolition. We admire and enjoy a thing only when the ego ceases to operate. This is how the sublime attracts. But beauty is a different thing. We can admire an elephant, but we cannot love it. We can be overjoyed by the majesty of the vast, turbulent ocean, but we cannot embrace it, hug it or love it.

God is an object of love for a devotee; God is not merely an object of admiration. In the Bhakti Shastra, two types of devotion are described. One is known as *aishwarya pradhana bhakti*, and the other is known as *madhurya pradhana bhakti*. Acharyas such as Madhwa and Ramanuja glorify God for His magnificence, His majesty, His omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence. But, there are other acharyas such as Vallabha, and to some extent Nimbarka also—and what to speak of Gauranga Mahaprabhu—who admire God for being the repository of all affection and beauty.

Usually, religions describe God as a Father in heaven, keeping Him far, at a distance from the dust of the Earth—at a frightening distance, almost. Unapproachable greatness is

attributed to God Almighty; but we cannot love such a God. We cannot love, from our heart, a bulldozer or a crane which has great strength, though we know its utility. Our sense of admiration may go to it, but our heart will not go to it.

What is this peculiar thing which makes one love God? It is that very indescribable element in the factor of love which defies human understanding. When love attracts, nothing else can be said about it, because love is where there is joy and happiness. The soul of the human being is basically utter perfection and freedom. Where there is freedom and perfection, an internal joy automatically manifests itself. Whoever has lived a life of freedom in this world, and to some extent a perfect life, would be able to know what satisfaction is.

When all said and done, nothing can move us unless it satisfies us, and only that can satisfy us which can bestow upon us all the things we need. What is it that we need? Whoever has lived the life of a parent, a devotee, a lover or a beloved, or a servant of a great master will be able to appreciate what propels attraction. The structure, the pattern, the shape of the object is not what attracts. The meaning that is hidden behind its structure, the significance that is behind it, is what attracts.

A high-value currency note attracts not because of the material out of which it is made, but because of the meaning that it has within itself. It embodies power. In a similar manner, love is the movement of the soul in the direction of that which can fill it with joy. There are so many things in the world which also can satisfy us and fill us with some kind of joy, but their effect is temporary.

Every object that is dear and near is also, at the same time, fraught with fear. That thing which we love most as a very valuable object can also keep us in perpetual anxiety due to the possibility of bereavement at the loss of that object—which can take place at any time due to the very nature of life itself.

But God's joy, the *ananda* that the Absolute Being is, is not of that nature. What is God made of? What is the substance? Everything is made of something; what is God made of? Inscrutable is this great question before us. God is made up of that capacity to inundate us and drown us in the uttermost conceivable joy, almost to self-annihilation.

Even in ordinary mortal affection—in intense loves that are directed to perishable objects—there is a temporary abolition of self-consciousness. The more we love a thing, the less we feel our existence at that moment, so that when we are in utter possession of the most beloved of

things, we do not exist at that moment. There is an abolition of self-consciousness. And, at that time, what is our experience? There is no one to experience it because, at that time, we have ceased to operate as a personality. To the extent that our personality is retained at the moment of the enjoyment of the object of love, to that extent our joy is diminished. Only the object of love should be there, and we should not be there; only then it is perfect enjoyment. Even in simple illustrations such as a mother's love for her child, that love makes the mother feel her own non-importance and the utter importance of the child. She pours herself entirely upon the child. When we pour ourselves on the object of love, we are no more there. It is very clear that because we have already poured ourselves upon that object, we cannot be existing separately from that.

As molten metal that is cast into a crucible takes the shape of that crucible, the one who loves is cast into the mould of the object of love, experiences only that pattern of the mould, and no longer exists at that time. That condition is called ecstasy. Ecstasy is the condition of the loss of self-consciousness on account of the feeling that something more than oneself has been obtained. In all forms of love and affection, the object of love is considered to be superior to oneself; otherwise, there cannot be attraction.

If we are also equally important, the object of love will be only fifty percent attractive. Utter attraction, a hundred percent engagement in the object of affection, is possible only when we are one hundred percent annihilated, and we are no more there. If we are no more there, who experiences the joy? The soul, which is not us, but is more than us, rises to action at that time. It is the soul that operates when we behold an object of art; it is reason that operates when we see a work of mathematical perfection. The soul's perfection, or God's perfection, is not the perfection of an equation; it is an inundation of indescribability. God is sometimes called the Cupid of Cupid—*sākṣān manmatha-manmathaḥ* (S.B. 10.32.2). *Manmatha* is one who churns the mind of a person, and he himself gets churned by another thing, which excels his beauty.

The most beautiful objects of affection are said to be in the kingdom of Indra. One day Indra projected the retinue of his beauties before the great sages Narayana and Nara, near Badrinath. “Such are those presentations that by the very touch of them one becomes crazy and mad,” says the Valmiki Ramayana. Such things Indra projected in a large mass of gaiety and attraction. Narayana and Nara were in intense *tapas* and meditation. By a stroke of his thigh, Narayana produced a beauty which

made all of Indra's retinues of beauties look like crows, like darkened nothings; they hung their heads in shame and withdrew themselves. Narayana told Indra, “Take this if you want.” Indra was shuddering with fear. He never imagined that there could be such a thing which the human mind cannot conceive. That is the power that only God can manifest.

Unfortunately for us human beings, men and women, we cannot imagine that God is a beautiful presentation before us. We mostly think God is like a judge, like a disciplinarian, a hard taskmaster, a parent who admonishes and perhaps even threatens dire consequences if anyone goes against their laws. Rarely can we imagine that God is beauty. The human intellect is so conditioned by the limitations of space, time and objectivity that the intellect cannot appreciate beauty. It cannot see it at all. It sees only machines, calculations and geometrical arrangements, not knowing that perfection is not mathematical, algebraical, arithmetical, or anything of the kind.

In order to appreciate the possibility of God Almighty being the object of love, one has to completely tear to shreds one's egotistic encasement. The name of God cannot be taken by an egoistic individual. This is what Gauranga Mahaprabhu said in that famous, oft-quoted verse *trṇād api*

sunīcena tarorapī sahiṣṇunā, amāninā māna-dena kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ (CC Adi 17.31): “One who is more patient than a tree, humbler than a blade of grass, one who gives respect to all but expects respect from nobody, such a person is fit to take the name of God.”

That which stands between the devotee and God has to be removed. Only then can that ocean of love come and bathe the devotee. The ocean can enter the river, provided there is no dam constructed between the ocean and the river that is seeking to enter into the ocean. *Ahamkara*, egoism, self-consciousness, pride, self-importance—this is what divides man from God because before God, there cannot be two selves. God is All-self and, therefore, your self cannot stand before It. If you assert yourself, you isolate yourself from that All-self, and that ocean of joy cannot enter you. You have created a barrier between yourself and that Being.

Our loves, generally, go for those things which will satisfy our sense organs. We do not know any other joy. Soft touches, tasty dishes, that which has a very fragrant odour, that which is colourful, symmetrical, methodically arranged to the eyes and melodious to the ears—these are the things that attract the mind, but these are isolated objects, one disconnected from the other. The whole of the beauty cannot be enjoyed by any sense organ because

if we see the beauty with our eyes, we cannot enjoy the melody of it, or the taste of it which is like honey, or the magical touch of it.

There is a maddening odour of fragrance, an ecstasy of touch, an indescribable taste, more than honey, for that particular sense, and a superabundance of colourful beauty. All these blend together in the perfection of God. That is why it is said that God can be known only in intuition, and not through sensory perception. Every sense organ can see one particular object. All things cannot be seen by any particular sense, but intuition grasps the totality of the object at one stroke. There is no such thing as a total object before the sense organs. Those who only see with the eyes, hear through the ears, etc., cannot understand what a total object is. We are confronting partial objects every day. Something is given, and something else cannot be given by that object. Gold can satisfy us in one way but we cannot eat gold, and what we can eat cannot equal gold in its value, etc.; such are the limitations of the objects of sensory attraction. But, there is something which can melt together all the requirements of the sense organs and pull the soul out of the body, in which condition alone we start feeling a rapture of ecstasy.

I do not know how many of us have had the occasion to be in a state of spiritual rapture. We might have had

the experience of intense concentration, a kind of absorption in meditation, but I do not know how many have felt rapture, a shudder, a trembling, a feeling of rupture of the personality, as if everything in us has gone and something else has come. These are some of the hidden significances behind the teachings, and even of the very life of the great *mahabhakta* Gauranga Mahaprabhu. We only hear what he did; we cannot know what he felt. We can see sugar, but we cannot know the sweetness of it unless we put it into our own mouth.

Nobody can love God unless one believes that God is everything. If there is a suspicious attitude towards God, a possibility of getting something and also a possibility of not getting something else, then God will recede from us like the horizon. God may appear to be near us, but He will move further and further away on account of doubts persisting in our mind that He is not all things.

The concept of All, of everything, is super-intellectual and super-rational in its comprehension. For the intellect, there is no such thing as All. The all-ness that the intellect can conceive is only a multitude of finite objects. A hundred million things can be brought together and piled into a heap, and they may look like an all; but millions of finite objects heaped together do not make the All, because

many finites do not make an infinite. All the resources of the world put together do not give us infinite satisfaction.

Who can love God? Only one who can feel the possibility of such a perfection as has been feebly described in the Upanishad—the Brahmananda, Brahman bliss, Absolute bliss—a million times, a million times, a million times more than all the greatest joys conceivable in this world. Can you contain the feeling of such a kind of bliss? If that imagination, at least, can be contained in your mind, you may be transformed into a super-personality in one moment, and not remain as an ordinary human being.

Great acharyas have proclaimed that we cannot love God unless we know what God is. These few words that I have spoken are only an attempt to describe what God could be, though words cannot describe what He is. Even the thought of it will raise us to a kind of love and spontaneous affection which will immediately nullify all the joys of the world as insipid, tasteless. *Brahmaloka tṛṇīkāro vairāgyasyā vadhir mataḥ* (Panch. 6.285): If the bliss of Brahmaloka can look like a straw which has no essence, you have attained supreme *vairagya*. But who can imagine the bliss of Brahmaloka, where everything is everywhere? Such kind of love was taught by Gauranga Mahaprabhu. Such was the love which

the Gopis felt in Brindavan, and such was the love of many of the saints and sages, the Alvars, Nayanars, and various other devotees whose biographies we read in the *Bhakta Charita*, *Bhakta Mala*, and such textbooks.

Love rules the world. It is not the intellect that rules the world, because love alone can appreciate; and wherever there is appreciation, there is success of every kind. This is the rule of the beauty of God, the joy of God, which we cannot entertain in our minds if we persist in thinking that God is only a judge sitting in a court in high heaven, ready to punish wrongdoers. God does not punish anybody; our egoism punishes us. The adamant, flint-like *ahamkara* in us, the ego, deals a blow to us and it looks like a punishment coming from God.

Thus is before us a brief message of the devotee of devotees. *Ānandāddhyeva khalvimāni bhūtāni jāyante* (T.U. 3.6.1): “This world is created by the bliss of God, not by the terror of God.” *Ānandena jātāni jīvanti*: “The world is sustained by the bliss that is behind it.” *Ānandaṁ prayantya bhisaṁviśanti*: “Finally, the whole world will enter into the bliss of God.” *Kohyevānyāt kaḥ prāṇyāt, yad eṣa ākāśa ānando na syāt* (T.U. 2.7.1): “Even space itself is bliss.” Suppose there is no space; see how we would feel. We would become

suffocated and all the joy of life will vanish in one second. Breathing is a joy. Spatial expanse is a joy, because the bliss of God is hiddenly manifest in all these manifestations, even in our own selves.

The bliss that is within us is calling the bliss that is outside us. *Ātmanastukāmāya sarvam priyam bhavati* (B.U. 2.4.5): “For the sake of the bliss of the Self, every other object in the world looks attractive and loveable.” This love that is hidden in our own self is not in one person only. It is present in every person. Even in an ant that crawls, even in a creature that moves, that self-love manifests itself. It wriggles to maintain itself. That total self-love of all creation is a little modicum of the manifestation of the infinite love of God. Such is what we are aspiring for.

The life of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu and other great devotees, such as the Gopis of Brindavan, are illustrations before us. The love of Saint Surdas, Kabirdas, Tulsidas—read their lives. They are inspirations before us.

Today is one of the occasions, Gauranga Mahaprabhu Jayanti, when we can recall to our souls, not merely to our minds, the joy that is everywhere. It is well said that creation is the overflowing of the superabundance of the bliss of God. May we try to live in that bliss and be blessed!

SIVANANDA—THE DIVINITY PERSONIFIED

Sri Swami Venkatesananda

It is indeed difficult to appreciate a divine personality during the period of His presence amongst us. Very few recognised Lord Krishna as a divine being when He was 'alive'. This vision to recognise the Avatara is itself His Gift to those few whom He chooses for fulfilling His purpose.

Who is an Avatara-Purusha?

'Avatara' itself means DESCENT – a descent from the Supreme Seat of Godhead. It is as though God gives up His Param Dham in answer to the prayer of the devout, and descends into the realm of the humans in human garb, to live as a Man amongst men and thus to lead men along the Divine Path to the Goal of human life, God-realisation. Avatara is willing and voluntary subjection of God to the laws that govern human beings, over which ordinarily He has transcendental control.

The Avatara-Purusha may not be conscious that He is the Supreme Being. Lord Krishna was fully conscious of His Divinity. Yet this Purnavatar too, following the laws of physical being, took food, drank to quench thirst, rested, slept, etc. Lord Rama seemed to be not conscious at all. Whether it is conscious pretence or an unconscious, momentary identification with the role assumed, it matters very

little. The momentum given to the Avatara by Himself is supremely divine. The 'content' of the Avatara is exceptionally divine. And the Avatara achieves the purpose surely and certainly, whether or not the consciousness of Godhead persists. The charm of the Lord's Lila is none the less for the seemingly momentary unconsciousness of His Identity.

Consciously or unconsciously, the Avatara becomes for the time being almost entirely human (e.g. Sri Rama). But as the Divine Birth is with a purpose, He is not lost in the human garb. There seems to be a dual current in Him – one is the divine which is much more manifest in the Avatara-Purusha than in others, and the other, the human. Inasmuch as there is a very great proportion of the Divine in the Avatara, it rules the human aspect. The human qualities too have the colouring of the Divine. Therefore, we find ethical perfection and moral excellence, as well as an abundance of Daivi Sampatti in Him.

If an Avatara-Purusha is a man amongst men, how shall we recognise Him?

When you look for an Avatara, do not search for supernatural, superhuman features (e.g. Narasimha Avatara) or for miracle-making. If only miracle-making and supernatural

Taken from 'Life of Swami Venkatesananda'

BIRTH CENTENARY YEAR OF SRI SWAMI VENKATESANANDA

features were to be the marks of an Avatara, then we ought to regard the ten-headed and twenty-handed Ravana with powers over cosmic beings like the sun and the moon, Kubera and even Lord Siva, as Avatara—in preference to Lord Rama. On the contrary, we consider that Ravana was a demon.

If you reflect for a moment on the Nine Avataras, you will see that the days of non-human Avataras are past. The Fish, the Man-Lion, the Dwarf yielded place to Rama, the pious and virtuous man and Krishna, the cowherd. They were both as human as they were divine. It is therefore essential that we are not deceived by the human qualities of an Avatara. Lord Krishna was as fond of butter as any child today. Sri Rama was as much grieved at the loss of His wife as any loving husband would be today. In fact, even here the Avatara-Purusha has His own Divine Purpose. By such manifestations of human weaknesses, He gives His devotees opportunities galore to adore Him in a variety of ways. How many Bhaktas have entered into Bhavasamadhi singing the glory of the childhood pranks of Lord Sri Krishna! To what heights of poetic ecstasy Valmiki has risen in describing the pangs of separation from Sita that Sri Rama suffered! No action of an Avatara-Purusha is therefore ultimately without significance.

An Avatara is to be recognised by his deeds. Has he fulfilled the Lord's Promise – *Dharmasamsthapana* (re-establishment of eternal righteousness)? The more effectively this has been done, the greater are the chances that he is an Avatara.

A man may be ethically perfect, a very good man – but he is only a saintly person, not an Avatara, unless he influences the world and causes righteousness to be established in the world. It happened in the case of Lord Rama that His mere conduct came to be regarded as a salutary influence which, without His having to preach, profoundly influenced humanity. However, but for the fact that He killed Ravana, the greatest perpetrator of Adharma, and established the Rama Rajya, the perfect government based on righteousness, He would not have been considered an Avatara. *Dharmasamsthapana* had to be done; that has ever been the criterion of an Avatara.

Take the case of Harischandra. If personal moral excellence alone were to be the criterion for Avatahood, he ought to be an Avatara. But not so; though he placed himself as an eternal example of a perfectly truthful man, he had not done any *Dharmasamsthapana* as Lord Krishna and Sri Rama had done.

The case is different with Lord Sri Krishna. Any ignorant man can pick

holes in His conduct. But besides destroying all the Asuras, He has given to humanity the priceless spiritual treasure, the Gita, which shall remain as a beacon light of Dharma for all time to come. Therefore, He is considered an Avatara, not because He held up the Govardhan mountain with His little finger, not even because He had four hands and weapons (conch, discus, etc.) – another Rakshasa had exactly the same form and he impersonated Krishna Himself! Dharmasamsthapana was the criterion.

Without Dharmasamsthapana, mere moral excellence or even Self-realisation would make one only a saint. There is this essential difference between an Avatara-Purusha and a saint. An Avatara-Purusha is God in human form. A saint of God-realisation is a Man with God-consciousness. In the former case, it is one of Descent. In the latter case, it is one of Ascent. The former is God descending upon us as a readymade Siddha-Purusha. The latter is a Sadhaka who has achieved Siddhi through great effort (Tapasya and Sadhana). An Avatara-Purusha too may indulge in Sadhana and seem to strive for Siddhi, but it is only because:

*Yadyad aacharati sreshthah
tatta devetaro jana h
Sa yat pramanam kurute
lokastadanuvartate (Gita Chapter 3
Verse 21)*

The people are guided by the great man's conduct; the principles enunciated by him are the path which man kind treads .

The Avatara-Purusha, like Lord Krishna, feels 'mamam vartmanuvartante' [the people will follow My Path], ignorant of the fact that He is an Avatara; they would try to imitate His actions and come to grief, as they would expect Siddhi to drop into their lap without effort. In order to prevent this general degeneration, the Avatara-Purusha exemplifies in Himself the conduct that He has come to preach. He too indulges in Tapas and Sadhana. But in the case of a saint, years of toil are a necessity. It is the ease with which the Avatara-Purusha ascends to the top rung of Perfection that makes Perfection itself seem natural to Him, which He need no more struggle to maintain, as in the case of a saint who has to be careful till Videha-Kaivalya [liberation after death] is attained. The Path and the Culmination are not new to the Avatara-Purusha and therefore, He walks with firm (though rapid and seemingly light) steps. He is bold and definite about the Path and the Goal, when He speaks of them to others. The saint speaks on the authority of scriptures. The Avatara-Purusha is Himself the authority, though He might extol existing scriptures to justify His human garb. A saint strives

to root himself in Dharma. An Avatara-Purusha Whose very breath is Dharma is here to establish that Dharma in the world.

Therefore, an Avatara is to be recognised by this one acid test – has he striven for *Dharmasamsthapana*, has he worked for the solidarity of the world, has he done anything to lead humanity along the path of righteousness? If so, to what measure? The greater the intensity of his *Dharmasamsthapana*, the more surely he is an Avatara and the greater manifestation of God he is. As Lord Krishna not only established Dharma in His own time by the destruction of the Asuras, but gave the Gita for all time to come, He is considered a Purna Avatara [complete Avatara].

In the light of the foregoing, there can be very little doubt that Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj is an Avatara of the Lord. He embraced Sannyas after a fairly long period of strenuous (in his 'untiring selfless') service to the suffering humanity in Malaya; he appeared to be a novitiate in the Nivritti Marga at the fairly advanced age of thirty-eight. But with an ardour that was the envy of fellow Sadhakas who were more youthful and with a spiritual pace that would prove to be too rapid even for more energetic people who renounce the world earlier in life; in the full-bloom of youth before spending any energy in any worldly

pursuit (however good and noble), he ascended the summit of Sadhana. His seniors in the Path stood aghast watching this new recruit to the Order march swiftly past with meteoric speed, reach the summit and smile at them with compassion and humility; they bowed to him and said: "He is not a man."

Siva had embraced Sannyasa in 1924; in 1936 he was widely known as a great Yogi, a Siddha-Purusha, a Jagat-Guru. He had already come to be regarded as a Spiritual Guide. He founded the Divine Life Society in 1936 in order to serve humanity more systematically (his service has been none other than *Dharmasamsthapana*). The rapidity with which the Divine Life Mission has grown during the past just over a decade is common knowledge. People who visit the Ashram after a few years are amazed: "You have created a heaven in what was a forest!" – "Swamiji entered Rishikesh in 1924 with only a Kowpeen ; by his mere Satsankalpa, he has created around himself a great institution within so short a time!" - "Surely only Iswara could do all this!"— these expressions have often surged up from the heart of the most distinguished visitors to the Ashram. Those who are nearer to him, who work under his guidance, are often amazed at the way he conducts the affairs of the worldwide institution of which he is the founder. Its very existence is a miracle to them.

Financial experts think that the institution should have been wound up long ago! Yet see that it is flourishing from glory to greater glory every day!

These are all miraculous features, superhuman features, no doubt. But the crowning glory, however, is that to Siva all these (the institution, the Ashram, the material resources and the manpower) are but instruments with which he carried on His Mission – *Dharmasamsthapana*. "I will sell the buildings. I will lead you all to the Kshetra for Bhiksha and thus eliminate our expenses on food. But dissemination of spiritual knowledge must go on!" – These very words have been heard from his lips very often, especially when financial crises have threatened to wipe the institution out. *Dharmasamsthapana* is Siva's life-breath.

If we pause and think for a while, we shall at once discover the divine wisdom that should have prompted him to write in simple English. It is through this foreign language that we received the alien culture. Every Indian is aware of this. And it is in order to counteract this influence alone that our leaders are struggling to supplant it with Hindi. Siva has short-circuited the problem itself. "If English is the language that turns the heads of our youngsters, offer them the best spiritual thought in that very language!" It is the English

educated men and women of today who are drifting away from the path of righteousness, often in spite of themselves. *Dharmasamsthapana* should naturally direct its endeavours towards them. And that is exactly what Siva is doing. To bring these English educated round to the path of righteousness is his mission. It is these English educated people who mislead the good people and spread Adharma. Siva works amongst them. Thousands and thousands have been transformed. Countless young men and women have been rescued from the clasp of Adharma, and Dharma has been restored to them and so to the land. If we closely analyse Siva's method of work, we shall find that he has placed his books (the spiritual sentinels) at every portal through which Adharma could invade man. *Dharmasamsthapana* has been the one all-consuming end and aim of Siva.

The All-India Tour furnished ample proof that Siva was the very embodiment of *Dharmasamsthapana*. He has made it clear at the very outset of the Tour that he was undertaking it in order to serve humanity, to disseminate spiritual knowledge. At every centre, people witnessed one heart-rending miracle: Siva's body is weak, his throat had become extremely sore, his vocal cords were all but broken, yet Siva smiled brilliantly (defiantly, as the doctors called it), and as he faced every audience, he joyously

served them with the richest food for their soul. Listeners might have got tired, going from one function to another and sitting up listening to Siva's lectures which were throughout thrilling and charming. But Siva was fresh as a morning flower (even when he was running a temperature!) A dynamic spiritual propagandist like Goswami Ganesh Dutt Ji admitted and admired it. The organisers and the people sitting around Siva on the dais were often nervous at the extraordinary strain that Siva was imposing on himself, but Siva himself had no thought for the throat. The Divine Will for Dharmasamsthapana was the Master and his body the servant. It had to obey. And it did obey.

It was again this Will to Dharmasamsthapana that attracted millions to him, millions who had never before met him, nor even heard of him. They were there because the Divine Will had to be done. He made them sing the Lord's Name. He talked to them in their own language – in a language simple enough for them to understand. He made them SING HIS INSTRUCTIONS. This is a very important point to note. Dharmasamsthapana is not done by merely lecturing to those whom you wish to transform! They may forget all that you say, before they leave the hall. Siva had adopted a very novel method.

Often learned Pundits and 'great men' who came to hear Siva expounding Advaita Vedanta were surprised when he started singing:

“Eat a little”, “drink a little”,
“Talk a little”, “sleep a little”

with a seriousness that they could associate only with Veda Mantras. They were perplexed when Siva asked the audience to repeat this peculiar Kirtan after him. Little did they know what a profound influence it had upon the audience. The very novelty of the song nailed it to the heart of the listeners. Children memorised it and began to sing it from that day – because they liked the song (whether they grasped the meaning or not). Visitors to the Ashram after the conclusion of the All-India Tour have uniformly admired Siva for his novel Kirtan. They now admit that these songs had a most profound influence on the people. Similarly with the other songs – 'Song of Eighteen Ities', 'Song of Govinda', 'Song of Instructions', etc. A saint would feel nervous to sing such songs in public, lest his reputation should be affected! An Avatara-Purusha knows that they and they alone would serve His purpose, viz. Dharmasamsthapana.

He whose very life-breath is Dharmasamsthapana, as Siva's is, is none other than an Avatara-Purusha!

THE SPIRITUAL CUPID OF SIVA

Dr. Ishar Singh

“He is clever to hide himself under the name of 'Swami Venkatesananda'. He is a 'must-see' Sannyasin at the gate of Ananda Kutir, before you meet Siva.”

There is Shivpuri. The Ganges is roaring nearby. Siva lives in Ananda Kutir. See the crowd of Jivas going towards it. They look tired and exhausted, due to their worldly woes and long journey. They want to meet their beloved Siva, but their energy is failing. Their faces are gloomy. Men and women, young and old, are all moving on and on. Lo! At last the gate is within sight. They have stopped to take a little rest.

Ha-Ha-Ha! What is this noise? This is not the sound of Siva's drum. See that figure standing at the gate of Ananda Kutir. The sound is like a shower of arrows, but no physical arrows are visible. Oho! Now I understand. He is Siva's cupid and is the cause of this sound. See that handsome, healthy, happy, humorous, hopeful, humble, heroic, honeyful youth! His body is the bow and his smiles and words are the arrows. Lo! He is hurriedly and tactfully showering health, humour,

hope, humbleness, heroism and honey on woeful worldly Jivas. See, they are getting energy, life, joy and hope. His arrows have hit at their hearts. See them running towards him. He is handy to all and greets all with open arms and is bewitching all. He has totally ignored their vices and is bringing out every atom of virtue in them. He even puts virtues into those who have none. Further, he magnifies their virtue to the size of infinity and calls them God. So he has removed all negativity from them and gives them positive charge and optimism. The Jivas look happy and hopeful now. Look, he has captured their hearts and is passing them on to Siva. One by one, he is leading all inside, where they meet Siva!

Again, he has returned to the gate. Another crowd of Jivas has come and he has started his operation again. This job he continues. He is clever to hide himself under the name of 'Swami Venkatesananda'. *He is a 'must-see' Sannyasin at the gate of Ananda Kutir, before you meet Siva.* He is a young rose in the garden of Siva. Glory to the ever-smiling active cupid Swami of Siva for his noble task of uniting Jivas with SIVA!

Taken from 'Life of Swami Venkatesananda'

BIRTH CENTENARY YEAR OF SRI SWAMI VENKATESANANDA

ARTHAMANARTHAM

Swami Gurusharananda

13th MARCH, 1955

While in the Satsang, Swamiji asked Swami Sadanandaji: "Have you written your further articles on Raja-Yoga?" To this, Sadanandaji replied that his articles could not be published (in the Divine Life) due to lack of space. Then Swamiji said, "I have also given the editor fifty articles! I think we will have to increase the size of the magazine." Swami Sadanandaji replied, "Even then the problem will be there. We have so many articles to publish!" Upon this, Swamiji remarked humorously, "People say, 'Arthamanartham—Money is dangerous', but nothing can be done without money!"

Swamiji's spontaneous desire to flood the world with his books is exerting severe pressure on all the departments of the Institution, including the Press. Whatever be the receipts, they are then and there consumed by the different

departments, which are all always short of money to carry on their work to satisfaction. But, in spite of such financial strain, Swamiji does not desist from embarking on further and further missions of Loka-Seva, of which the eye hospital under construction at the Ashram will be a standing monument. The construction of the hospital was taken up by Swamiji without waiting for sufficient money to complete the work. From the Divine Source, money is coming little-by-little, day-by-day, through the medium of Swamiji's devotees, specifically for the hospital construction work, and slowly the building is being raised. Swamiji one day joked, "Will this building remain in its present stage or will it be completed?" Then Swamiji himself said, "Now the building has risen to so much height, and therefore it will not be difficult to complete the balance

work!" Swamiji daily inspects the progress made with the building, and Dr. K. C. Roy of the Ashram one day remarked to Swamiji, "The building is rising every day only because Swamiji's gaze falls on it daily!" Is there anyone who will undertake constructing a hospital without having money in hand and depending on chance receipts? People may say that Swamiji has got divine powers, Siddhis, but if Swamiji is questioned, he would say, "God will help us. It is His work that we are doing." It is this faith, born of experience, that gives courage to Swamiji to hazard such ventures, and truly, his faith always wins. If Swamiji has been able to bring into being a vast spiritual Institution (i.e. the Divine Life Society), it was only due to his faith in Divine support for a noble cause, and not because he first gets sufficient money to start a work. Everything has been due to his faith and courage. Artham is Anartham (Money is dangerous) only when money is kept. If money received is immediately spent (on a selfless cause), there is no money!

So, there is no Anartha. Again, Swamiji's example teaches another lesson: Artha is Anartha to the owner, Money is dangerous only to the possessor of it, and not to another who does not possess it. So, if the idea of ownership is absent, money is not a danger. A third viewpoint would be this: Money is dangerous only to one who looks at it as such. If one looks at money as he would look at any other object, it loses the distinction as money and it is just an object, as other necessary objects. Therefore, it is excluded from the operation of Artham-anartham.

It may also be mentioned that because money is dangerous, Swamiji always keeps himself in a deficit condition, so that any unexpected inflow of money would be readily absorbed by the deficits leaving no balance to do any harm!

So Swamiji strictly abides by the caution 'Arthamanartham', yet, paradoxical as it may seem, he receives and spends thousands of rupees every day in the most supreme service of humanity. Thus Swamiji's life offers us the best commentary on the doctrine of 'Arthamanartham'.

FIND THE INNER SELF

Swami Atmaswarupananda

In the Gita, Lord Krishna tells Arjuna that he is better off meditating on God with form. He says that God beyond form, the unmanifested, is most difficult to reach. The reason is that we think and meditate with our mind, and our mind basically functions only when it is considering something objective, something that it can imagine. And even if it tries to meditate on God unmanifest, it creates an image of the transcendental, which, of course, is a contradiction, because we can't make an image of that which is beyond knowing. Thus we are told to make an image of what we can know, or at least what we can make a legitimate image of: Existence, Consciousness, Bliss, Truth, Love, Purity can all be objects of our meditation.

But then, our real objective is to cure our fundamental error of wrong identification. The scriptures declare that God, Guru and Self are one. They also declare That thou art. Therefore, our true Self is not other than what is described as God, Guru and Self. So why not meditate on our own Self? That is what we are really seeking. We are seeking to, in Gurudev's words, change our angle of vision from a false self, the ego, to our true Self, which is ever present, but

we are not paying any attention to.

What is the nature of that true Self? It must be ever present. There cannot have been a time when it was not present, whether waking, dreaming or deep sleep. It must be eternal, never changing. Is there anything in our experience that is like that? It is certainly not our ego self which is constantly changing. And yet there is a conviction in us that we have never changed. There is a conviction in us that night or day, we exist unchanging. We exist unchanging whether we are conscious of that existence or not.

That Self has the qualities that we attribute to God—unmoving, existing always, and always aware, even when there is no object of consciousness as in deep sleep. Thus perhaps we should make, as best we can, an object of our own existence, our own awareness, our own bliss, which is this unmoving Self. We will recognize that it is also pure love. It is the truth. It also is absolute purity.

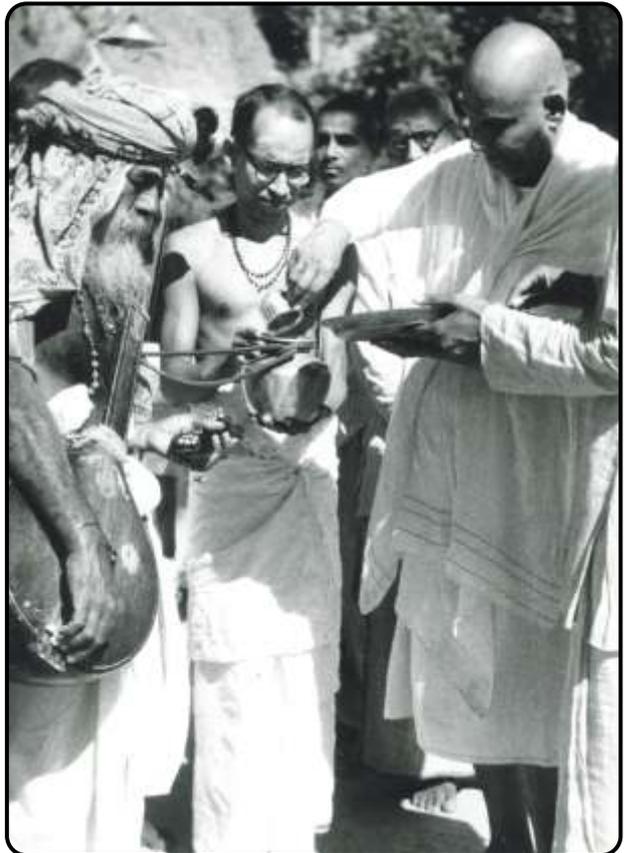
On one side of the Sivananda Pillar, there are four simple instructions: Seek, Find, Enter, Rest in God. Why not meditate on our inner Self that never changes? Find It, enter It, and rest in that Self.

CHILDREN'S WORLD

STUDENTS' SUCCESS IN LIFE SELFLESS SERVICE

Blessed Immortal Selves!

Selfless service unto humanity through the medium of social and charitable institutions, feeding the poor, clothing the poor, sympathising with the needy, attendance on the sick, consoling the depressed, helping the fallen, imparting knowledge to the ignorant, without expectation of return, feeling that you are an instrument in the hands of God, come under the category of Nishkama Karma Yoga, the easiest means for Chitta Shuddhi (purification of heart). Service of humanity is the service of the Lord. If you cannot love and serve these



manifestations of the Lord or visible gods, how will you be able to find God elsewhere in the world?

People who manifest definite, deep and active sympathy towards sufferers are very rare. The world abounds with people who show some kind of lip-sympathy. The man of active and definite sympathy at once shares what he has with the afflicted person. He has a soft heart. His heart melts the moment he sees a man in actual distress. He actually feels himself the pangs of the distressed persons. He who shows lip-sympathy is a confirmed hypocrite.

May the Lord instil in your heart a burning desire to relieve human sufferings and to do selfless service to humanity.

—Swami Sivananda

CULTIVATION OF VIRTUES

COURAGE

Courage is that quality of mind which enables man to encounter danger, opposition and difficulties with firmness, calmness and intrepidity or without fear or depression of spirits.

You may have courage when everything is going right; but it is difficult to have courage in times of panic and danger. The really courageous man is one who knows no fear when danger is on his heels and helps others with a calm attitude of mind.

If you have courage and confidence, you can accomplish anything in this world. Courage is the source of all success.



Impossible things become possible if you have courage and confidence.

Meditate ceaselessly on the absolutely fearless Atman or the Immortal Soul that dwells in the chambers of your heart. You will become an embodiment of courage.

—Swami Sivananda

ERADICATION OF VICES COWARDICE

Cowardice is want of courage. It is timidity.

A coward is a faint-hearted person. He is afraid of danger. He fawns upon those who are above him. He falters. He yields to fear. He dreads pain or harm unduly.

Cowardice is the one deadly sin. Cowardice is loss of fame.

A lie is contemptible, chiefly because it is cowardly.

A coward dies many times before his death. A coward can never attain God-realisation.

—Swami Sivananda

MAKARASNA

Technique: Lie down face prone on the floor. Keep your crossed folded hands below the head, palms resting on the shoulders. Stretch the legs as far as



possible, toes pointing outwards. Relax in this posture for two to three minutes, with normal breathing.

Benefits: The muscles that are put under severe strain demand relaxation and rest, and it is Makarasana that promptly and efficiently ensures complete relaxation and perfect ease to these muscles.

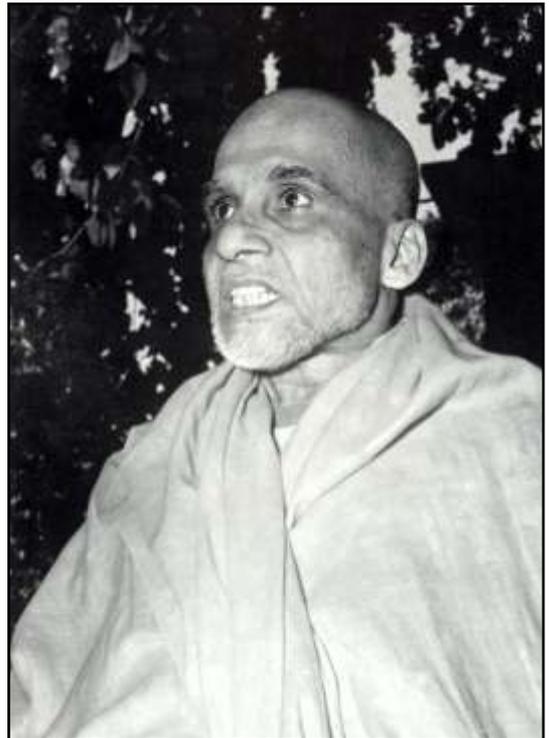
—Swami Chidananda

SITKARI

(Sound (seet) producing Pranayama)

Technique: Open the mouth, fold the tongue upwards inside the mouth so that the tip of the tongue might touch the upper palate, and draw the air through the mouth with a hissing sound (seet). After inhalation, bring the tongue to its original position. Retain the breath as long as you feel comfortable, and then exhale slowly through the nostrils. Repeat it six times, and gradually increase the number.

Benefits: This Pranayama cools the system, soothes the eyes and ears and purifies the blood. It quenches thirst and appeases hunger. It cures chronic dyspepsia (indigestion), inflammation of the spleen, various chronic skin diseases, low fever, biliousness and phlegm disorders.



—Swami Chidananda

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)

Her name was Sushila, but she was lovingly called “Nani” by one and all. For more than 20 years she stayed in Sivananda Home, as a resident, as an attendant in the female wards, and not in the least, as a patient too. Roties prepared by her for the patients were the thinnest, the utensils she brushed were the most sparkling, the floors she mopped were the shiniest, and the patients she attended was given the utmost care by her.

Under-nourished she had arrived; a tiny small body with a huge hunchback. Her lower abdominal hurting, reminding her continuously, day in and day out, of the pains and suffering she underwent. But she refused to dwell in her own agony. With a broad smile, a warm heart, and open hands, she served and served and served. Service made her, not only to forget her own hurt, but also elevated and diverted her mind, so that she could tolerate and bear what was given to her in her own heavy backpack. She could understand and empathize with the pain of others and this compassionate attitude was just natural to her. All those years she herself was under continuous medical treatment; the last year of her life, she was completely bedridden. Where she used to feed, bath and dress others, now she herself had to be fed, bathed and dressed. “I am sorry,” she said, about ten days before her passing away, “that I am not able to serve any longer”. She expressed and thanked beloved Gurudev for giving her the opportunity of serving others and Him for all these years of heartfelt Seva at Gurudev's Feet, and it was kindly told to her that she could retire now, that she could rest now, that she could let go now....Resistance did not leave her quickly, and her final struggle was long, rigid and hard. After many days of only Ganga Jal

intake, she finally surrendered and breathed her last.

She is missed in Sivananda Home by many. But her kind soul and loving appearance will be remembered for long. She came alone, she left alone. She came empty handed, she left empty handed. She came with a heart filled with anguish and hurt, she left the earthly abode with a heart filled with His blessings, a heart pining for His Darshan, a heart finally immersed in Peace, Free. Ashes were offered to Holy Mother Gangaji, near Gurudev Kutir. Om Shanti, Shanti, Shantih.

“Come all ye to Me who are burdened and heavily loaded. And I will give thee REST.”—(Lord Jesus).

Jai Gurudev! Jai Sivananda! Om Sri Sadgurudevaya Namah.

“Load your mind with all your sins and propel it to Swami Sivananda. He shall bestow Eternal Shanti.” -Swami Chidananda

“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

God is full of mercy, love and compassion. He has been described as the 'ocean of mercy'. His mercy flows like the streams of the Ganga and the Yamuna. He is depicted as having sold Himself, so to say, to His devotees. He willingly suffers endless pain in the eyes of the world in order to alleviate the sufferings of His devotees. He bears the scar left on His chest by the kick of Bhrigu as an ornament. He wears the skull of His devotees as garland round His neck. He ran with His Chakra to kill the Asura who was in the form of a crocodile, when He heard the cry from Gajendra, the Lord of the elephants and gave him salvation (Gajendra Moksha).

—Swami Sivananda

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* 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.

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REPORTS FROM THE D.L.S. BRANCHES

INLAND BRANCHES

Bargarh (Odisha): The Branch continued daily Arati, Rudrabhishek on Mondays and Guru Paduka Puja on Thursdays.

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. On 1st January, New Year was celebrated. Special Satsangs were arranged on 2nd and 12th with Mahamantra Sankirtan. Sundarakanda Parayan was done on 14th, and Sadhana day was arranged on 17th.

Chhatrapur (Odisha): The Branch continued weekly Satsang on Thursdays and monthly Jayanti ceremonies on 8th and 24th of every month with Paduka Puja. Special satsang was held on 21st December.

Jamshedpur (Jharkhand):

During the Covid pandemic, the Branch conducted online Satsang on Fridays, and Vishnu Sahasranam Parayan on 30th November.

Kakinada (A.P.): During Kartika month, Eka Vara Rudrabhishekam from 15th November to 14th December, and Kartika Vanasamaradhana on 6th December were arranged by the Branch with Bhajans, Pravachan and Quiz competition. This was concluded with Prasad Sevan.

Kabisurya Nagar (Odisha): Daily Narayana Seva and weekly Satsang on Thursdays and Sundays were continued by the branch. Gita Jayanti was celebrated on 25th to 27th December with Gita Path and Guru Paduka Puja.

Lucknow (U.P.): During the Covid-19 Lockdown, the Branch

had daily chanting of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra, and special Satsang was conducted on 13th December at the residence of a devotee. Besides this, the Branch had special Satsang at Lekhraj Homes on 10th January with Prayer, Bhajan, Mantra Japa and Swadhyaya etc. The Branch celebrated Republic day on 26th with children at Baldeep Public School.

N a n d i n i n a g a r (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 January. Besides this, weekly Satsang was held on Thursdays.

Rourkela (Odisha): Weekly Satsang on Thursdays and Sundays were continued with Paduka Puja, Bhajan, Kirtan, Archana and chanting of

Vishnusahasranam etc. Special Satsangs were held on 14th and 24th.

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. Gita Path, recitation of Vishnu Sahasranam and Hanuman Chalisa were arranged on Ekadasis. The Branch anniversary was celebrated on 3rd January and special Satsang on 14th and Mahamantra Sankirtan on 30th were other activities.

Visakha Rural Branch (A.P.): The Branch had daily Puja and Abhishekam on Mondays. Special Pravachan on Tiruppavai was conducted from 16th December to 5th January. Besides this, Satsang was held on 10th January with talk on Bhagavad Gita, Bhajan and Kirtan. There was Akhanda Mahamantra Kirtan on 23rd.

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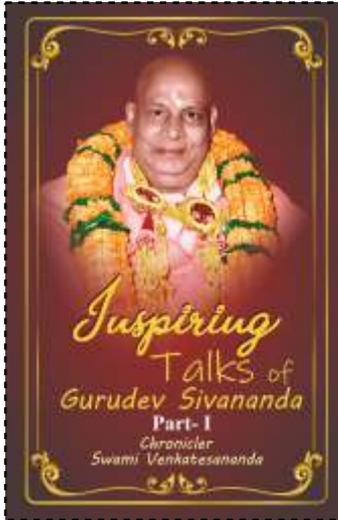


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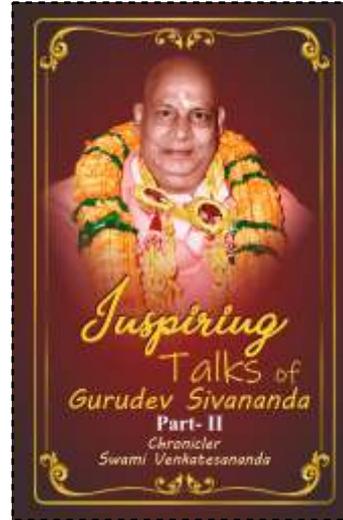


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**Statement about ownership and other particulars
about newspaper “The Divine Life”
FORM IV**

1. Place of publication: Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy Press,
Shivanandanagar, Uttarakhand
2. Periodicity of its publication: Monthly
3. Printer's Name: Swami Advaitananda
Nationality: Indian
Address: The Divine Life Society,
P.O. Shivanandanagar-249 192,
Dt. Tehri Garhwal, Uttarakhand, India
4. Publisher's Name: Swami Advaitananda
Nationality: Indian
Address: The Divine Life Society,
P.O. Shivanandanagar-249 192,
Dt. Tehri Garhwal, Uttarakhand, India
5. Editor's Name: Swami Nirliptananda
Nationality: Indian
Address: The Divine Life Society,
P.O. Shivanandanagar-249 192,
Dt. Tehri Garhwal, Uttarakhand, India
6. Names and addresses of individuals who own the newspaper and partners or shareholders holding More than one per cent of the total capital. The Divine Life Society,
P.O. Shivanandanagar-249 192,
Dt. Tehri Garhwal, Uttarakhand, India

I, Swami Advaitananda, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date: 1st March 2021

**Swami Advaitananda
Signature of Publisher**

MARCH 2021

LICENSED TO POST WITHOUT PREPAYMENT

(Inland) Licence No. WPP No. 03/21-23 Valid upto: 31-12-2023

DATE OF PUBLICATION: 15th OF EVERY MONTH

DATE OF POSTING: 15th OF EVERY MONTH

Posted at Shivanandanagar P.O., Tehri-Garhwal, Uttarakhand

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Pleasure and pain, gain and loss, life and death, good and evil are the obverse and reverse sides of the same coin. Evil cannot exist without good; life, without death. They are relative terms. Ignorant people want everlasting happiness in this world: this is simply puerile. Pleasure and pain, life and death are inseparably linked together. If you do not want pain and death, give up sensual pleasures and existence in physical limitations.

Swami Sivananda

To