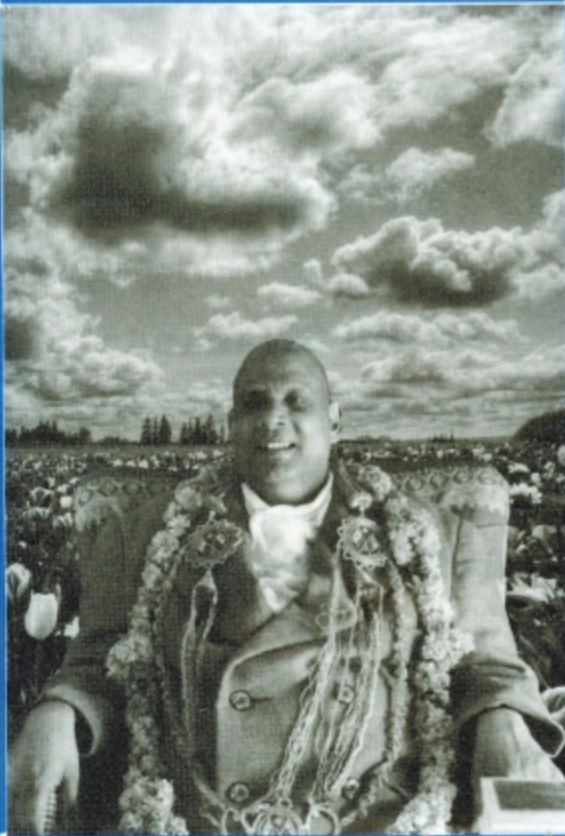


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The DIVINE LIFE



Realisation cannot come to you as a miracle done by your Guru. Lord Buddha, Lord Jesus, Rama Tirtha have all done Sadhana. Lord Krishna asks Arjuna to develop Vairagya and Abhyasa. He did not say to him, "I will give you Mukti now." Therefore, abandon the wrong notion that your Guru will give you Samadhi and Mukti. Strive, purify, meditate and realise.

Swami Sivananda

FEBRUARY 2024

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**

HOW TO JUDGE RIGHT OR WRONG

Have right-thinking and use your reason and commonsense. Follow the injunctions of the Shastras. Consult the code of Manu or Yajnavalkya Smriti whenever you have doubts, you will be able to find whether you are doing right or wrong actions.

The third way of distinguishing right or wrong action is to have fear in God. Consult your conscience. The subtle inner voice will guide you. As soon as you hear the voice, do not delay even a moment. Start the action diligently without consulting anybody. Practise to hear the inner voice in the morning at 4 a.m. If there is fear, shame, doubting or pricking of conscience, know that you are doing wrong action.

Swami Sivananda



THE DIVINE LIFE

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MUNDAKOPANISHAD

CHAPTER I—SECTION II

तपःश्रद्धे ये ह्युपवसन्त्यरण्ये शान्ता विद्वांसो भैक्ष्यचर्या चरन्तः ।
सूर्यद्वारेण ते विरजाः प्रयान्ति यत्रामृतः स पुरुषो ह्यव्ययात्मा ॥११॥

But those who practise penance and faith, in the forest, with subdued senses, learned, and living the life of a mendicant (living on alms), go, freed from sin, through the sun to where the immortal and imperishable Purusha dwells.

शिवानन्दस्तोत्रपुष्पांजलिः
SIVANANDA-STOTRAPUSHPANJALI
PART-II

Sri Swami Jnanananda Saraswati, Shivanandanagar

नानाजनैरभिनुतं नयनाभिरामं
 मानातिरिक्तमहसं महितानुभावं
 पीनावबोधनिलयं शिवदेशिकेन्द्रं
 दीनावनैकनिरतं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥३९॥

I surrender myself to Gurudev Swami Sivananda who is reverentially adored by numerous people, whose form is charming and glowing with splendour, whose pure character is highly appreciated by all, who is a great repository of vast knowledge and who is ever engaged in helping the afflicted ones.

सदासेवितं वीतनानावलेपं
 सदा सच्चिदानन्दलीनान्तरंगम्
 मुदाधारमुन्निद्रदिव्यप्रभावं
 शिवानन्दयोगिन्द्रमेवाश्रयेऽहम् ॥४०॥

I take refuge at the lotus feet of great sage Swami Sivananda who is devoutly worshipped by virtuous people, who is free from egoism, whose mind is always rooted in Parabrahman, who is an abode of bliss, and who is endowed with divine glory.

(To be continued)

INSPIRING MESSAGE FOR EVERYONE

Sri Swami Sivananda

Every man in the world is restless and is striving after something; what, he does not know. He feels he is in want of something, the nature of which he does not exactly comprehend. He seeks in the accomplishment of ambitious projects the rest that he feels, he is in need of. But, he finds that worldly greatness, when secured, is a delusion and a snare; he does not find any happiness or peace in it. He gets degrees, diplomas, titles, honours, power, name and fame; he marries, he begets children; in short, he gets all that he supposes would give him happiness. But, he finds no rest. Pious men, saints and sages declare that this restlessness of every man, this state of discontent, **d i s s a t i s f a c t i o n** and uncomfortableness of being ill at ease with himself and surroundings, is solely due to the loss of the companionship of the partner of his Soul.

There is not even an iota of bliss in this world. All are illusory in this universe. All worldly things are generative of pain only and are

fraught with all dangers. This life is ephemeral. There is nothing so baneful as this life which is perishable in its nature. What beauty is there to be enjoyed in this body which is composed of blood and flesh and which has a tendency to rot? Even the most virulent poison is no poison; but, the sensual object is truly so. The former kills only one body, whereas the latter destroys many bodies in successive births.

Fie on this earthly life, which is attended with pains, sorrows, diseases and death. You cannot find one object in this universe which is sweet and beneficial, for one twinkling of the eye at least. Even the greatest of persons will, in course of time, become dust—the lowest of the low. Emperors, poets, scientists, orators and intellectual giants have come and gone.

It is very difficult to get a human birth. This precious life is meant for attaining Self-realisation. Ignorant persons, like innocent children that do taste again and again sweetmeats which give sweetness for the time being, indulge

themselves in illusory, transient, sensual pleasures and are caught, again and again, in the wheel of births and deaths. They are not ashamed to repeat the same sensual act. What a miserable life they lead! How pitiable is their lot!

You are elated when you get married, when you get a son, when you get some sudden fortune or increase in salary; but you feel sorry when your wife dies, when you lose your money, when you are thrown out of employment, when you suffer from some acute pain.

Now tell me, friend, what do you really find in this illusory world—happiness or pain? Have you now understood the illusory nature of this world? This world is a mere show. The mind and the senses are deceiving you, at every moment. You have mistaken pain for pleasure. There is not even an iota of happiness in this universe.

Will your son, or daughter, or friend, or relative, help you when you are about to die? Have you got one sincere unselfish friend in this world? All are selfish. There is no pure love. But that Lord, your real Immortal Friend and Father who dwells in your heart, will never

forsake you, though you may forget Him. Adore Him in silence, that God of gods, that Divinity of divinities, Highest of the most high. May He bless you with His love, wisdom, power and peace!

Minus skin, minus dress, minus ornaments, physical beauty is nothing. Just imagine for a moment that the outer skin is removed. You will have to stand with a long stick to drive away crows and vultures. Physical beauty is superficial, illusory and fading. It is skin-deep only. Do not be deluded by external appearances. It is the jugglery of Maya. Go to the source—Atman, the Beauty of beauties, the Everlasting beauty.

If your hair become grey, that is the first warrant from Lord Yama, the God of Death. You must get yourself ready to meet him. The wrinkles on the face and the bending of the body, will remind you of the warrant. When the teeth fall and the eyesight becomes dim, you must be fully prepared to greet him. You will get three hiccups or final passing of breaths, lying on the bed. When the last hiccup comes, all your possession will be taken away by your sons and partners. One will run

after the savings bank pass-book, another will take hold of the cash chest, the third of your provident fund papers and insurance claims, the fourth of the ornaments that lie on your person, and so on. Such is life on this earth-plane. Why can't you see that the money is well spent for your spiritual progress and the service of the poor and the Mahatmas? Friends! Try to attain immortality through devotion, meditation, purity, service, Japa, prayer and enquiry. All troubles and miseries will come to an end.

O Nectar's sons! Enough of this mundane life! Enough of this life of passion on this earth-plane! You have spent your whole life-energy and time in obtaining material wealth, power, name and fame. All your efforts have gone in vain. All your wealth is only a broken shell, when compared with the inexhaustible or supreme wealth of Atman. Obtain this spiritual wealth. Give up this vain selfish struggle. You have walked too long with passionate eyes in this universe. Give up this lustful look. Meditate. Look within now and behold the marvellous Self and be free.

Atman or Brahman or

Supreme Self is the hidden treasure. It is the pearl of incalculable value. It is the Jewel of jewels. It is the Gem of gems. It is the imperishable, inexhaustible, supreme wealth which no dacoit can rob. It is Chintamani of Chintamanis, which will give man whatever he wishes.

Brahman is beyond speech, time and causation. It is limitless. It is tranquil and It shines with equal effulgence in all bodies. It cannot be a particular thing. It is Chaitanya or pure consciousness. It is Vastu. It is Sat-Chit-Ananda.

Knowing the nature of Brahman or Atman as such, attain freedom or perfection. Think yourself bodiless. Identify yourself with the Supreme Peace and Eternal Bliss of your all-pervading Self.

May you all lead the Divine Life, sharing what you have with others, singing the Lord's name, rejoicing in Him alone and melting the mind in the Supreme Self!

By indiscriminate clinging to wife, children, house, wealth and property, you have forgotten all about your essential divine nature. In youth, you are enveloped in ignorance; in adult age, you are entangled in the meshes of women; in

old age, you are groaning under the burden of Samsara. When will you find time, friend, to do virtuous actions and worship God?

Sensual pleasure is momentary, deceptive, illusory and imaginary. A grain of pleasure is mixed with a mountain of pain. Enjoyment cannot bring satisfaction of desires. On the contrary, it makes the mind more restless through intense craving. Sensual pleasure is the cause of births and deaths. It is an enemy of peace and knowledge.

Abandon these selfish struggles and schemes for amassing wealth. Do all actions with Nishkama Bhava. March directly to that wire-puller (God), who is moving these toys of fleshy human bodies, who is keeping up this big show, who is behind this pageant. In Him only, you will find everlasting happiness and perennial joy. Merge in Him by practising daily Japa and meditation.

Give up clinging to this illusory life. Take refuge in God. Develop lasting, sustained dispassion (Vairagya) or indifference to sensual enjoyments herein and hereafter. You have had countless fathers, mothers, wives and children in the past. You came alone. You will go

alone. No one will follow you except your own actions. Worship God. Realise Him. All miseries will come to an end.

O Ram! Do you not wish to attain the illimitable kingdom of eternal bliss and perennial joy? Do you not long to attain everlasting peace and immortality? Do you not desire to dwell in that sweet abode of Brahman, where there is neither pain nor sorrow, neither hunger nor thirst, neither fear nor grief, neither doubt nor delusion?

Then come, my beloved Ram! Develop real, lasting Vairagya (dispassion or mental non-attachment) by looking into the defects of sensual life (Dosha Drishti) and through association with Sages, Sadhus and Sannyasins (Satsanga). Serve, Love, Give. Be kind. Be good. Do good. Practise vigorous Japa and meditation and attain God-consciousness or Self-realisation in this very birth.

May you all possess that master-key, viz., Vairagya, to open the realms of Brahmic Bliss!

May you all attain Kaivalya or Atma-Svarajya or Independence! May you all dwell in the immaculate Brahmic seat of ineffable splendour and glory!

YOUR LIFE ON EARTH — KNOW ITS PURPOSE

Sri Swami Chidananda

Radiant Divinities! Immortal Souls! May the Divine Grace of the Lord, benedictions of all men of God,—men of the Spirit,—ancient as well as modern, of the Orient as well as the Occident, be upon you.

May God grant you long life, good health, prosperity, success in your undertakings, and also may He graciously grant you the immense inner treasure, the riches of the Spirit, firm faith in the Divine Reality and a great devotion to the Divine Spirit, Universal Being. May He also grant you an earnest aspiration to attain Him, to know Him, to experience the Reality, so that your life may progress not only in a secular way, in earthly prosperity and well-being, but it may also acquire an upward, vertical, spiritual dimension where, day by day, by the Grace of God and your own earnest aspiration and efforts, you may move on, ascend towards Divine Consciousness and succeed in attaining the experience of the Peace of God, the Peace that passeth understanding and perfect joy of the Spirit, illumination and divine wisdom by which your life is crowned, an enduring attainment, an everlasting beatitude and perfection.

That is the humble prayer of this servant of the master Swami Sivananda, on behalf of each and every one of you assembled here in the name of the Lord, in the spirit of oneness and brotherhood. In kinship, I am here before you to offer my spiritual services by bringing to you a little message and sharing with you a few ideas about your life on earth, your mission here.

What is the meaning of your being here in this temporary embodied condition? If life is to result towards any attainment, we have to live it meaningfully. We must be aware what purpose, what deeper significance, life holds for us, other than the external biological processes of life. What is the meaning of life? If you ask a medical man or a biologist, he would say, "Clinically, a man is said to be alive, if his heart is functioning, if he is respiring and if his blood is pulsating through his body." So, if there is circulation, respiration, and the other metabolic processes going on in the body, they declare a person to be alive. And, if these processes have come to an end, they say, "He's dead." Life, according to them, is equated to the metabolic processes, the biological function of

the various parts of the inner mechanism of the body—heart, lungs, etc. Is that life? Evidently that falls far short of your concept of life. That's merely existence, a biological existence.

You are more than that. You think and feel that you are an intelligent being, a rational being. So, you may say, "It is sentimental emotion, fulfilment of the desires and enjoying things around you." You would add all these to your definition of life. "We are more than a plant, more than an insect or an animal. We are human. We must enjoy life in a higher way." This would be the common man's concept of life. Sense-experience and desire-fulfilment—towards this man works, acquires the things that are necessary to supply pleasant sensations and enable him to fulfill the desires of the inner psychological being. But, illumined souls with a greater vision, a deeper vision of you, have seen even beyond the psychological self of man. They have declared that he is not only more than breathing, living, metabolic processes, but he is even more than the psychological functions and activities of feeling, sentiment, emotion, thought, reason, memory, imagination, willing, resolving, determining and purposeful fulfilment of the desires of the

psychological personality. More than all this, there is something in man, something higher, something beyond, which in their vision they saw to be superior. For this reason, the biological, physical being is temporary. It has a beginning and an end. It is subject to decay and ultimate dissolution.

Even so, psychological man has a beginning and an end. It is unstable, unreliable and ever-changing. Your thoughts can change. Your opinions can change. Your views and attitudes can change. You may feel towards a person in a particular way at a certain moment, during a certain period. May be after a couple of years, your feeling might completely alter. You are a totally different person. Your relationship to that person completely alters. It is no longer what it was two years back. So it is changeful. It is not stable, not reliable. There is no uniformity in it. There is no continuity in it. It is subject to constant alteration. And it is all personal experience of each and every one of you.

They saw beyond this changeful psychological level of human personality something that was ever stable, permanent, enduring, upon which you can count, you can rely, you can be absolutely sure and certain about. And, it is in that depth that they saw

the reality of man. He is an eternal spirit enfolded or involved in thought and intellectual processes and temporarily residing in a gross physical receptacle, a body, a cage of flesh and bones, the mind and intellect being his media to express the spirit upon the secular plane, earth plane.

It is this vision which the illumined seers, men of God, masters of wisdom, had of man that brought forth the phenomenon of the life spiritual. They declared to man, "O man! You are a traveller on this earth-plane. You do not belong here in the ultimate analysis. You come from a realm of eternal sunshine. You come from a realm of everlasting life. In your innermost depth, you are part of that everlasting Substance, the eternal Essence, the Principle that is without a beginning, without an end. You have no birth; you have no death. You have no change or decay or destruction. For, you are a spiritual entity. You come into this earth-plane and find yourself in a temporary state of embodiment. And your mission in life is to make use of the faculties — physical, mental and intellectual, with which you are endowed. Utilise them in a right and purposeful way, to bring about an awakening of that spiritual awareness, a consciousness of your all-perfect and eternal being— "I am

in reality That which has no birth and death, no beginning and end. I am in reality That which decays not. There is no disease nor old age, nor change, nor decay. I am in reality That which is deathless, That which is permanent, everlasting, ever-pure, shining with wisdom-consciousness, the Light of lights. I am complete and whole. I lack nothing. Therefore, no desires and cravings have I; for, I am complete."

Rise into this experience of Self-awareness which by itself, liberates you from all the bondage you have at present come into, to this finite existence, which liberates you from all limitations, from the bonds of desire, from the shackles of sense-cravings and urges, and restores you once again to your native state, pristine state of a totally free consciousness, fearlessness, freedom and an awareness of wholeness. "I lack nothing. I am complete in myself. I rejoice in myself. I am sufficient in myself. I am Joy. I am Bliss. I am Peace." This is Self-realisation or an experience of Self-awareness or awareness of your own higher being, your eternal inalienable spiritual nature which is perfect.

That is the great mission in life of every individual soul that has acquired this human status. Beings in a lesser level of consciousness —

animals, plants— have not got this ability; for, they do not have this awakened reasoning and thinking power. Man alone can question, "Who am I? Why am I here? From whence am I here? And what am I here for?" This ability to question 'Whence? Whither? Wherefore? Why?'—this is unique to the soul in the human status only, not to any other form of life. And that human being justifies his human status, who puts these deep questions to himself.

This faculty of intellect has as its highest function this inner philosophical inquiry. "What is life? What is the relationship between me and this external universe?" Inquire into the real nature of this life on earth. Inquire into the real nature of things that surround us, so that we may know what their real value is, if there is any, and not just be attracted by them blindly, drawn towards them, enslaved by them, held in thralldom by the external glitter and attraction of passing things, of temporary and evanescent things. Thus, to question, use reason which has made you man, the thinking being, the rational animal.

If reason is not put to this use of inner analysis and philosophical inquiry, then man does not justify his human status. Though he has acquired the form of man, a vertical

being with two legs, a biped, yet he fails to be man in fact.

Make use of your faculty of inner reason and intellect to try to unravel the mystery of creation, the mystery of this life, the mystery of your own Self; because, a great many of us go through life in blindness and ignorance. We have managed to acquire through our mind, intellect, observation, a vast amount of information about things around us, about this external world of phenomena, of processes that we find going on in nature—in plants, in animals, in fish, in fowl, in minerals, in chemical elements. But, in the midst of this vast store of information which the ordinary education gives through books, through tapes, through lecture-classes, through our own observation, there persists a nucleus of darkness, a nucleus of essential ignorance as to our own nature.

Man is not aware of who he is in reality, why he is here, what is his true inner Reality. He goes about, surrounded by this plethora of apparent knowledge but lacking in essential wisdom, moving in spiritual darkness, self-forgetfulness, non-awareness of one's own true being. And if life were to pass in this condition and he is to exit out of life in that state of spiritual darkness, alas! the highest purpose of life, the

supreme purpose which he has come to fulfill— for which God has endowed him with this wonderful faculty of feeling, thinking and reasoning—would be unattained. He would go still a bound creature, in ignorance, in darkness, in a state of spiritual slumber.

Those who have gone before us have plunged into this inner research, investigating the answer to these questions and they have done a great deal of work for you and me, so that we don't have to start from scratch and do all the spade-work. They have given us the fruit of their labours and in this sense the modern man, the man in this twentieth century, is one of the most fortunate generations in human history. For, in this, on the eve of the fourth quarter of the twentieth century, we stand inheritors of a wonderful heritage of spiritual wisdom.

During the recent generations, two or three centuries past, the world has produced great, phenomenal personalities endowed with God-realisation, divine experience and spiritual wisdom and they have therefore left their rich legacy for us, as one of the most fortunate and richest generations that has ever filtered out through human history. For, we are the direct heirs, we are rich in the heritage of this common,

universal wealth that past generations have evolved and left for us.

If man were not to avail himself of this wonderful treasure of divine wisdom, we cannot blame the past generations. We have to squarely lay the blame upon ourselves. God gave us everything and yet we do not have the wisdom to utilise it and attain the highest state.

The aforesaid inquiries have enabled us to have some revealing home-truths. The first is that no matter how uncertain life on earth may be, especially in this twentieth century, in this nuclear space age, (we don't seem to know what is there waiting for us tomorrow), there is one absolute certainty about which there is no argument, there is no debate, there is no difference of opinion, there cannot be two views. That absolute certainty is that, one day we all have to go! One day, we have to leave this earth-plane. We are not going to be here continuously because life is short, time is fleeting, body is perishing. It had a beginning in time and it has an end in time. Well, you may say, "You are just uttering a truism. Everyone knows that. So what?" Yes, everyone knows it, but no one does anything about it.

To be continued...

ON REASON AND HIGHER LIFE

Sri Swami Krishnananda

First of all, it has to be remembered that reason is not everything, and it is futile to work up an apotheosis of reason. This itself is contrary to reason, and it is a prejudiced faith of the human mind which makes it imagine that reason is all. You ask, 'On what is faith based?', but I ask, 'On what is reason based?' 'Who told you that reason itself is reasonable?' Don't you think that this itself is a faith that you have inherited due to your social circumstances which you yourself condemn on another occasion? That the human mind unquestionably clings to the doctrine of a reason for everything and does not want to accept anything which cannot have a reason shows that the mind is prejudiced; and do you call this rationality?

Secondly, it is not true that everything in creation can be explained by reason, and I do not believe that you will again subscribe to the prejudice that the visible alone is real and there is nothing above what the human mind can visualise. The culture of our land is not based merely on reason, though it is not contrary to reason. The greatness of our culture lies in a super-rational

faith,—mark super-rational,—on which even reason is based; because, reason is an offshoot of experience, as inference is based on perception. Our culture is primarily rooted in the great gospel of unselfishness for which you want a reason now. Yes, there is a reason, and this reason is our philosophy. This is our religion, this our aim, and this the fond ideal of all humanity. Without going deep into the reason behind things too much, it is not difficult for us to discover, with even a little of common-sense, that we belong to a wider environment of which we are *integral* parts, and we do not exhaust ourselves in the shell of our personalities. Emphasise again, we belong to a wider environment, we are constituents of this environment, and we cannot exist if we are disloyal to the law of this environment to which we belong. To cite an example, a limb of the body cannot exist if it wishes to revolt against the law of the body taken as a whole, because the limb is an integral part of the body. Now, unselfishness or selflessness, as you wish to understand, is nothing but the way or the mode in which the part belongs to the whole, by which it surrenders itself to the

Taken from DL 1977

A letter addressed in reply to certain queries from a modernistic mind

fulfilment of the law of the whole, through which the lower is transfigured in the higher. Are you satisfied that there is a reason in unselfishness? In an unselfish act we do not do something unreasonable, but, the only reasonable thing possible; for, unselfishness is the discovery of oneself in the larger whole. I believe this is sufficient reason.

Now, about the question of money which you have raised: No one says that money as such is evil, as nothing in God's creation as *such* can be called evil. Taking money or giving money as such are not evils. But the evil lies in clinging to anything, getting disturbed by the absence of it, being in an emotional tension when deprived of it,—in short, to be attached to it. All attachment is evil,—not money or gold, or anything for that matter. As to why attachment is evil is a different subject altogether, which I would like you to study in detail by going through standard texts written by geniuses. But, this does not mean that we should necessarily accept money for our services. I do not mean to say that taking money is always an evil. But, not to take money is noble and is a mark of greatness. Not to accept money is not in any manner the denial of one's ability to produce, as you put it, for, though money is a

measure of one's ability to produce, as you say, it is not necessary that the ability should always be measured. Let it be there unmeasured. What is the harm? No harm happens to the sun if there is no one to measure the intensity of its heat or light. One may lose money by not accepting it, but thereby one does not lose one's ability to produce, because money is not the ability,—it is ability that brings money.

Further, as I have pointed out above, our existence is to be dedicated to the larger whole to which we belong, and in not accepting money for services rendered, you are only asserting your participation in the larger whole, while simultaneously diminishing the importance of the part, taken independently, in the light of the whole. That it is love of money which is evil does not mean that it is not evil when it is *coveted* by one who is able to produce it. Whether one is able to produce anything or not, all earthly love is bad insofar as it binds one to a limited life of a very narrow perception. Earning money honestly is one thing, and coveting it is another thing. There is nothing wrong in earning it, but there is something wrong in coveting. Earning has a spontaneity of naturalness, while coveting is deliberate and artificially construed.

However, it has to be reiterated that things themselves are not evil but attachment is evil; for, all attachment is a bar to the onward progress of the human individual towards a larger reality of which it is a part, as already stated.

Whether it is moral to accept something for nothing is a digression from the point at issue; for, unselfish service and accepting something for nothing are two different standpoints. Do you think that people accept money merely because they do not want the other to receive something for nothing? Is it the consideration of the morality of the others that makes us accept money from them? Have you seen one individual in this world who thinks like this? You know, legal quibbles do not always touch the core of truth. Take the matter as it is, on its face. Do we accept money from others so that others may be benefited by the morality thereof? Definitely not. We want the money for ourselves. And the morality in regard to the other is irrelevant to the matter. I am reminded of a man who, in anger, thrashed some poor fellow and when queried later on, answered that he thrashed the other to instil into him the lesson of 'bearing insult and injury', which is supposed to be a spiritual virtue. You can imagine how untrue the man's answer is, though

it is true that it is good to bear insult and injury. Similar is the case with receiving and giving money, the point that you have raised. Giving is considered as good and taking not so good merely for the reason that giving unfolds our real personality while taking encumbers it. This is simple enough to understand. The question of the morality about giving and taking is clear to your mind, I believe.

Sacrifice is the voluntary surrendering of a value, it is true, without thought of reward. You say that sacrifice of the nature of dedication of oneself or one's values to total strangers, especially those whom we despise, is not possible. But there are many other impossible things in the world from the point of view of the ordinary mind, but all possible with some effort and understanding. The reason behind sacrifice is the same as the reason behind unselfishness, which I have touched to some extent already. It is not based on blind faith as you think, nor on others' saying it, and it is not beyond one's power of reasoning, as you surmise. It is also not impossible as you seem to think. You are right when you say that to make a *true* sacrifice is death, but it is death of the false personality and not the real one. It is the death of our prejudices and erroneous notions. It is the death of what is to be cast off one day or the

other. It is not the death of the real *we*. Suicide is not the solution; for, suicide is not the death of the personality but its affirmation in stronger terms than one would do when alive. Suicide is the culmination of attachment to oneself and one's own pleasures, which is foolishly affirmed with the wrong notion that by the cutting off of oneself from circumstances which are painful one can attain the desired end. This is not the solution because the effect cannot be destroyed without removing the cause.

Giving one's body for scientific study may be some sort of unselfishness,—there is no denial. But this is again attachment to humanity as a corporate body, which is not in consonance with truth. There is something more real than humanity as a group, which cannot be forgotten.

It all, in the end, hinges upon whether an act is done for one's personal pleasure or for the good of a larger existence. But no sacrifice should involve pain or injury to others. This is another condition to be borne in mind, barring of course the pains of the nature of the operation performed by the doctor for the good of the patient. To perform a sacrifice, it is not always necessary that there should be a 'taker'; for, sacrifice is not always material.

Sacrifice is possible even if you alone exist in the world and there is none else; for, sacrifice is more a psychological act of self-dedication to a higher existence than a mere parting with material objects, though the giving away of material things also is a part of sacrifice of a lower order. Remember again that sacrifice is not giving where it is not needed but the giving for the sake of wiping out of the encrustation of one's egoism and attachment. You seem to be thinking of only a horizontal sacrifice where someone takes something, but there is a vertical one where the higher one consumes the lower. The gigantic fraud that you speak of is not the moral principle of giving but the ignorance with which we deny its meaning and value due to insufficient enlightenment about the truth of things. The principle of giving is based on the principle of the relinquishment of the narrower personality in the larger good which is the eternal reality.

We do not 'give' merely because another man's need is identical with his lack of ability. This is not the reason behind giving. We give because thereby we evolve, and there is the end of it. In this world, there is always someone who has a larger ability and some other who has a lesser one. There is no point in

mentioning it in the interpretation of the psychology of giving. In the performance of duty, the result is not the motive. The motive is the psychological process that is going on in the act of giving. What you *think* and *feel* is important. The end beyond it is not the consideration. Our philosophy of Karma Yoga, which is the philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita, is one of emphasis on the essential value of active duty and not the passive existence of its remote end. It would be a poor philosophy that identifies this with the dogma or those who, in their inability, want to share the bounty of others. The question of 'others' has no relevance to the act of giving. As I mentioned above, giving is a psychological process and there is no psychology except in the subject which thinks. There is no use tagging on to it the object which is an extraneous element to all thinking. This inability to distinguish between the true subject and its false object, which is only a notion of its, is itself the outcome of a muddle in our thinking; for, the person that we see outside is not the object. The person standing outside us as a subject *in his or her own capacity* is not the object of our thought. The real object is the *objectness* that we associate

with that subject. We have to think over this a little deeply.

There is no use merely being a skeptic. One who doubts everything should also doubt one's own conclusions in order to be a consistent skeptic. That would be a wonderful state of affairs, isn't it? What is your standard of judgment, and what is the standard on which you base this standard? Can you doubt that standard? Can you be a skeptic about it? All doubt has a reference to a standard which itself is not doubted. We cannot live with doubts. Life itself is a negation of all doubt; for, life is and doubt negates all existence.

Your queries regarding selflessness have been adequately answered, and your point concerning the one who imagines he has no self as he borrows from others should have also been answered. Borrowing is not effacement of ego but a strengthening of it, which is not difficult to understand. A shameless man is not an egoless man. We always distinguish between *Sattva* and *Tamas*.

Our highest wisdom is expressed in the great sentence of the Veda: 'Reality is One and undivided, though it is envisaged in variegated forms.'

ANECDOTES FROM SIVANANDA DAY-TO-DAY

Sri Swami Venkatesananda

21st December, 1948

SUB-POST OFFICE

A Superintendent of Post Offices has come to inspect the Ananda Kutir Branch Post Office. The Superintendent said, "Swamiji! Even though I have not visited this Ashram previously, I have heard a lot about your humanitarian services and the noble work, the Ashram is doing. The volume of work turned out by this Post Office, Swamiji, entitles the Office to be converted into a Sub-Office. I am now collecting statistics necessary for effecting this conversion. This Sub-Office will then serve the entire locality, including Swarg Ashram, Gita Bhavan, etc."

"More work and more responsibilities! And, in any case, I must have my own Ashramites to work in the Post Office."

The Sannyasin likes to remain the unattached Sannyasin fond of moving about among people who are

also Sannyasins, and does not like to compromise on fundamentals! This is perfect renunciation. Rather sacrifice some glory and earthly comforts than compromise on fundamentals!

"Surely, Swamiji, I shall recommend that it be converted into an Extra-Departmental Sub-Office; only a little additional work and additional responsibility. But, on the other hand, you will save a lot of time and labour, and the Sub-Office will be able to transact business much more quickly. You will have your own Post Master, of course."

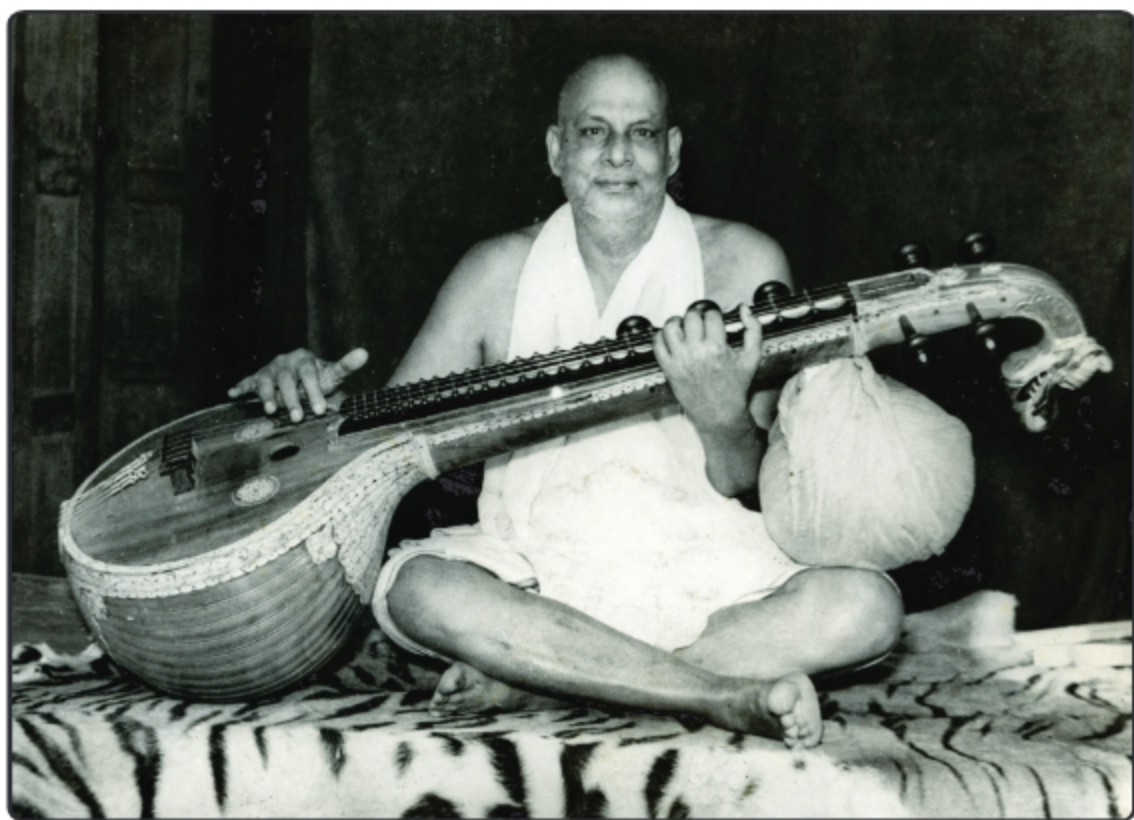
The Superintendent then paid a glowing tribute to the revenue that the Ananda Kutir Post Office brought to the Government! Indirectly, a glory to the tremendous work that Siva and his selfless band of workers are turning out at the Ashram—the hub around which revolves the world-wide Divine Life organisation!



CHILDREN'S WORLD

Blessed Children of Eternity!

Last month I told you what you should do to grow as a real big man and become world-famous, immortal like Dhruva. For doing anything that is necessary to become great, your body is one of the most essential instruments. Without a healthy body, you will not be



able to do even Japa or Kirtan efficiently. You can have a cheerful mind only when you have a healthy body. You should keep the body in a fit condition. Your body is a precious gift given to you by our Loving Father, God. If you are to keep this human machine in good working order, you should know something about it; as you should know how the motor-car works to be able to maintain it in proper order. I shall now tell you about this wonderful machine—your body.

The human body is made up of bones, flesh, fat and blood. Various organs are placed within the cavities of the chest and belly. Heart is in the chest. It pumps blood. The two lungs are in the chest. They are the breathing organs.

Stomach is in the belly. It receives the food and digests it. Mind is in the brain. It thinks and feels.

The immortal soul dwells in the heart. The two eyes are the windows through which the soul sees. The body dies but the soul ever remains. You are really immortal soul.

HEALTH IS ABOVE WEALTH

Take care of your health. Do not eat much sweetmeats. Do not over-load the stomach. Do not take onions, garlic, meat, fish. Take plenty of milk, fruits and vegetables.

Take cold bath daily. Rub the body with a coarse towel. Do not use soap. Take a plunge-bath, in the river, in a tank, in a swimming pool or in a big tub. Run in the open air. Keep your body always clean. Do exercises regularly. Do Shirshasan, Sarvangasan, Matsyasan, Bhujangasan. Do Dand-bhaitak. Bask in the sun in the morning and evening. Do deep breathing a little.

Drink pure, filtered water. Learn hygiene. Do not allow flies to sit on your food.

BEST SIX DOCTORS

The best six doctors are sunshine, water, air, diet, exercise, and rest. No one can deny this. These doctors do not charge you even a pie. Their treatment is always free. Get their free treatment and be ever happy and healthy.

Sun-bath is a great tonic. It invigorates you. It removes all skin diseases. Sunlight is a cheap and powerful germ-killer. It kills all germs. Dry your clothes in the sun daily. Pure air will purify your blood.

Pure water gives you good health. Wholesome light, nutritious diet will make you healthy and strong. Never take stale things, over ripe and unripe fruits. Be regular in your exercise. Take rest.

Swami Sivananda

STORY OF A KING'S CAT

In days of yore, there was a king.

He had a pet cat;

He used to put a lamp on its head,

He did all his work at night.

He said to his ministers,

“O Ministers, you are not so loyal as the cat,

This cat is very sincere to me;

I place a lamp on its head;

And do all my work at night.”

One intelligent minister said,
“O adorable King, I shall test this sincere cat.”

He took a few rats in a small basket;
And entered the king's room.
He let loose the rats in the room.
As soon as the cat saw the rats,
It jumped and seized the rats.
The lamp fell down.

The minister said,
“O King, where is the sincerity of the cat?
There were no rats in your room;
And so the cat was quiet.”

The king put his head down in shame.
So long as the mind cannot get the objects,
It remains quiet for some time;
When there is the least chance,
It jumps like the cat;
And indulges in sensual objects.
O Aspirants, beware, beware, beware.

Swami Sivananda

**THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY
CHANDIGARH BRANCH
ANNUAL SPIRITUAL CONFERENCE
From 15th to 17th March 2024**

By the grace of Most Worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, The Divine Life Society, Chandigarh Branch will be holding its Annual Spiritual Conference from 15th to 17th March, 2024 at The Divine Life Society Branch, Sivananda Ashram, Plot No. 2, Sector 29-A, Chandigarh.

The Conference will be blessed by senior monks from the Headquarters and saints and scholars from the other institutions. Devotees from all the Branches of the Divine Life Society are cordially invited to participate in the Conference aimed at dissemination of spiritual knowledge.

For Registration and Information, please contact:

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| 1. Sri S.K Mahajan, President | M: 0 9814118034 |
| 2. Sri Ramavtar, Vice President | M: 0 8847622075 |
| 3. Sri Darshan Kumar Vashisht, Secretary | M: 0 9216704041 |

Brahman or the Absolute is the fullest reality, the completest consciousness. That beyond which there is nothing, that which is the innermost Self of all is Atman or Brahman. The Atman is the common Consciousness in all beings. A thief, a prostitute, a scavenger, a king, a rogue, a saint, a dog, a cat, a rat—all have the same common Atman.

Swami Sivananda



IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

YOGA-VEDANTA FOREST ACADEMY

THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

P.O. SHIVANANDANAGAR, PIN: 249 192, Distt. Tehri-Garhwal, Uttarakhand (INDIA)

ADMISSION NOTICE

Applications are hereby invited for undergoing the **100th** residential Basic YOGA-VEDANTA COURSE of two months' duration, i.e., from **3-5-2024** to **30-6-2024**. This Course will be held in the Academy premises at the Headquarters of the Divine Life Society, Shivanandanagar, Rishikesh.

The details are as follows:

1. It is open to Indian citizens (Men) only.
2. Age Group: Between 20 and 65 years
3. Qualifications:
 - (a) Preferably graduate with keen spiritual aspiration and deep interest in the practice of Yoga-Vedanta
 - (b) Must be able to converse in English fluently as the medium of instruction is English.
 - (c) Should have sound health
4. Scope and syllabus of the Course:
 - (a) An outline study of History of Indian and Western Philosophy, Studies in Upanishads, Studies in Religious Consciousness, Study of the Bhagavad Gita, Patanjali's Yoga System, Narada Bhakti Sutras and The Philosophy of Swami Sivananda
 - (b) There will be final examination after the completion of syllabus.
 - (c) Asana, Pranayama, Meditation, Karma Yoga, Lectures, Group discussions, and Questions and Answers will also form part of the Course.
5. There will be no charges for training, boarding and lodging. Pure vegetarian food (Breakfast and two meals a day only) will be provided. Smoking, drinking and use of intoxicants are strictly prohibited.
6. The Application Form and Prospectus can be had from the Registrar through post or downloaded from our website www.sivanandaonline.org. Candidates can also apply for the Course using Online Mode through the link given in our website www.sivanandaonline.org. Duly filled Application Form should reach the undersigned by **31-3-2024**.
7. The aim of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy is not merely academic equipment of students, but to prepare the students for a successful life in the world and to facilitate the living of a wholesome life with an integrated personality. The Course conducted in this Academy is more of the nature of an all-round discipline than merely providing students with scriptural learning or textual information.

Shivanandanagar
January, 2024

Registrar,
Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy,
Phone: 0135-2433541, email—yvfacademy@gmail.com

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 leprosy patients 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

Angul (Odisha): In the months of November and December, daily Puja, weekly Satsang on Thursdays and Guru Paduka Puja on Sundays were conducted by the Branch. Mobile Satsang was held on Sundays. Sadhana day was observed on 17th November and 15th December. Gita Jayanti was celebrated on 24th December with Hawan.

Balangir (Odisha): The Branch continued daily Yogasana class and Paduka Puja, and weekly Satsang on Saturdays. Lord Dhanwantari's Puja was performed on 11th November with Hawan. Discourses on Sundarakanda were arranged from 2nd to 7th December. Study and discussion on Vedanta continued in the month of November and December. There were recitations of Vishnusahasranam and Sundarakanda, Bhajan and Kirtan on Ekadasi and Sankranti day. As usual, free Ayurvedic and Homeopathy medicines were provided to needy people on every Sunday and Monday. Around 57 patients were served during November and 48 in December.

Bargarh (Odisha): The Branch had daily Puja, Swadhyaya, Yoga and Pranayama, Rudrabhishek on Mondays, Guru Paduka Puja on Thursdays, weekly Satsang every Saturday, and recitation of Srimad

Bhagavad Gita with discussion on Sundays. Free Homeopathic treatment of poor patients was continued.

Brahmapur (Odisha): The Branch celebrated Gita Jayanti on 23rd December with Hawan. There was Gita chanting on Ekadasi day and Sundarakanda Parayan on Sankranti day. Sadhana day was organised on 3rd Sunday of every month. Besides this, Paduka Puja was done on Thursdays.

Bhimkand (Odisha): The Branch had daily Paduka Puja and weekly Satsang on Sundays. Gita Jayanti was celebrated on 23rd December with Paduka Puja, Gita Path, Hawan and Narayana Seva.

Bhubaneswar (Odisha): The Branch continued its daily Puja and Narayana Seva, weekly Satsang on Thursdays, and free health service four days in a week. Mobile Satsang was held on 13th December. There was recitation of Hanuman Chalisa on 19th and 20th. The Branch arranged special Satsang on 21st in the kind presence of H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj, DLS Hqs. Rishikesh.

Chandapur (Odisha): Daily Puja, weekly Satsang on Saturdays, Paduka Puja on Thursdays, Sundarakanda Parayan on Sankranti

day and mobile Satsang on 8th and 24th of every month were the regular programmes of the Branch. Gita Jayanti was celebrated on 23rd December with Gita Yajna and chanting of "Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya".

Chhatrapur (Odisha): The Branch continued weekly Satsang on Thursdays with Bhajan, Kirtan recitation of Bhagavad Gita and discourse on Ramayana, and Paduka Puja on 8th and 24th of every month. The Branch arranged Sadhana Shivar on 2nd November with Prayers and talk on Japa and Parayana. Six mobile Satsangs were held on 5th, 7th, 10th, 14th, 15th and on 21st November with recitation of Sundarakanda and Hanuman Chalisa. On the occasion of the annual function of the Branch, special song competition was arranged for students on 26th. Sri Ramcharita Manasa Parayan Purnahuti was done on 27th. It was followed by distribution of certificates and prizes to the students, and Jnana Yajna Prasad of "Ramayana" to the devotees.

Cuttack (Odisha): The Branch successfully rendered service to poor patients through Sivananda Allopathic Charitable Dispensary. Special Satsang was held on 2nd November with Paduka Puja. There was chanting of Srimad Bhagavad Gita on Ekadasi days. Sadhana day was arranged at Swami Chidananda

Tapovan Shanti Ashram on 5th with Paduka Puja, Swadhyaya, and recitation of Hanuman Chalisa. There was Mahamantra Kirtan on 26th and Boita Bandana Utsav on 27th. It concluded with Dadhi Bhandha Bhanjan and Narayana Seva. Besides this, Mobile Satsangs and daily Paduka Puja were continued. Sri Ram Katha was arranged by the Branch from 8th December to 10th. Gita Jayanti was celebrated on 23rd with Gita Path and Hawan, and blankets were distributed to needy people on 25th i.e. Christmas day.

Dunguripali (Odisha): Paduka Puja and mobile Satsang were conducted on first Sunday of every month. Hawan was performed on Kartika Purnima day. Mahamantra Kirtan was held on Sundays.

Gaham (Odisha): The Branch conducted 6th Annual Sadhana Shivar and Spiritual Conference from 10th to 14th December. H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj, Vice President of DLS Hqs, Rishikesh inaugurated the newly constructed Auditorium and also gave inspiring talks during the Conference. 914 delegates and a large number of other people attended the programme. In the month of January, the Branch successfully rendered service to poor patients through Chidananda Centenary Charitable Dispensary. Around 502 patients were examined

and provided with free medicines.

Jamshedpur (Jharkhand): The Branch had its weekly Satsang on Fridays, and organised free drawing classes for children of the Antyodaya Bastee every Sunday. Gita Jayanti was celebrated on 23rd December with Gita Path.

Kakinada (Andhra Pradesh): The Branch continued Satsang on Mondays with Pravachan on Bhagavad Gita.

Kabisuryanagar (Odisha): In the months of November and December, daily Yoga class, Narayana Seva and weekly Satsang on Thursdays and Sundays were continued regularly. During Kartika month, special evening Satsang was arranged by the Branch. There were Gita Path, Sundarakanda Parayan and Mahamantra Kirtan on Ekadasi and Sankranti day. Paduka Puja was performed on 21st and 27th November, and a blood donation camp was held on 29th. Gita Pravachans were organised from 18th to 24th December. Gita Jayanti was celebrated from 22nd to 24th with Paduka Puja, Gita Path, Bhajan, Kirtan and Narayana Seva.

Kakching (Manipur): Daily Puja with chanting of Shiva Mahimna Stotra, Shiva Abhishekam on Mondays, and Guru Paduka Puja, Bhajan and Kirtan on Thursdays were continued by the Branch. Akhanda

Mahamantra Kirtan was held on Sundays. Monthly Satsang was organised on 8th of December.

Kantabanji (Odisha): Gita Jayanti was celebrated on 23rd December with Guru Puja, Sri Krishna Puja, Gita Path, Bhajan and Kirtan. Besides this, weekly Satsang was held on Thursdays.

Lanjipalli Ladies Branch (Odisha): Daily Puja with chanting of Bhagavad Gita, weekly Satsang on Sundays, and Paduka Puja and mobile Satsang on Thursdays were regular programmes of the Branch. Besides this, there was recitation of Hanuman Chalisa and Sundarakanda Parayan on Sankranti day. It concluded with Narayana Seva. Gita Jayanti was celebrated on 23rd December with Gita Path and Hawan.

Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh): The Branch conducted special Satsangs at Lekhraj Homes on 3rd and 25th December with Prayers, Bhajans, and Mantra Japa etc. Besides this, there was Chanting of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra for welfare of all beings.

Nandininagar (Chhattisgarh): The Branch had daily morning prayers, Yoga class, Gita Path, chanting of Hanuman Chalisa and Vishnusahasranam. There was Mahamantra Kirtan on 3rd November. Besides this, weekly Satsang on Thursdays, and Matri Satsang on Saturdays with recitation of

Sundarakanda and Hanuman Chalisa were the regular programmes. The Branch conducted special activities: Paduka Puja on 3rd November, special Satsang on 5th, Lakshmi Puja on 13th, recitation of Hanuman Chalisa and Hawan on 16th, Shiva Abhisheka on 17th and 20th, Branch foundation day on 23rd, Hawan on 25th and mobile Satsangs from 27th to 3rd December.

Puri (Odisha): In the month of November, the Branch had daily Satsang, weekly Satsang on Thursdays and Sundays and Guru Paduka Puja on 8th and 24th of every month. There was recitation of Hanuman Chalisa on Sankranti day, and Gita Path on Ekadasis. Sri Jagannath Pancharatra was conducted from Ekadasi to Kartika Purnima day, and Akhanda Mahamantra Kirtan was arranged on Amavasya and Purnima day.

Rourkela (Odisha): Daily Yoga class and weekly Satsang on Thursdays and Sundays continued with Paduka Puja, Bhajan, Swadhyaya and chanting of Vishnusahasranam etc. As usual, free Accupressure treatment and medicines were provided to needy people. Special Satsang was held on 17th December. Gita Jayanti was celebrated on 23rd with Paduka Puja and Hawan.

South Balanda (Odisha): Daily

Puja, weekly Satsang on Fridays, and Guru Paduka Puja on 8th and 24th of every month were the regular programmes of the Branch. Gita Path, recitation of Vishnusahasranam and Hanuman Chalisa was done on Ekadasis. On 16th December i.e. Sankranti day, special Satsang was arranged. There was Akhanda Mahamantra Sankirtan on 27th for world peace and universal brotherhood.

OVERSEAS BRANCH

Hong Kong (China): The Branch conducted Mahamantra chanting on 4th and 18th November in both Cheung Sha Wan and North Point Yoga Centre of the Branch. Yoga camp was arranged from 10th to 12th November at the Salvation Army Bradbury in Cheung Chau Island. In the presence of H.H. Sri Swami Yogaswarupanandaji Maharaj, President of DLS Hqs, Rishikesh, a Yoga retreat was conducted from 11th to 16th November; Deepavali was celebrated with Bhajan and Kirtan on 11th November. During retreat, Swamiji gave three lectures on "The Yoga of Imperishable Brahman", and on 15th, Swamiji addressed the devotees on "Mission and Vision of Divine Life Society with personal Sadhana". On 16th, the Branch arranged for a visit to the Big Buddha at Po Lin Monastery in Lantau Island.

AVAILABLE BOOKS ON YOGA, PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

By H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj

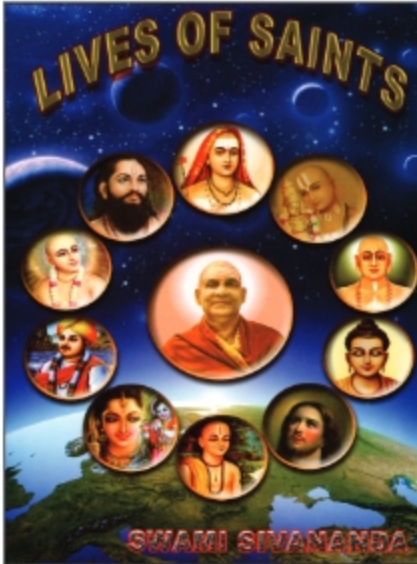
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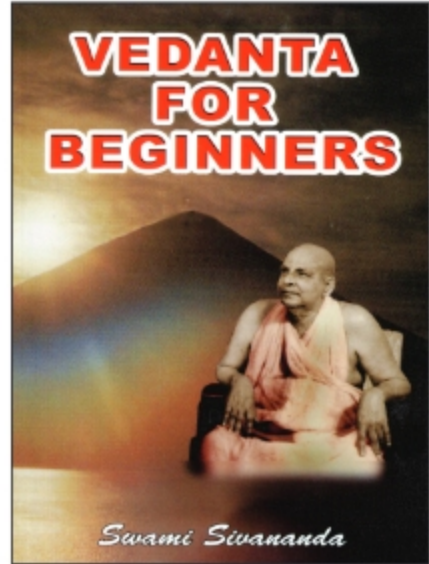
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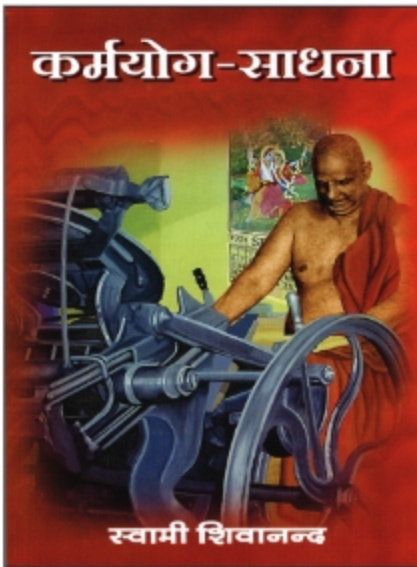
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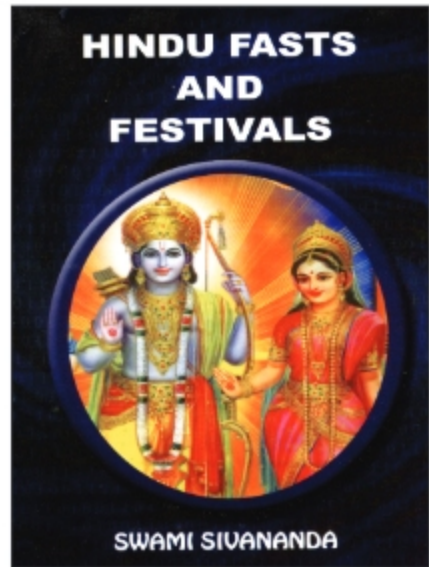
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TWENTY IMPORTANT SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTIONS

By H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj

- 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 Namō Narayanaya, Om Namah Sivaya, Om Namō 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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The Touchstone of Knowledge and Spirituality

Equal vision is the touchstone of knowledge. Unselfishness is the touchstone of virtue. Celibacy is the touchstone of ethics. Oneness is the touchstone of Self-realisation. Humility is the touchstone of devotion. Therefore, be unselfish, humble and pure. Develop equal vision. Be in tune with the Infinite.

Swami Sivananda

To