

₹100/- ANNUAL



The DIVINE LIFE



My
New Year
Message to spiritual
seekers the world over and to
all others in general is:
Consecrate yourselves to the
spiritual values of life, the practice of
which can be summed up in this short
teaching:—Serve love, give, purify,
meditate; adapt, adjust, accommodate;
be good, do good, be kind; practice self-
restraint, equanimity, self-reliance;
strive to follow what you believe in,
be practical; realize thyself.

Swami Sivananda

JANUARY 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**

BE DETACHED AND BALANCED

Just as the tongue is not affected by taking ghee, so also you should remain unaffected even amidst worldly activities and troubles. You must keep up the Nirlipta (detached) state. This is Jnana. This is the balanced state (Samata).

You may fail to keep the balance and Nirlipta state for a thousand and one times but in the long run, you are bound to succeed if you persist in your practice and if you discipline the mind properly. Every failure is a pillar for future success. A Karma Yogi should not expect even a return of love, appreciation, gratitude and admiration from the people whom he is serving.

Swami Sivananda



THE DIVINE LIFE

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MUNDAKOPANISHAD

CHAPTER I—SECTION II

इष्टापूर्तं मन्यमाना वरिष्ठं नान्यच्छ्रेयो वेदयन्ते प्रमूढाः।
नाकस्य पृष्ठे ते सुकृतेऽनुभूत्वेमं लोकं हीनतरं वा विशन्ति ॥१०॥

These ignorant persons, fancying sacrifice and charitable gifts as their highest object, do not know any higher good. Having enjoyed the fruits of their works on the high place of heaven, which they gained by their good works, they enter again this world, or a lower one.

शिवानन्दस्तोत्रपुष्पांजलिः
SIVANANDA-STOTRAPUSHHPANJALI
PART-II

Sri Swami Jnanananda Saraswati, Shivanandanagar

आलोकनैशिशिरिताखिलजीविलोकं
 सालोक्यमार्गनिरतं विरताभिलाषम्
 आलोकनीयसुषमं शिवदेशिकेन्द्रं
 कालोचितोक्तिकुशलं शरणं प्रपद्ये॥३७॥

I take shelter in the great preceptor Swami Sivananda who, by his mere glance, fills the hearts of all human beings with indescribable peace, who is ever engaged in treading the path of liberation, who is devoid of worldly desires, whose splendour is worth seeing and who is skilfull in speaking words best suited to particular circumstances.

संगीतलास्यरसिकं सुजनैरजस्रं
 संगीयमानयशसं करुणाम्बुराशिम्
 अंगीकृताखिलसनातनधर्ममार्ग-
 मंगीरसोपममतिं शिवमाश्रयेऽहम्॥३८॥

I take refuge at the lotus feet of Gurudev Swami Sivananda who takes delight in music and dancing, whose glory is sung by innumerable noble people, who is an ocean of compassion, who strictly adheres to the path of Universal Religion, and whose intellectual powers are equal to Brihaspati, the preceptor of the Devas.

(To be continued)

New Year's Message



YOGA FOR DIVINE PERFECTION

Life in this universe is in the nature of a restless quest and a struggle. Caught amidst the play of mysterious forces and brought

face to face with bewildering phenomena, man struggles to understand and strives to overcome them. In this incessant drama of Life, one factor emerges clearly: namely, that all his endeavours and attempts have a single and definite aim—the wish to obtain happiness, gain peace and achieve freedom from all limitations.

Constantly man seeks to avoid that which is painful, unpleasant and binding. Here then, the science of Yoga constitutes the most successful and at the same time, the most rational solution of this two-fold problem of quest and struggle: it unerringly leads up to a speedy consummation of man's quest after the ideal by helping him to obtain mastery over all forces that obstruct him in his quest.

At the back of the two ever-fluctuating and changing factors of Man and Nature, we touch the reality of a constant unchanging immutable entity, the Absolute, the Divine Being, God who forms their eternal substratum and source. That Divine Being is the supreme Truth, the transcendent Reality, the infinite Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. The entire creation is a process of the One becoming the many, of the Transcendent becoming manifest and immanent. All phenomena arise out of, subsist in, and subside into that undivided infinite Ocean of Pure Consciousness. They are, as it were, an expiration and inspiration of the Supreme Being.

As the billions of wavelets develop, dance and dissolve on the bosom of the ocean, when manifestation begins, infinite beings stream forth out of the One and involve into the countless forms of life we see in this universe. From here starts the steady onward march of Evolution by which the individual souls merge

once more into their Primal Source. This is the Cycle of emanation, involution and evolution, the Cosmic Plan according to the Divine Will.

Being, in fact, a part and parcel of the Infinite Existence, the human Soul is in its essential nature identical with that transcendent Reality. Set awirling in this cycle of the world-process, veiled from the knowledge of its essential Divinity, and its Consciousness severely limited by the encasing sheaths of Matter, the individual soul ever seeks to put an end to this separation, limitation and the sense of incompleteness that it feels.

Through successive incarnations, the life of the individual constitutes a constant reaching forth towards its Primal Abode of Infinite, Immortal, Blissful Existence, and until that state is attained, each centre of individualised ego-consciousness will keep up this restless quest on the upward path of evolution. The theory and practice of Yoga, therefore, rose out of practical necessity; it came into being in answer to the most vital need of Man. Through every event of phenomenal experience, through every crisis in human history, through every moment of phenomenal life, humanity as a whole is inevitably and irresistibly being drawn up towards that Ideal State of Perfect Existence.

The practical science of Yoga is this cosmic process deliberately systematised, regulated, intensified and thus expedited in the human individual, to an incredible degree. The latter is the reason why many of the natural developments of the Yogic process appear as miracles in the eyes of the surface observer. Thus the natural, unhurried, protracted process of

evolution upon the cosmic scale is developed as the exact, scientific technique of Yoga-Shastra. In this broadest aspect therefore, any movement, any activity that consciously or unconsciously tends upwards and is evolutionary may be regarded as Yogic.

Everything that helps to disentangle man from the phenomenal world of sense-objects, and links him with absolute Perfection, with the infinite Being, is in effect Yoga; but, for all practical purposes, the ancient supra-scientific research men of India, the wise Sages, who held in their palms the keys to transcendental Experience, have brought to being the science of Yoga, formulated and built up certain well-defined workable methods by which man can establish union with the Divine. This is a method of compressing one's evolution within a single life-time, even within a few years of this particular life.

A state of knowledge through a constant discrimination between the real and the unreal, combined with a ceaseless assertion of and identification with the ideas of omniscience and perfection, a state of unshakable equilibrium and one-pointedness, an intense unabated attachment to some particular aspect of the Divine,—constitute the major means in the Yoga Process, of overcoming all those factors that keep man pinned down to the phenomenal existence.

This New Year, may you all make a real beginning in Yoga practices and realise in your daily lives, the endless Powers, the endless Peace, the endless Happiness, the endless Perfection it confers on you!

Sri Sri Sivananda

TO THE SADHAKS

Sri Swami Sivananda

Live with a definite purpose. Do not roam about aimlessly. Proceed with a definite aim. Climb the ladder of knowledge steadily and reach the summit of the Temple of Brahman or the sweet Abode of Immortality.

In the spiritual path, there are constant failures and set-backs. Repeated endeavour, constant vigilance and undaunted perseverance are essential.

When the heart-knots are gradually loosened, when the Vasanas are thinned out, when the bonds of Karma are untied, when the ignorance vanishes before the dawn of discrimination, you become more and more peaceful and merge in the Self.

Fight with the mind bravely. March onwards! Spiritual hero! Go on fighting with the lower instincts and impulses with an undaunted heart. Struggle hard. Be courageous! At the end of your battle, you will attain the illimitable domain of eternal Bliss, the immaculate, imperishable Seat of Brahman.

Hard enough is to purify the lower nature. Difficult enough is to practise concentration and

meditation. But vigilance, perseverance, constant persistence, steady efforts, company of the wise, resolute will, strong determination, will surely obviate all the difficulties and render the path easy, smooth, pleasant and refreshing. Strive ceaselessly. Despair not. The Light is within you. Serve all. Love Truth. Be serene. Meditate regularly. You will soon attain the Life-beatitude, the Silence, the supreme Peace.

Even when you get a glimpse of Truth or the Supreme, your whole life will be transformed. You will become a changed being. You will then possess a new heart and a new brighter vision. A new thrill of spiritual current will rejuvenate your entire being. A wave of spiritual bliss will sweep over you. This state is indescribable. There are no words to express. There is no language to describe your inner experience.

The Divine within you is stronger and closer than anything else that is without you. Therefore, be not afraid of anything. Rely on your inner Self—the Divinity within you. Build up your character. Tap the Source and look within.

Improve yourself. Purify the heart. Develop divine nature. Eradicate the evil traits. Conquer all that is base in you. Endeavour every moment of your life to practise all that is worthy and noble.

Without renunciation, you can never be happy. Without renunciation, you can never be successful in gaining the highest good i.e. liberation or Moksha. Without renunciation, you can never be at ease. Therefore, renounce everything. Renounce mentally first. Renounce the ego, then the physical attachments. Make happiness your own. Hold renunciation as the foremost of all things.

Become good first. Then, try to do good to all those around you. Then, control the senses. Then, subdue the lower mind by strengthening the higher mind. Then, the Divine Light will descend. Only then will you be able to receive and sustain the Divine Grace.

Build up your spiritual life on a sure foundation—on the rock of faith, determination and strength of character. Take refuge in the Lord and His eternal laws. There is no power in heavens or on earth that can bar your path now. Success in your Sadhana is sure. Failure exists not for you. There is light on your path.

All is brilliant.

When the lamp is wrapped with many layers of cloth, there will be no bright light. When the cloth is removed one by one, the light grows brighter and brighter. Even so, when the self-resplendent Atman which is covered by the five sheaths, is stripped of by meditating on the pure Self and through the practice of 'Neti-Neti' doctrine, the self-luminous Atman reveals Itself to the meditator.

Children of Light! Life is but the unfolding of the latent capacities of the Soul. Lead the Divine Life. Generate sublime, divine thoughts through Japa, Kirtan, meditation and study of elevating scriptures. Why should you prolong your bondage unnecessarily? Why should you not claim your divine birthright right now, in this very moment? Delay means prolonged suffering. You can get rid of this suffering at any moment. This is within your power. Do it now. Stand up! Gird up your loins! Do rigorous Sadhana and attain your birthright—the eternal Freedom!

May that Light of lights guide you in the Path Eternal every moment of your life! May success be yours! May you attain God-realisation in this very birth!

WORSHIPFUL SRI SWAMI CHIDANANDAJI MAHARAJ'S LETTER TO THE DEVOTEES

Beloved Immortal Atman!

Blessed Seekers after Truth!

Om Namo Narayanaya.

Loving Pranams. Homage unto the Divine.

May the Grace of the Supreme Being be upon you all ! Glory to the Lord ! My humble and sincerest Good Wishes and Greetings to you for Joy, Prosperity and Success during this New Year. May Happiness and Spiritual progress mark all its days and may good thoughts, sweet and kind words and noble selfless deeds of help and service unto others fill the entire year ahead. You are Divine. Therefore, let Divinity radiate from you in everything that you think, say and do. Live to express the perfect God-Essence that dwells within you. Let all the movements of your daily life be filled with the light that illumines the innermost shrine of your spiritual 'heart' which is the divine centre of your real being.

Beloved Friend, you are the moving temple of God. God is within you as an all-pure and bliss-filled Divine Presence. That God is Love. Unlock the flood gates of the Ocean of Divine Love within thee, and let flow that Love over all the universe. Love all. Encompass everything here with that Love. Live Love. Think Love. Speak Love. Do deeds of loving kindness and goodness in your day-to-day life. Even the most trifling of actions, do with love for God. Do all things for Him. Fill your mind with loving thoughts towards all created beings and things. Fill your heart with pure feelings of kindness, compassion, affection, friendship and genuine love towards everything upon earth. Regard none as thine enemy. Feel all as thine own. For, we are brethren in the

Taken from Wisdom Light 1966

divine, all being children of God. Merciful be thine attitude towards all creatures and things here. Speak gentle words alone, of friendship and divine brotherhood in the Lord. Utter soft speech that brings happiness unto others and helps them to bear the trials and burdens of this life. Kind words affectionately uttered bring heaven down to man on earth. Unkind and harsh words contradict the Divine Law of Life and thus take the joy out of life and cause pain. Therefore beloved seeker, fulfill the Law by filling your speech with Love and thus helping to bring light into the lives of all. Engage in actions of loving-kindness which the noble brothers of the sublime Buddhist faith refer to by the beautiful term "Metta". It is the expression of the highest principle in man. It is impersonal, universal, motiveless love towards everyone and everything. It leaves no place for anything else except such love in your heart. Such love is Divine. It makes you Divine by enabling you to rise up into Divine Experience.

Love is the one and only Law that can bring solace, peace and happiness to mankind in this world. It is the higher principle with which man can overcome the grievous results of his past folly, blindness, wickedness, selfishness and the sufferings created by them. Love will give back to World Humanity the Peace, Safety and Security which it has lost through the transgression of this supreme principle of life, namely, Loving Kindness. Blessed Seekers, strive to restore unto humanity peace, joy and welfare by practising the rule of cosmic love or Vishwa-Prem and living a life of loving goodness and kindness unto all.

Spiritual Life means unfoldment of the hidden Divinity within you. It implies the manifestation of this inner Divine nature which is your real Self. Yoga is the process for bringing about this inner awakening, unfoldment and manifestation. All Sadhana is for manifesting this Divinity of your true Swaropa, fact of divine

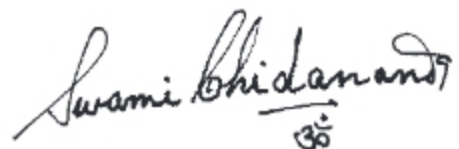
experience. A life that contradicts Love in any manner cannot become spiritual or grow in divinity. It cannot progress towards God because He is attainable through Love.

GOD IS LOVE; therefore anything in your life that contradicts LOVE, know it to be undivine. It is not 'Daivi-sampatti' expounded by Lord Krishna. Selfless Love, Compassion and Friendliness are divine, Sattwic and, therefore, help spiritual unfoldment. Hatred, anger, dislike, ill-will, prejudice, envy, jealousy, intolerance, harshness, selfishness and resultant unkindness are the negation of Love, and hence are great obstacles to spiritual advancement, as they are undivine expressions of your lower earthly nature. They must die and your nature, the inner man should be cleansed of this dross before the Light of Truth can flood your inmost being and grant you Illumination, Divine Experience and Immortality. Love is the great and marvellous power that can effectively root out all evil in man and transform him and make him godly.

Love is the greatest purifying force on earth. It makes your life divine. It is therefore the very basis and support of Divine Life as expounded by Gurudev, worshipful and beloved Sivananda Swamiji. Therefore, overcome all blemish through the sanctifying power of pure selfless love for all and attain the goal of God-consciousness, my beloved Atman. God bless you.

Glorious New Year unto you. My deepest regards, love and prostrations to you all, souls journeying onward unto Divine Perfection.

Shivanandanagar
January 1966



Swami Chidananda

Radiant Immortal Atman,

Om Namo Narayanaya.

Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya.

Om Namo Bhagavate Sivanandaya.

Om Namo Bhagavate Chidanandaya.

Om Namo Bhagavate Krishnanandaya.

My heartiest greetings and warm wishes to you all for a bright and auspicious New Year, full of happiness, peace, prosperity and spiritual progress.

All of us have now stepped into the New Year 2024, with lots of aspirations and ambitions to enrich our lives with Divine Grace. The beginning of each New Year is indeed an occasion to assess the significance of the previous year. The year 2023 has just concluded and the year 2024 is just commencing. We should consider well what has taken place during these past twelve months. What lessons have we learnt in the year 2023? How much progress have we made on the spiritual path? The valuable lessons of the year 2023 should guide our footsteps in the New Year and ensure quick progress on the spiritual path.

Our Treasure is the teachings imparted to us by Worshipful Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj and H.H. Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj. All devotees are the inheritors of this treasure. Time and tide do not wait for anyone. Therefore, "**Uttishthata Jagrata Prapya Varannibodhata** – Arise, awake and attain Illumination seeking shelter at the sacred feet of the Enlightened ones". This is the clarion call of our scriptures and great Masters. Therefore, we should make the very best use of each moment of the New Year to attain the supreme goal of life.

May this New Year bring success in all your efforts with inner peace, happiness, clear discrimination between the real and the unreal to boldly tread the path of spirituality.

May Gurudev's grace be ever upon all of us.

Yours in the Lord,



Swami Yogaswarupananda
President

YOGA—AN ART AND SCIENCE

Sri Swami Krishnananda

The Yoga system, especially that propounded by the sage Patanjali, is a masterly science of psychology. We are asked to control the modifications of the mind-stuff in order to be able to have clear perception and true insight. Patanjali points out that we become normal only when we cease from thinking in terms of forms of the mental modification and begin to adopt quite a different way of perception. In other words, we have to rest in our own selves, first in order that we may be healthy and also have a healthy perception of things. All types of objective thinking are considered in our system of Yoga as certain diseased conditions of consciousness; for, in these states the consciousness is not-in-itself. Whenever it is not in a state of rest in itself, it gets identified with the forms of the mind, and assumes for the time being their spatio-temporal shapes. In this empirical process, the individual consciousness often comes in conflict with other such centres in the forms of other persons

who have their own special modes of self-identification with other types of mental transformations. Human misery has its roots in this self-contradiction born of ignorance of the structure of the perceptible diversity and its basis in the One.

A successful life, and a happy life, is possible only when one is able to adjust and adapt the different sides of the personality in a harmonious way and the entire personality with the others that form the constituents of the world. In this sense, life is an art. What does an artist do? He has a definite idea of an end to be executed and achieved, he collects the necessary material as means for the purpose, and arranges the material in a methodical and harmonious manner. He selects the proper requisites, removes what is unshapely, adds what is necessary, and brings about a system and completeness in his work in consonance with the nature of the purpose in view. This is the case with great works of art, whether architecture and sculpture, painting

and drawing, or music and literature. The essence of art is the arrangement of material to produce rhythm, symmetry, order, fullness, and a sense of perfection so far as the mind can conceive of it. We have to arrange the pattern of life, with its forces of the outward Nature and inward impulses, so that there may not be any jarring element or inharmonious appearance unsuited to the purpose of realising the equilibrium of the universe as reflected in our personal lives, in the life of society, the community, the nation and the world. We do not belong merely to ourselves, not even merely to any particular society or country, but, we are citizens of the universe to which we owe a tremendous duty. And this duty is nothing but feeling and acting in a way that may not negate or violate the truth that the essence of the universe is an indivisible fullness. This art of self-adjustment with the entire creation is called Yoga. It is an art that appeals to the being within, which is also without, at the same time. Yoga is an art insofar as any successful practice of it demands of us a sort of genius and uncommon insight which cannot be expressed in

mathematical or logical terms. But, Yoga is also a science in the sense that it follows certain fixed laws and its principles are eternal, irrespective of class, creed, place and time. It is the knitting together, as it were, of the various springs of thought and action to form a connected and beautiful fabric in the universal scheme. It is the science of peace, of inner delight, and it requires that at one and the same moment, we have to be at peace not only with the different levels of our being but also with the various strata of external life. A happy man, who has been able to lead a successful life, is one who is thoroughly friendly, not only with the structural demands of his own body, mind, emotions, and intellect but also with the different elements that go to form the world outside.

The Yoga system, by its technical terms, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi, expresses in a highly mystic way the need for perfect discipline of the body, the vital forces, the senses of perception, the functions of the mind, the intellect and the reason from the standpoint of the universe taken as a whole. Life

is a preparation for Self-realisation, a training ground for the individual to transfigure itself in a self-dedication to the Absolute Reality. Some have compared this earthly life to a temporary halting of pilgrims in an inn, which is not the destination but only a means of help in the journey. We are not to take the experiences of this life as ends in themselves but as processes of self-advancement and chastening of the inner spirit for a higher fulfilment. Our joys and sufferings, our exhilarations and griefs, our prejudices and ideals are not to be valued as realities in themselves but as certain conditions which we have to overstep, and which will mean nothing to us when transcended in a deeper wisdom. Our present life is a flow of events, and nothing that changes can be called the real.

SACRIFICE AND DEDICATION IN LIFE

Herein comes into high relief the significance of the teaching that we have to perform actions without regard for their fruits, because the fruits are not in our hands, they are determined by the ultimate law of the universe, which, in the present condition of our minds, we can

neither understand nor follow. Our duty is to act, act in the right way, bearing in mind that we are fulfilling an inviolable and unavoidable imperative, not forced upon us by any outward mandate, but by the law of our own being, to ignore which would be nothing short of folly. To work with any fixed ulterior motive beforehand would be like naming a child before it is born. The position is that no one can clearly envisage or understand the nature of an effect which would follow a particular action. That we glibly talk of fixed results of visible causes and hope for desired ends of our actions only shows that we have a very narrow outlook and forget the fact that nothing in this interrelated universe is absolutely self-dependent but requires the co-operation of infinite centres of force for it to come into being at all. Just take a concrete example. I say that a book placed on a table has the table as its support. Am I right? Perhaps you would say I am. But, we do not stoop to think here that the table itself is supported by the floor. And where is the support for the floor? It is perhaps kept fixed by certain beams placed crosswise beneath it, which again

are supported by walls, the walls being supported by the foundation, and the foundation by the earth. Is the position of the earth self-dependent? No. The earth's position and motion are governed by the attraction of other planets in relation to itself, and we should not forget here that the planets are held in position by the terrible gravitational force of the sun. The whole solar system is said to be rushing with a great velocity to another destination in the vast ocean of the Milky Way. Where are we, and where is the book placed on the table? The existence of things is really marvellous, and, surely, our life is precarious. What right have we, then, under these circumstances, to expect what we have in our minds? We can be justified in hoping only for that thing which is sanctioned by the unitary law of the universe taken as a single whole.

The Bhagavadgita, for example, exhorts us not to have attachment to things. Obviously, any outward attachment is not permissible in the scheme of things as they truly are. To which object am I to be attached, when everything outside me is inseparably related to

me, and we are all mutually inclusive and determined in this magnificent home of God's creation? Where is that special endowment of reason, of which man so much boasts, when he acts as an animal in thinking that he can have special attitudes to particular objects and yet hope to be let off scot-free? Every action has a reaction which comes with an equal force of nemesis and retribution; for, every action is a sort of disturbance produced in the equilibrium of the universe, and the universe shall ever maintain its balance by rebutting the force of disturbance created in its being in the form of an action of thought. How marvellous is life, how grand, how just, and yet how relentless!

The correct spirit with which we have to work in this world is one of self-sacrifice and surrender to the Supreme Cause of all things. As a famous verse has it, whatever there is as this vast world, visible or heard of,—all this is pervaded inside and outside, throughout, by the Eternal Spirit. Another verse tells us that we have to see the immanent Divine in earth and water, in the mountains and the flame of fire, and that the whole world is nothing but the

appearance of God. The correct perception is designated as *ishvaradrishti*, the practice of the presence of God in each and everything, in every quarter and cranny, everywhere, and at all times. The essence of the Gita teaching is this, that the universe is the body of God, nay, it is God Himself appearing to us through our senses, the mind and the intellect, that there is nothing outside of God ever existent, that man is bound to have prosperity, victory, happiness and lawful polity when he acts with this consciousness,—with the deep feeling that he is an instrument in the hands of the Absolute, that his actions are really not his but Its, and that suffering is inevitable the moment he cuts his consciousness off from the Divine. The happy and the normal life is, therefore, the Divine Life.

INNER DISCIPLINE

This is a grand concept, and this the goal. But, there are certain lesser aspects in our life which we cannot ignore, if we are to be successful in our different endeavours for perfection. First, we have to use our emotions properly and adjust them in such a way that

they do not create any discord in life's harmonious process. Second, we have always to attempt to make a fuller use of our personalities than we actually do in states of misconception, prejudice and ignorance. There has to be brought about a complete reorientation of our ways of thinking, in the light of eternal facts amidst which we exist. There is that absolute necessity to bring about in ourselves those necessary changes, now and then, to attune ourselves to the vast universal environment. Think properly about yourselves, and understand your position in the expanse of the environment around you,—whether it is family, the community, the country, or the world. Face your weaknesses with an adamant will, but know also your strengths, and use them to adapt yourselves to the circumstances in which you find yourselves at any given moment of time. In this you have to be very diligent, sincere and honest. Remember always, that what is important is not so much what you are, as to what extent you know why you are what you are, and how much you endeavour to improve yourselves in the right direction. Of

course, do not be in a hurry. *Understand well* before you take a step. There cannot be a right attempt without a clear-cut ideal before it, and directing it. A race horse put to a plough or a plough horse put to race will not lead to any substantial result. We have to know our powers, our knowledge, and go only so far; not further.

If you are emotionally healthy, you will find that you will be comfortable with yourselves, and would not need the company of a crowd, or even of other persons related to you. No doubt, this is only one aspect of the question, because the most well-adjusted person should be comfortable and perfectly at ease either way. Watch yourselves in a crisis, and detect what you are. You can know your weaknesses when you are thwarted, opposed, threatened or when you find yourselves in danger. You can also know your buried desires and urges, your cravings and fears, when you are put to such a test. The training of the emotions and the development of strength within, however, is not difficult for one who has a genuine conviction that he is backed up at all times by a mighty Power that works

everywhere in the cosmos, and that he has nothing to fear. This faith should be born of conviction, enlightened understanding, and a real love for the Supreme Being. This is self-mastery, by which, one can invoke incredible powers to function at any time in one's life.

Do not have inner conflicts. Such conflicts are mostly results of the inability to fulfil the basic instinctive urges, which, again, is due to ignorance of one's hidden capacities and of the way by which to utilise properly the facilities provided under the conditions in which one is placed. You have to know clearly (1) what ought to be done, (2) what is capable of being done, (3) what has been done already, (4) why something has not been done yet, and (5) how to overcome the obstacles in a reasonable manner. This means that you have to be master of your own psychology. A successful life includes physical, emotional, intellectual and moral fitness based on an integration of being in all its degrees, inwardly as well as outwardly. Know yourselves as higher than you now are. Summon the reserve forces which lie latent

within, and use them for the constructive work of building the structure of life which is not merely yours, but of everyone, equally. When the diversity of beings is beheld as rooted in the One, and as having proceeded from the One, then does one attain to Perfection, says the Bhagavadgita. But the achievement of this end is hard, though possible for everyone. It demands inner toughness born of a perfect moral nature. A capacity to love and to serve all with the feeling of the presence of a common element behind everyone, to be truthful and honest and straightforward at any cost, to be able to feel for others as one does for oneself, not to do to others what would not be desirable for oneself, to have always a concern for the good of the whole world and not merely of a restricted group of

persons, not to attempt at appropriating things which do not lawfully belong to oneself, to be perfectly continent and restrained in thought, word and deed, to be able to look at the world with a cosmic vision, and to act at all times with this consciousness, is the requisite qualification demanded of a truly cultured person and a seeker of Truth. We are neither wise nor right when we lose sight of this meaning of the educational process and act in a way that is not warranted by this vision of perfection. But, success is near at hand, if only we would have a rightly directed will. And it is for our own good. Let us pray in the sublime words of the Upanishad:

Lead us from the unreal to the Real,
 Lead us from darkness to Light,
 Lead us from death to Immortality.

Yoga does not want a turning away from life. It demands spiritualisation of life.

Yoga is primarily a way of life, not something which is divorced from life. Yoga is not forsaking of action, but is efficient performance in the right spirit. Yoga is not running away from home and human habitation, but a process of moulding one's attitude to home and society with a new understanding.

Swami Sivananda

ANECDOTES FROM SIVANANDA DAY-TO-DAY

Sri Swami Venkatesananda

17th DECEMBER, 1948
SOURCE OF COURAGE

Sri Sthanu Subramania Iyer today had the good fortune of celebrating his son's birthday at the Ashram, and thus enable the young lad to receive the Sage's blessings in person. The boy should have had the accumulated merits of thousands of lives of Yoga Sadhana to receive on the crown of his head the sacred palm of Siva.

Sri Subramania Iyer is a devotee of Lord Dattatreya. So, a grand worship was arranged at the Dattatreya Mandir as an item of yesterday's Datta Jayanti programme. The Murti of Dattatreya was bathed in milk with the chanting of Rudra, Chamaka and Purushasukta and Khichadi was offered. Siva suggested "Aranya Bhojan" (Forest Dinner) and the party took the Prasad in the Jungle itself.

Suddenly Siva burst forth: "I have decided. The Lord gave me the idea two years ago. We should build some Virakta Kutirs here immediately. We have already

written to the Tehri State for permission. We shall start the work. They will all be Kutcha Kutirs which can be built even without formal sanction from the State. Just put up a few wooden pillars and spread corrugated sheets over them. That is all! Krishnanandaji, Sivanarayanji and others of a meditative temperament will live here. They can spend their whole time in silent contemplation. We should start the work at once. Later on, if the State or someone else objects, we shall go away from here. No loss!"

Such power of renunciation! And, that is the fountain source of courage. This courage is the main-spring for dynamic activity, selfless service. This is the secret of Siva's miraculous achievement in the field of service. Just think of the phenomenal growth of the Society!

Aranya Bhojan over. Siva roared "OM": the entire forest echoed and re-echoed. The vibrations reached up to the horizon. Siva sang Kirtan, for a second time. (The first one was during the ceremonial Worship to Lord Dattatreya)

Taken from Sivananda-Day-to-day

"May Lord bless Sri Badrinath, Sri Subramania Iyer and family with health, long life, peace, prosperity and Kaivalya! May you all realise the Self in this very birth!" Then, we all chanted the Shanti Path in chorus.

"Now I will say 'Long live': you should all respond with 'Badrinath.' This is on the model of the "Three Cheers." (We cheered in this divine way, thrice.) It is all on account of Sri Badrinath that we were able to come here today, worship Lord Dattatreya, enjoy the serene atmosphere of the forest; and even the idea of the

Virakta Kutirs here owes its birth partly to him. Sri Badrinath is really a blessed soul."

This attitude was peculiar among saints to Lord Dattatreya who, though a Sage of Supreme Wisdom, sang the praise of a snake and even a prostitute. To Siva, the young boy Badrinath, his aged father, an erudite Pundit, a highly-evolved saint—represent the One and Only Brahman.

With Dattatreya Kirtan, we returned to the Ashram.

To behold the one Self in all beings is Jnana, wisdom; to love the Self is Bhakti, devotion; to serve the Self is Karma, action. When the Jnana Yogin attains wisdom, he is endowed with devotion and selfless activity. Karma Yoga is for him a spontaneous expression of his spiritual nature, as he sees the one Self in all. When the devotee attains perfection in devotion, he is possessed of wisdom and activity. For him also, Karma Yoga is a spontaneous expression of his divine nature, as he beholds the one Lord everywhere. The Karma Yogin attains wisdom and devotion when his actions are wholly selfless. The three paths are, in fact, one in which the three different temperaments emphasise one or the other of its inseparable constituents. Yoga supplies the method by which the Self can be seen, loved, and served.

Swami Sivananda



CHILDREN'S WORLD

Blessed Children of Eternity!

All of you would be celebrating the New Year's Day today, all over the world. Today is a day of rejoicing to one and all of you. On this blessed day, we send you through this Magazine our hearty good wishes so that you may all grow steadily and surely, in spirituality. May God, our Father, make you all great, each in your own way. You should not confine this day's activities to



mere physical rejoicings. You should keep up your mental joy. Then alone all things will appear joyful to you. Be cheerful. Remember that you are all the chosen children of God. If you are cheerful on this auspicious day, you will be cheerful throughout the year.

The first day of the year is always the best day for beginning to turn a new leaf in your life. Today you celebrate the New Year's Day. Think about what you want to do during the New Year. Forget the year that has passed.

Make a few good resolves. Think of Buddha, Christ, Nandanar, Mira Bai, Sita. What a wonderful life they led. See with what respect they are remembered. It was because they all lived a very pure and noble life. Don't you want to become like them?

I hear every one of you saying, "Yes, Swamiji. I would very much like to." Then, make a determination that you will develop at least one of the noble virtuous qualities that they had — Truth, Mercy, Love, Devotion, Piety. Pray to God, "O Lord! Yet another Year has come. I want to become a good man. Won't you help me?" Help will come. But,



you should yourself make it a point to remember always your determination to be good. Make a few resolves. "I will do Japa for 15 minutes daily." You know what is Japa? It is repeating God's name over and over — Om Namah Sivaya, Om Namo Bhagawate Vasudevaya (the famous Mantra which brought God to young Dhruva). Next, "I will sing God's name for 15 minutes daily." "I will write God's name for 15 minutes." This is Divine imposition writing! If you commit a slight mistake, your teacher asks you to write "I will not do such and such a thing hereafter." This is intended to prevent you from committing the same mistake again. How powerful should God's name be then! If you write it with devotion, you will see God very quickly. Then, "I will do Yoga Asanas for 10 minutes". You can select a few simple Asanas and practise them. This will improve your health. "I will not tell a lie." Whenever you feel like telling a lie, at once you should close your eyes and think, "I have determined that I won't tell a lie during this year. I will speak the truth now and if it brings trouble, I

shall bear it coolly." At once think of Harishchandra. You will become like him! Don't steal even little things either at home or in your school. When you steal a thing, to avoid punishment you have to tell a lie, and so on you develop many evil habits. Don't get angry with any of your friends. If you



get angry often, you will become very weak when you grow up. How can you become great if you are weak? Be cheerful always. Love everybody. Everyone is God's creation as you are. You should not even think ill of others. If your mother gives you a small cake, you should share it with a few of your friends. See how pleased they are! God is watching your actions. When you do such acts of kindness, He will stand by your side and smile. You will get His

Grace and then He will give you more and more of cakes. If a beggar comes in front of your house, give him some rice or quarter of an anna. See his face now. What joy does he get from such a small gift. God will give you more and more. The beggar's joy will transform itself into a Deva and protect you from hunger throughout your life.

Get up before sunrise in the morning and immediately after washing your face, sit before your God and recite some prayers. If your father or mother has taught you some prayers, you can recite them; or, you can even pray in your own way, "O Lord! I am Your child. Let me be as pure as You are. I have taken some resolves to lead a good, noble life hereafter. Give me strength to stick to them. O Lord! Bless my father, mother, brothers, sisters, friends and everybody on this earth! You are all

powerful. Let nobody suffer on this earth." God will listen to your sincere prayers. See, by praying for others, you have prayed for your good also!

If you sincerely follow the above instructions, you are surely destined to become great. You will live forever. May God bless you to be a Chiranjeevi like Dhruva!

Swami Sivananda

VIDURA'S WIFE'S PLANTAIN SKIN OFFERING

Vidura was away from his house.
Now, Lord Krishna entered Vidura's house.
Vidura's wife became highly ecstatic,
Her heart was brimming with joy.
She took some plantain-fruits,
Removed the skin and offered the same.

In her overwhelming joy,
She lost all consciousness.
Lord Krishna was eating the skin joyfully.

In the meantime, Vidura entered the house;
He said to his wife, "What are you doing?
Instead of giving the fruit, you are giving the skin!"
Thereupon Vidura offered the fruit to the Lord.

The Lord said, "O Vidura,
The fruit is not so delicious as the skin
Offered by your wife.
I do not want the fruit."

The Lord does not want rich offering;
He wants your heart and heart alone.
Have a devoted heart like that of Vidura's wife.

Swami Sivananda

Cultural Tour of H. H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj

In response to humble invitation of the devotees of Odisha, H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj, Vice-President, the Divine Life Society Headquarters, visited Odisha in the second week of December 2023.

Sri Swamiji Maharaj's first destination was Swami Sivananda Sevagrama, Gaham, where the Annual Sadhana Shivar and Spiritual Conference were being organised from 10th to 14th December 2023. On 10th morning, en route from Bhubaneswar to Gaham, Swamiji received a request from the Commanding Officer of Special Operations Group of Odisha Police, to give a talk for their trainees. Swamiji Maharaj accepted this spontaneous invitation and addressed the police trainees who were being trained to fight in Naxel prone areas. Swamiji, in his talk, inspired them to approach the Naxelites primarily as human beings but not before ensuring their own safety and then try to reform them by their ideologies. Swamiji further said that if this method did not work, they could take up the fighting mode. Swamiji also gave them insights upon how to work stress-free in such life-threatening situations. Swamiji Maharaj's talk was well received by 350 trainees.

Thereafter, Swamiji proceeded to Sivananda Sevagrama, Gaham, to attend the 6th Annual Sadhana Shivar and Spiritual Conference organised by Swami Sivananda Sevagrama Charitable Society. On 10th December afternoon, Swamiji Maharaj inaugurated the newly constructed Sivananda Auditorium. Following this, Swamiji inaugurated and also presided over the Spiritual Conference which was well attended by over 900 delegates. During his two days' stay at Gaham, Swamiji Maharaj gave a series of talks emphasising the essence of Dharma. Swamiji also attended the cultural programme performed by children.

During Swamiji's stay at Gaham, a group of 30 children from Sukinda Mines, situated in tribal area, came to have his Darshan. Swamiji spent time with the children and blessed them with Prasad and his inspiring words. From Gaham, Swamiji proceeded to Kolkata on 12th December.

At the kind invitation of Sri Swami Atmapriyanandaji Maharaj, Pro-chancellor, RKMVERI (Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Educational and Research Institute) University, Belur Math, Kolkata, Swamiji Maharaj visited the University on 13th December for his week-long stay. Swamiji Maharaj was accorded warm welcome by Sri Swami Atmapriyanandaji Maharaj along with his team of monks who are serving as faculty members in the University. On 14th December, Swamiji had an interactive session with Sri Swami Bhajananandaji Maharaj, Vice-President, Ramakrishna Math and Missions and other senior monks (faculty members) of the RKMVERI. They had an interesting exchange of ideas on the subject 'Ritam' which proved a great learning experience for the monks and Brahmacharis of the University.

Next day, Swamiji gave a lecture on the topic 'The content of the Vedas—the concept of Ritam' in the Department of Sanskrit and Philosophy run under the 'School of Indian Heritage' at the RKMVERI University. Following the lecture, there was an interaction with the students, research scholars and faculty members. Thereafter, Swamiji was taken around the Department and shown the classes and libraries. It is worth mentioning here that the Divine Life Society Headquarters Ashram has created a 'Memorial Chair in the name of Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in RKMVERI University.

On 18th December, Swamiji was taken to the off-campus of the RKMVERI located at Narendrapur. In this huge campus, a School, a College and various rural development works as well as Training Centres are being run by the Mission. Swamiji gave a talk on 'Importance of Values' to the

graduates and post graduates, research scholars and faculty members. In the evening, Swamiji Maharaj called on the General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Missions, Sri Swami Suviranandaji Maharaj and had a cordial interaction with him.

During his stay at Belur Math, Swamiji paid his devout obeisance at the Main Shrine of the Math, followed by the Darshan of the holy temples of Mother Sharada Devi and Swami Vivekananda. Swamiji visited Dakshineswar Kali temple, Kashipur House and other important places related to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa's life as well. Swamiji also visited the birthplace of Sri Thakur at Kamarpukur village and the birthplace of Ma Sharada at Jayrambati village. Hearty welcome was accorded to Swamiji Maharaj at both the villages.

On the last day of his visit i.e. 20th December, Swamiji was requested to address the Trainee Brahmacharis at the Training Centre of the Belur Math. Swamiji Maharaj gave an enlightening discourse to the monks-in-making on 'The Glory of Bhakti in the Kali Yuga'.

From Kolkata, Swamiji proceeded to Bhubaneswar on 21st December. In the evening, Swamiji blessed the devotees in a Satsanga held at the DLS Bhubaneswar Branch which was well attended by around 150 devotees. That same night, Swamiji Maharaj proceeded to CHSA (Chidananda Hermitage Shanti Ashram) Baliguali, Puri.

In Baliguali, Swamiji was joined by the auditors of the Headquarters Ashram on the next day for the audit work of CHSA. Swamiji discussed with the auditors and the members of CHSA about the management of CHSA. On 25th December, Swamiji visited the newly affiliated DLS Branch of Chandrashekharpur, located on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar. Upon the humble request from the members of the Branch, Swamiji Maharaj formally inaugurated the Branch and gave his blessing message as well. On 26th December, Swamiji left Bhubaneswar and arrived at the Headquarters Ashram in the evening.

Celebration of the 80th Anniversary of Mahamantra Sankirtan Yajna



Glorifying the significance of singing of the divine name, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj says –

“Sankirtan is the easiest, surest and quickest means to God-realisation.”

The sacred day of the 80th Anniversary of Mahamantra Sankirtan Yajna was celebrated with great spiritual gaiety at the Headquarters Ashram on 3rd December 2023.

As a prelude to the Celebration, the collective chanting of the Mahamantra was done daily at Bhajan Hall for three hours from 27th November to 2nd December 2023. On the auspicious day of 3rd December, a Havan was performed at the Ashram Yajnasala for the peace and welfare of world. At 2.30 p.m., a beautifully decorated palanquin with the portraits of



Lord Sri Rama, Lord Sri Krishna and Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj was taken in a procession which wended its way from the Ashram to Kailash Gate, Rishikesh. The residents, devotees and guests of the Ashram took part in the procession with great zeal and devotion. Small booklets elucidating the glory of the Divine Name, specially printed for the occasion, were distributed along the way. After the procession, the floral Archana was offered to Lord Sri Rama and Lord Sri Krishna in the Bhajan Hall to the chants of Ashtottarashata-Namavali, and amidst the ecstatic singing of Mahamantra. The programme concluded with Arati and distribution of sacred Prasad.



During the night Satsanga, the devotees got the blessed opportunity to have Darshan of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj and to listen to his mellifluous and soul-stirring Bhajan - Kirtan

through a Video Show.

May Lord Sri Rama, Lord Sri Krishna and Sadgurudev bless us all with the constant remembrance of the Divine Name.

Sri Gita Jayanti Celebration at the Headquarters Ashram



The Gita is not merely a book. It is not a mere scripture. It is a Living Voice carrying an eternally vital and indispensable message to mankind. Its verses embody words of wisdom, coming from the Infinite Ocean of Knowledge-Absolute Itself.

Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj

The auspicious day of Sri Gita Jayanti was celebrated with great devoutness on 23rd December 2023 at the Headquarters Ashram.

The programme commenced with a Gita Yajna at the Ashram Yajnasala for the peace and welfare of the world. In the forenoon, a special Satsanga was organised in the holy Samadhi Hall wherein all the eighteen chapters of the sacred Scripture were devoutly recited by the Sannyasis,



Brahmacharis, devotees and guests of the Ashram. It was followed by the floral Archana of Lord Sri Krishna to the chant of Ashtottarshatanamavali. The Satsanga concluded with Arati and distribution of Prasad.

May Lord Sri Krishna and Sadgurudev bless us all with pure hearts to imbibe the divine wisdom of the Gita and thereby attain eternal bliss and everlasting peace in this very life.



Sri Dattatreya Jayanti Celebration at the Headquarters Ashram



न ह्यम्मयानि तीर्थानि न देवा मृच्छिलामयाः।
ते पुनन्त्युरुकालेन दर्शनादेव साधवः ॥

The Tirthas (holy waters) and the images of the Lord made of clay and stone do purify the devotees after prolonged worship whereas the Darshan of the saints effect this purification instantaneously.

Worship of the great saints and the celebration of their birthdays are the occasions for recalling to our minds the ideals for which they stood and the spiritual heights that they reached, so that by deep contemplation on their sublime lives, we may get inspired and dedicate ourselves towards the attainment of supreme goal of life with renewed enthusiasm.

The sacred day of Sri Dattatreya Jayanti was celebrated with great devoutness at the Headquarters Ashram on the full-moon day of the month of



Margashirsha i.e. 26th December 2023. The inmates, devotees and guests of the Ashram joyously participated in the Satsanga organised from 9 a.m. to 11.00 a.m. at Dattatreya Temple wherein grand worship, with Abhisheka and Archana to the Vedic chants, was offered to Lord Dattatreya. The Sannyasis and Brahmacharis of the Ashram sang Stotras, Bhajans and Kirtans as their worshipful offering at the sacred feet of Avadhuta Guru. After the Arati, everyone partook the holy Prasad.

In the night Satsanga, Marcus and Zen from Brazil offered their loving tribute to Lord Dattatreya and Sri Gurudev in the form of soulful devotional music.



May Lord Dattatreya and Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj shower their divine grace upon all.

80th Pratishtha Mahotsava of Sri Vishwanatha Mandir



Lord Siva is the Supreme Light that shines in your heart. Meditate on His form. Do His worship daily. He will bless you with His vision.

Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj

With devout rejoicing, the auspicious day of the 80th Anniversary of the Pratishtha (consecration) of Sri Vishwanatha Mandir was celebrated at the Headquarters Ashram on 31st December 2023.

As a prelude to the celebration, the inmates and devotees of the Ashram chanted the sacred Panchakshari Mantra 'Om Namah Sivaya' in Sri Vishwanatha Mandir for two hours from 27th to 29th December 2023. On 30th December, the Akhand chanting of the Mantra commenced at 7 a.m., and continued till 6 p.m. filling the entire ambience with divine vibrations.

On the blessed day of 31st December, the Celebration commenced with the Prabhat-pheri followed by a Havan for the peace and welfare of the world. In the forenoon, a grand Abhisheka was offered to Lord Sri Vishwanatha



enshrined in the delightfully decorated sanctum-sanctorum of Sri Vishwanatha Mandir with the sonorous chanting of Vedic Mantras. It was followed by Archana of the Lord to the chant of Vedasara-Sivasahasranamavali. With joyful hearts, all the inmates and devotees participated in the Abhisheka-Archana of the Lord. The celebration concluded with the Mangalarati and distribution of Prasad at Annapurna Bhawan.

May the abundant blessings of Lord Sri Vishwanatha and Sadgurudev be upon all.



Christmas-New Year Retreat at the Headquarters Ashram



As per yesteryears, Holy Christmas was celebrated with great devotion and spiritual rejoicing at the Headquarters Ashram on 24th December 2023. The Ashramites, devotees and guests participated enthusiastically in the joyous function which began with Jaya Ganesh Kirtan at 7.30 p.m. in the sacred Samadhi Hall.

The evening featured several hymns and songs expressing gratitude, related to the theme of the Christmas-New Year Retreat 'The Liberating Power of Gratitude.' It was followed by the traditional Bible readings interspersed with sacred music. Inspiring readings from Worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj were also included. The celebration concluded with silent meditation, closing prayers and the



distribution of sacred Prasad.

From December 25, 2023 to January 1, 2024, the 28th Annual Christmas-New Year Retreat for seekers from abroad was held at the Swami Sivananda Auditorium Satsanga Hall. Over forty devotees from sixteen countries along with many guests devoutly attended the sessions of the Retreat. Inspiring mid-morning talks were given by senior Swamijis of the Ashram on this year's Retreat theme 'The Liberating Power of Gratitude.' All the talks from Headquarters Ashram were live streamed onto the Divine Life Society Youtube Channel and they were deeply appreciated by both live and online listeners.

During the night Satsanga, wonderful talks on the theme of gratitude were shared online by different speakers. In addition, there were two beautiful musical offerings held in sacred Samadhi Hall. Morning meditation in the sacred Samadhi Hall and guided meditation led by senior Swamijis every evening, were also the part of the Retreat programme. The Retreat concluded with the blessings from senior Swamijis and distribution of Jnana Prasad on January 1st.

New Year Celebration at the Headquarters Ashram

A New Year of new life has come. Every day of this New Year should be spent in egoless service, all-embracing love and devotion to God.

Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj

The New Year was celebrated with great spiritual gaiety at the Headquarters Ashram in the night Satsanga of 31st December 2023. The celebration commenced at 7.30 p.m. at the sacred Samadhi Shrine with Jaya Ganesha prayers and chanting of Stotras. Thereafter, Sadgurudev's devotees from different parts of India and world offered their love and devotion at His lotus feet in the form of soul-stirring devotional songs, mellifluous instrumental music and Stotra-chanting. A short drama titled 'Mystery of Life' by the Christmas Retreat participants was also the part of the programme which delighted the hearts



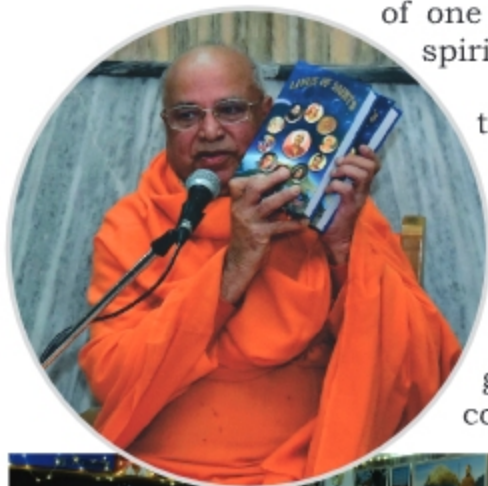
of one and all and also inspired all to tread the spiritual path with grateful hearts.

All the devotees felt immensely blessed to have the Darshan of Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj and to receive their inspiring messages through a DVD show. Thereafter, H.H. Sri Swami Yogaswarupanandaji Maharaj and H.H. Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj blessed the gathering with their brief messages. To commemorate the occasion, two books of Sri

Gurudev were also released. With the chanting of Divine Name and meditation till 12 midnight, all bid adieu to the year 2023 and welcomed the New Year 2024. The celebration concluded with Arati and distribution of special Prasad.

May the grace of the

Lord Almighty, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj be upon all.



6th Annual Sadhana Shivar and Spiritual Conference at Divya Jeevan Sangh, Swami Sivananda Sevagrama Charitable Society, Gaham, Angul (Odisha)



With the divine grace of the Lord Almighty and Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, Divya Jeevan Sangh, Swami Sivananda Sevagrama Charitable Society, Gaham, Angul (Odisha) successfully organised its 6th Annual Sadhana Shivar and Spiritual Conference from 10th to 14th December 2023 at Sivananda Sevagrama, Gaham.

Pujya Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj, Vice-President, the Divine Life Society Headquarters Ashram inaugurated the Conference and presided over the Conference as well. Swamiji Maharaj also inaugurated the newly constructed Sivananda Auditorium and blessed the devotees through



his talks in the Conference. Sri Swami Sivachidanandaji Maharaj, Sri Swami Dharmanisthanandaji Maharaj, Sri Swami Swarupanandaji Maharaj, Swamini Atmikananda Saraswati Mataji, Pujya Babaji Sri Brijbandhu Das

Maharaj, Brahmachari Sri Satya Chaitanyaji, Brahmachari Sri Sivaprasad Chaitanyaji, Pandit Sri Birendra Kumar Pandaji, Pandit Sri K Sridhar Dasji and other scholars guided the Sadhakas through their discourses on various aspects of Sadhana. Sri Dilip Kumar Ottaji ably conducted all the sessions of the Conference as the Master of Ceremonies. 914 registered delegates and a large number of devotees from various parts of Odisha devoutly participated in the Shivr and Conference.

May the blessings of Lord Almighty and Sadgurudev be upon all.



**48th TELUGU DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY
SPIRITUAL CONFERENCE
From 26th to 28th January 2024
at Yadadri, Yadagiri Gutta, Telangana**

By the grace of Most Worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Lord Lakshmi Narasimha, the 48th Divine Life Society Spiritual Conference "Divya Gyanalahari" will be held from 26th to 28th January 2024 at Yadadri, Yadagiri Gutta, Bhuvanagiri District, Telangana.

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 Shamala Pramod Kumar | M: 0 9248134848 |
| 2. Sri Venkata Sameer Kumar | M: 0 8333890999 |
| 3. Sri Ananda Gajapathi Raju | M: 0 9848306585 |
| 4. Sri Janardhan Ji | M: 0 7013242585 |

Man's essential nature is divine, the awareness of which he has lost because of his animal propensities and the veil of ignorance. Man, in his ignorance, identifies himself with the body, mind, Prana, and the senses. Transcending these, he becomes one with Brahman or the Absolute who is pure bliss.

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

Brahmapur (Odisha): The Branch continued Guru Paduka Puja on Thursdays and 8th and 24th of every month. There were Gita chanting on Ekadasi day and Sundarakanda Parayan on Sankranti day. Sadhana day was held on 3rd Sunday of every month. Sri Ram Charit Manas Parayan was arranged from 29th October to 27th November. Mahamantra Kirtan was conducted on Kartika Purnima day.

Balasore (Odisha): In the month of October and November, the Branch continued daily Puja, weekly Satsang on Thursdays, and Paduka Puja on 2nd Sunday of every month. Besides this, chanting of Vishnu Sahasranam and Mahamantra Sankirtan and Narayan Seva were done on 8th October and 12th November. The Branch conducted medical camp on 12th October and 9th November.

Bargarh (Odisha): The Branch had daily Swadhyaya, Pranayama and Meditation, Rudrabhishek on Mondays, Guru Paduka Puja on Thursdays, weekly Satsang every

Saturday, and recitation of Srimad Bhagavad Gita with discussion on Sundays. Charitable Homeopathic treatment of poor patients was continued. Pravachan on Tulasi Ramayan was arranged from 5th to 11th November.

Bolangir (Odisha): The Branch conducted special programmes for students and teachers on 19th November, in the name of "Sivananda Literature Festival for Students, and Teachers" on "Life-Building", "Character-Building" and "Man-Making Education" for students, and on "Orientation of Teachers on Teaching Profession" for teachers. It was followed by Prayers and talks. On this occasion, a commemorative souvenir "Golden Student Life" was distributed to the students and Teachers. The celebration has been video recorded and it will be uploaded in the You Tube.

Bhimkand (Odisha): Daily Paduka Puja and weekly Satsang on Sundays were held in the Branch.

Bhubaneswar (Odisha): The Branch continued its daily Puja and Narayan Seva, weekly Satsang on

Thursdays, and free health service for four days in a week. Mobile Satsang was held on 5th November. There was chanting of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra on 10th and 15th. The Branch conducted a special Prayer and chanting of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra on 13th for the Supreme Peace of the immortal soul of Late Dr. L.K. Nayak. Aradhana day of Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj was observed on 20th. Raas Ustav was arranged by the Branch from 23rd to 27th November. Chidananda day was observed on 24th with Srimad Bhagavat Parayan and Chanting of "Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram". Special Satsang was held on 28th.

Chandigarh (Punjab): The Branch conducted daily online Satsang with Gurudev's spiritual teachings. Weekly Satsang was held on Sundays with Narayan Seva. Besides this, the Branch arranged Ramayan Path on Tuesdays and Saturdays. There was Akhanda Mahamantra Japa on 24th November. A combined Satsang with Panchakula Branch was arranged on 26th.

Chhatrapur (Odisha): The Branch continued weekly Satsang on

Thursdays with Bhajan, Kirtan, recitation of Bhagavad Gita and discourse on Ramayan, and Paduka Puja on 8th and 24th of every month. Three mobile Satsangs were held on 12th, 15th, and 30th October with recitation of Hanuman Chalisa and Sundara Kanda Parayan. The Branch had arranged a Sadhana Shivar on 5th with Prayers, Bhajans and talk on Japa, Dhyana and Parayan. Sri Ramcharit Manas Parayan was conducted from 29th October to 27th November.

Chandapur (Odisha): Daily Puja, weekly Satsang on Saturdays, Guru Paduka Puja on Thursdays, and mobile Satsang on 8th and 24th of every month were the regular programmes of the Branch. Sundarakanda Parayan was done on Sankranti day, and recitation of Hanuman Chalisa on 14th and 21st November. Sri Ramcharit Manas Parayan from 19th to 27th and Valmiki Ramayan Parayan from 24th to 27th were arranged by the Branch.

Cuttack (Odisha): Sadhana day was observed on 1st October with Guru Paduka Puja, Swadhyaya, and recitation of Hanuman Chalisa. A Special Satsang was held on 8th. The

Branch performed Durgashtami Puja on 21st with Hawan, and on 22nd Lakshyarchana, Bhajan and Kirtan. There was chanting of Srimad Bhagavad Gita on Ekadasi days. Besides this, daily Paduka Puja and three mobile Satsangs were arranged by the Branch. Around 90 patients had free treatment and medicines through Sivananda Allopathic Dispensary. The Monthly Magazine "Dibya Sandesh" was published.

Jamshedpur (Jharkhand):

The Branch continued its weekly Satsang on Fridays. Recitation of Vishnu Sahasranam was held on 27th November. Free drawing classes were conducted for poor children of the Antyodaya Bastee every Sunday.

Kakching (Manipur): Daily Puja with chanting of Shiva Mahimna Stotra, Shiva Abhishekam on Mondays, and Guru Paduka Puja on Thursdays were continued by the Branch. Akhanda Mahamantra Kirtan was held on Sundays. Monthly Satsang was organized on 8th of November.

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

was arranged on 8th October with Japa, Bhajan and Pravachan.

Lanjipalli Ladies Branch

(Odisha): In the month of November, the Branch had daily Puja, weekly Satsang on Sundays, and Paduka Puja and mobile Satsang on Thursdays. Besides this, Ekadasis were observed with chanting of Srimad Bhagavad Gita, and there were recitation of Hanuman Chalisa and Sundarakanda Parayan on Sankranti day. During Kartika month, Sri Ramcharit Manas Parayan and Pravachan, and Srimad Bhagavata Saptah were conducted from 16th to 27th November. Besides this, Narayan Seva was done on Purnima day.

Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh): The Branch conducted special Satsangs at Lekhraj Homes on 5th and 12th November with Prayers, Bhajans, and Mantra Japa etc. Besides this, there was chanting of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra for welfare of all beings.

Nandinagar (Chhattisgarh):

The Branch had daily morning prayers, Yoga class, Gita Path, chanting of Hanuman Chalisa and Vishnu Sahasranam. There was Mahamantra Kirtan on 3rd October.

Besides this, weekly Satsang on Thursdays, and Matri Satsang on Saturdays with recitation of Sundarakanda and Hanuman Chalisa were the regular programmes of the Branch. Navaratri was celebrated from 15th to 24th October. It was followed by Jyoti Kalash, Hawan and Kanya Puja.

Nayagarh (Odisha): The Branch continued its weekly Satsang on Wednesdays. There was Sundarakanda Parayan, Gita Path, and recitation of Hanuman Chalisa and Vishnu Sahasranam on Sankranti day. The Branch had arranged chanting of Bhagavad Gita from 19th to 24th November. A Special Satsang was held on 21st.

Panchkula (Haryana): The Branch had mobile Satsang on Sundays at the residence of devotees with study of Bhagavad Gita, Bhajans and Prayers for world peace and well being of all. Besides this, Narayan Seva was done on 8th November at Civil Hospital, and on 24th, green fodder was offered at Mata Mansa Devi Gowshala.

Puri (Odisha): In the month of October, 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. Mahamantra Sankirtan was conducted on Purnima and Amavasya day.

Rourkela (Odisha): Daily Yoga class and weekly Satsang on Thursdays and Sundays were continued with Paduka Puja, Bhajan, Swadhyaya, discourse and chanting of Vishnusahasranam etc. As usual, free Acupressure treatment and medicines were provided to needy people. A Special Satsang was held on 26th November.

South Balanda (Odisha): In the month of October and November, the Branch conducted daily Puja, weekly Satsang on Fridays, and Guru Paduka Puja on 8th and 24th of every month. Mobile Satsang was held on 10th October. Gita Path and recitation of Vishnu Sahasranam and Hanuman Chalisa were done on Ekadasis. There was Akhanad Mahamantra Sankirtan on 31st October and 29th November. Srimad Bhagavata Parayan and Pravachan were arranged from 21st to 27th November, and it was concluded with Narayan Seva.

AVAILABLE BOOKS ON YOGA, PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

By H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj

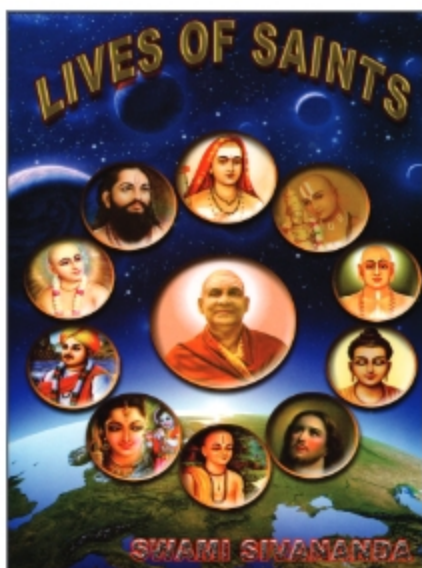
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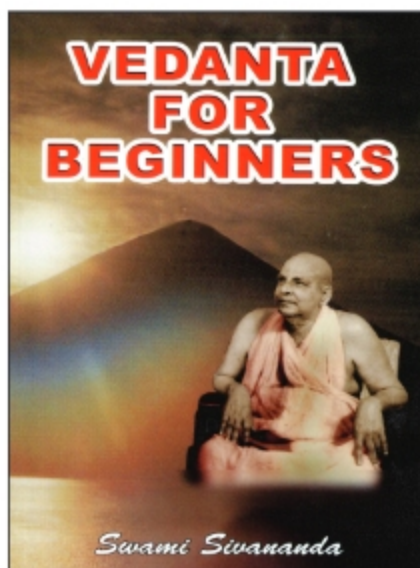
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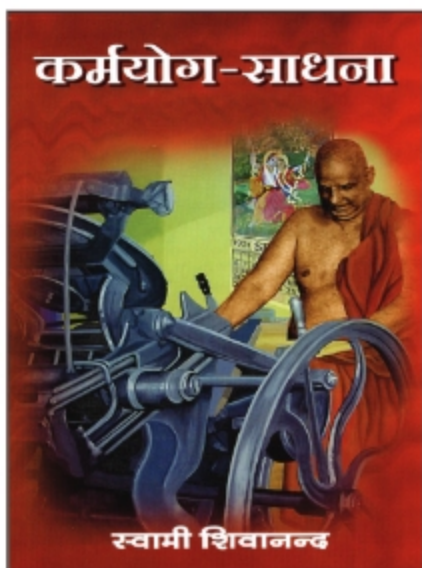
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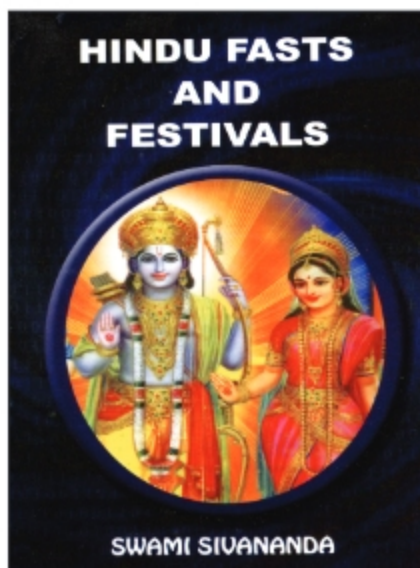
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TWENTY IMPORTANT SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTIONS

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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Inter-related Fundamentals of Spiritual Life

Satyam or truth is the seed. Brahmacharya or celibacy is the root. Meditation is the shower. Shanti or Peace is the flower. Moksha or emancipation is the fruit. Therefore, speak the truth, practise celibacy, cultivate Shanti and meditate regularly. You will surely attain the final emancipation or freedom from birth and death.

Swami Sivananda

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