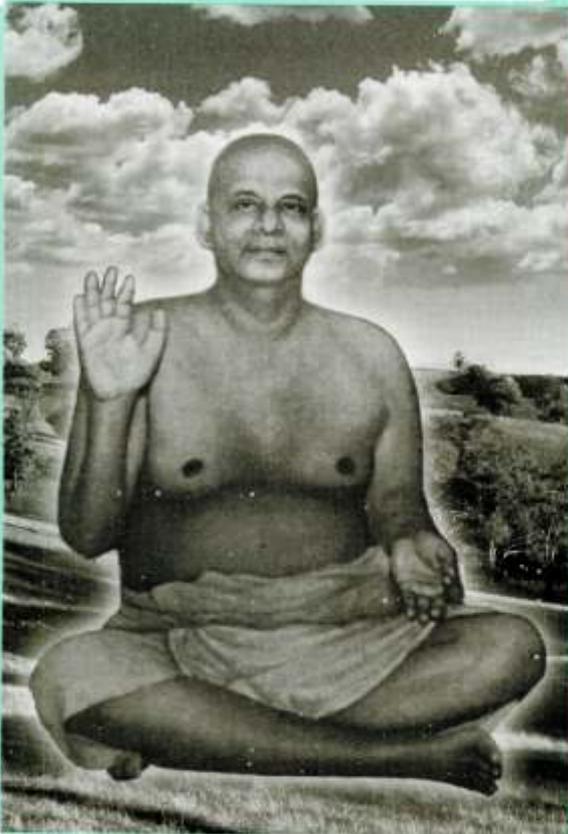


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The DIVINE LIFE



Sadhana
is a lifelong
process. Every day,
every hour, every minute is
an onward march. Obstacles
are innumerable in this great
voyage. But so long as you hold
God as thy guide, there is
nothing to worry about. You are
sure to reach the other
shore.

Swami Sivananda

MARCH 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 NOT DELUDED

You have a whole menagerie within you—the lion, the tiger, the serpent, the elephant, the ape, the peacock. Bring them under your control. The beauty of the flesh is really due to the life-giving principle, Prana. The beauty is attributable to the light that emanates from Atman.

The nasty body with oozing discharges from nine gutterlets is composed of five elements. It is a Jada Vastu and unholy. Always entertain this idea. Have a clear-cut, well-defined, image-picture as this. You will conquer lust by such a mental drill.

Swami Sivananda



THE DIVINE LIFE

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MUNDAKOPANISHAD

CHAPTER I—SECTION II

परीक्ष्य लोकान्कर्मचितान्ब्राह्मणो निर्वेदमायान्नास्त्यकृतः कृतेन ।
तद्विज्ञानार्थं स गुरुमेवाभिगच्छेत्समित्पाणिः श्रोत्रियं ब्रह्मनिष्ठम् ॥१२॥

Let a Brahmana (an aspirant), after he has examined the worlds gained by Karma, acquire freedom from all desires, reflecting that nothing that is eternal can be gained by Karma. Let him, in order to obtain the knowledge of the eternal, take sacrificial fuel (Savit) in his hands, and approach that preceptor alone, who is versed in the Vedas and is established in Brahman.

शिवानन्दस्तोत्रपुष्पांजलिः
SIVANANDA-STOTRAPUSHPANJALI
PART-II

Sri Swami Jnanananda Saraswati, Shivanandanagar

अमर्त्यापगातीरवासं सुशीलं
 सुमर्त्याभिनन्द्यं विशालावबोधम्
 शमप्रस्फुरद्विव्यशोभाविलासं
 शिवानन्दयोगीन्द्रमेवाश्रयेऽहम् ॥४१॥

I surrender myself to the great sage Swami Sivananda who is living on the banks of the Ganges, whose character is ennobling, who is admired by all devout people, who has vast knowledge, and who shines with divine splendour and peace.

अहोरात्रमुत्कृष्टकर्मैकदीक्षं
 महोराशिमाशास्यनानापदानम्
 महीशादिसेव्यं जगद्देशिकं तं
 शिवानन्दयोगीन्द्रमेवाश्रयेऽहम् ॥४२॥

I take refuge at the lotus feet of Jagadguru Swami Sivananda who is always engaged in performing noble actions, whose all deeds are sublime and glorious, and who is worshipped even by kings.

(To be continued)

Sivaratri Message

GOODNESS IS THE PATH TO GOD

Sri Swami Sivananda

Salutations and countless prostrations to Blessed Lord Siva, the glorious Yogeeshwara, the Great God, whose grace destroys the bondage of Avidya (individual nescience) and bestows joy, bliss and immortality unto the devout seeker. Lord Sankara is the Supreme Being presiding over the third aspect of the cosmic process, namely that of dissolving the projected names and forms and reabsorbing manifestation back into the original state of the pristine nameless and formless un-manifest Being. The Mahasivaratri is a most auspicious and unique holy day of worship, especially consecrated and dedicated to this third aspect of the Supreme Transcendental Spirit, the Absolute Satchidananda, the One without a second.

This holy tradition of the Mahasivaratri worship of Lord Siva carries an eternal message to mankind at large. It also bears a special message to each and every spiritual aspirant and seeker of whatsoever faith, creed or religion he may be. Siva is veritably supreme

Auspiciousness. He who would approach the Divine must verily make himself a repository of all that is auspicious, good, Sattwic and pure. Illumine yourself with the light and the radiance of virtue. Infill thyself with the peerless wealth of Divine qualities, or Daivi-Sampatti. Verily thou shouldst be an embodiment of Yama-Niyama and Sadachara. Seat thyself steadily upon the firm seat of virtue, if thou wouldst aspire to offer worship unto the Most High. Himself based upon holiness and auspiciousness, the seeker indeed becomes fit to adore and attain Siva, the most Auspicious. This is beautifully brought out in the holy narrative of the Sivaratri story wherein the lone hunter caught in the dense darkness of the deep forest, is described as having offered his spontaneous, unconscious worship to Lord Siva seated upon the holy Bilwa tree. His seat upon the holy Bilwa tree symbolising, as it does, the seat of virtue, reveals the essence of true worship. Secret of successful worship is purity

and goodness.

Know O seeker, that the secret of spiritual attainment is a life of Dharma. Hence, sages proclaim unto the world that the path of righteousness leads to happiness and blessedness. Reflect the ideal in thy own life. Moral rectitude and ethical conduct of life is the essential condition of true prosperity and auspiciousness. This is the indispensable pre-requisite and the only way to real happiness. You cannot base your life on evil and expect to attain the Divine. In the darkness of the night and the terror of the jungle, the lone hunter sought divine succour. The seat whence he offered his worship and prayer was the holiest and one most pleasing to Lord Siva. In the universal context, Dharma is that seat. Darkness and terror once again engulf mankind in this age. It has strayed into the jungle of ungodly ideologies, selfish group-life, hatred and greed. The light of reason has receded from this age of enlightenment. Wherein lies the way out of this?

O man! Worship Siva, the Auspicious. O humanity! Harken to the whispered message of the sacred night, the holy Sivaratri—Be good.

Offer thy adoration to the most auspicious Lord. His grace redeems and transforms. Modern mankind must return to Dharma. The world based upon righteousness alone can realise the ideal of Universal welfare and lasting peace that the political leaders profess to be striving after. Divorced from goodness, virtue and righteousness, man can never, never expect to find auspiciousness and prosperity. Without Dharma, there is no peace or happiness. Without virtue, there can be no welfare.

Behold Siva, the Great God! See Him resplendent with the light of inner Self-absorption. He is Siva, the Self-absorbed. Siva is dead to the world around Him. He is sunk in oblivion of the objective universe. His entire being is immersed in the steadfast contemplation of the Transcendental Ideal. He is the Yogeeshwara. Mankind in its pursuit of the true and lasting welfare must grow into this Siva. Be above the lure of lower earthly objects. Turn away from base ambitions. Direct all your energies towards the ideal of a good and noble life of tolerance, sympathy, compassion and love of all men.

Charity and generosity should guide your dealings with the rest of the world. The Ideal of Goodness must absorb the total attention of the man as well as the State. This is the necessary step to the realisation of the welfare-state of auspiciousness and prosperity.

To be steadfast unto the Ideal—this is Siva. To be impervious to all factors contrary to the Ideal—this is Siva. To be based on absolute righteousness and virtue in your attempt to realise this Ideal—such is the message of holy Sivaratri. Idealism is indispensable. Idealism is not absence or lack of Realism. Idealism is the flaming

force to utilise existing reality unto lofty achievement. To be a realist should not mean to be caught in things as they are. Idealism should powerfully lift mankind from the present conditions to greater heights. Siva's and Sivaratri's message is verily a call to Dharma and Idealism. It is a call to turn away from the 'Preyas' and be drawn fully towards the 'Sreyas.' Happiness of humanity and world-welfare lie that way. May self-restraint, virtue, goodness and idealism guide mankind towards prosperity, auspiciousness and progress.

Om Namah Sivaya!

Lord Siva is the God of Love. His Grace is boundless. He is the Saviour and Guru. He is the Beloved of Uma. He is Satyam, Sivam, Shubham, Sundaram, Kantam. He is the Supreme Light that shines in your heart.

Meditate on His Form. Hear His Lilas. Repeat His Mantra 'Om Namah Sivaya'. Study Siva Purana. Do His worship daily. Behold Him in all names and forms. He will bless you with His Vision.

Swami Sivananda

YOUR LIFE ON EARTH — KNOW ITS PURPOSE

Sri Swami Chidananda

Continued from Previous Issue

If you are always living in the awareness of this certainty of your having to go one day, would you ever neglect to do what's to be done? Would you ever postpone, procrastinate, or just ignore it? Would you ever neglect to do what you have to do—your duties secular and, more than that, spiritual? Would you postpone working to fulfill the most important mission in life—to know yourself, to awake and unfold the spiritual awareness, without which life would be empty, barren of content, only be a surface life of sensation and a little bit of chaotic restless thought and desire, leaving you in a whirl, unsatisfied, discontent, without a sense of fulfillment?

How many of us are really making use of this awareness that "one day I must go; therefore I must be up and doing, not only upon the outer path of human relationship and earthly duties, but also upon the inner path of my own spiritual mission, my highest unfoldment, the supreme Good, knowing which everything becomes known, attaining which all these are added

unto us?" How many of us are earnest? In how many of us, this awareness of the inevitable—call it death—having to journey forth from here, is goading us to be dynamic in our spiritual life, to be progressive in our inner life? We know, but we do nothing about it.

Therefore, the great masters of wisdom, saints and sages, remind us constantly, "O man! With every sunrise and every sunset, one day of your life is lost! By now, so much your span of life has been shortened, in so much less time you have to do whatever you have to do. Therefore, arise, awake! Do not postpone. Be up and doing. Be active upon the spiritual life."

The second great truth is that you are the citizen of two worlds simultaneously. When you took birth and came into this world as an embodied being, the very fact of your having acquired this physical body brought you into a relational pattern with a number of persons—someone was father, someone mother, someone brother, someone sister, someone uncle, someone grandfather, someone grandmother.

And all of life is an expansion of this relationship. It is evident that it is the body that is related to people around you in this physical world. But to whom are you related? Whence did you come? Are you not related to some source, some invisible origin, root of your being, from which has come forth your spiritual reality?

You, in the innermost depth of your being, are the imperishable dweller in this perishable body, the ever-pure and ever-peaceful Reality behind this impure and restless mind. You are the infinite, changeless, spiritual Reality beyond the perishable, the finite and the changeful body, mind and intellect. You are the imperishable, ever-pure, ever-peaceful, limitless spiritual Essence.

In this depth and dimension of your being, you are not of this phenomenon. You are uncreated. You are not a created phenomenon. You are not a process. You are complete in yourself. And in that level of life, in that plane of consciousness, you are not an earth-creature. You belong to a spiritual realm which is your true abode, your everlasting dwelling place, where there is only Existence, Consciousness and Bliss Absolute, where there is Sat, Chit and Ananda, Being, Consciousness

and Bliss. That is Peace. That is Perfection. That is Wholeness. Even while this body dwells on this earth-plane, physical, materialistic plane, even while the body functions in this created world of processes and phenomena, yet, at the same time, you live, move and have your being in the Divine. You have only lost your true awareness.

Here and now, you dwell in the Universal Spirit. You live in that Divine Essence which pervades all existence, which is within and without, which envelops you and which pervades the whole earth and interpenetrates your innermost being.

You can escape from anything, but you cannot escape from the Spirit. You cannot escape from the Reality. For, It is here, It is there and It is everywhere. That's the Truth! Become aware, "I dwell in God, I live in the Divine, I move in the Divine, I exist in the Divine. And the Divine exists in me. It lives and moves and breathes in me. My awareness, my consciousness is the Divine principle within me, the awareness of Being."

Therefore, simultaneously, you are also a citizen of that spiritual realm, the Divine Kingdom of Heaven, the Kingdom of God, right now at this moment! It is not

something to be attained at a distance in time, in some remote future. And the awakening into awareness of this fact is the second great truth one has to cherish in one's mind.

Great masters of wisdom have revealed to us the science of relating ourselves in the most ideal way to both these universes, so that our life may be a thing of beauty. Life may be an ever-progressive process which ends in the dazzling light of Christ-consciousness, the dazzling light of Self-realisation, call it Nirvana, call it Satori, call it Liberation, call it Brahmajnana, or Wisdom, or Illumination. It is a great thing which leaves no regrets, brings supreme satisfaction and fulfils your life, so that your life becomes totally successful and you fulfill the purpose of your every being.

They gave two ideals to develop your relationship between these two universes, on the threshold of which, in the middle of which, each individual human soul stands—there, the vast, mysterious, untapped, spiritual realm which is your true realm, your true plane of being, and here, the temporary realm of material objects and beings, through which you but pass for a while and bid adieu. How can you

relate yourself so that this relationship may not become an obstacle in fulfilling that relationship and stand in the way?

They said, "Relate yourself as a giver. Seek through every thought, word and deed to see in what way you can bring something to enrich life while you pass through it. Never think in terms of 'What can I get? What can I acquire? What can I hold and keep and accumulate?' But go like a master. 'God has given me this wonderful opportunity, this golden chance. While I move through life, in what way, can I enrich life around me? In what way, can I serve others? In what way, can I help a fellow human being? In what way, can I benefit those around me? In what way, can I beautify, enrich it?' Try to make people happy. Go in terms of rising above self, thinking not in terms of this little self and what it can get."

If in this way you are able to rise above self, forget self and try to make life a thing of beauty, a thing of self-offering, giving, making people happy, bringing peace to people, then you set into motion a mysterious Great Law of the universe. You shall never lack. You shall have abundance of life from the Divine. The moment an individual soul

ceases to think of itself and starts thinking in terms of how it can enrich life around it, the Universal Consciousness starts thinking about this being. Day and night, the Universal Consciousness will start providing all the needs of this soul. This is the law. This is an experienced fact to which all the great ones have been witness. And they have left this experience of theirs for our guidance.

Become great. Become noble. Become magnanimous, large-hearted. Think in terms of giving, never in terms of grabbing or getting. Let not the mind think small, petty and mean. But, let it think in a noble way, sublime way, large-hearted way, and I assure you, I promise you that you'll never lack in any way whatsoever. Everything that is needed for your life here, will be supplied to the minutest detail, and no mistake. The Divine takes all the responsibility of that soul which ceases to think of itself and gives of itself for the good of all, for the benefit of God's creation, God's great family.

This is the ideal way of relating yourself to the world around you, so that your life becomes spiritualised, it becomes part of the evolutionary process, and it becomes a supplement to the inner spiritual

unfoldment. Far from being an obstacle, outer life becomes a help, a complementary process in terms of the great spiritual Reality with which your relationship is more lasting, more real, more fundamental, which is forever.

The only thing to which you are really related is the Universal Consciousness, the Father in Heaven, the Almighty Being, the Cosmic Soul. Towards it, the ideal relationship is of seeking and experiencing, and entering into it. The relationship can only be brought out in this earth analogy: "Be as a river unto the ocean". Let your spirit be a restless river, ever questing, ever flowing onward, ever flowing oceanward, moving towards the ocean. Let all your life be brought together and let it be turned into one concerted flow towards the Divine. Let your life be one great love for the Divine, one great seeking, one great hunger and thirsting for the Divine. "I shall, in this very body before life ends, attain the Divine and thus crown my life with the Supreme Fulfilment". This should be your aspiration. This should be your determination. Live in order to attain Divine Consciousness. Live to aspire and rise into a state of God-experience.

SIVA – THE MYSTIC NIGHT

Sri Swami Krishnananda

We conceive God as glory, as creativity and as austerity. Vishnu is glory and magnificence; Brahma is creativity and force, and Siva is austerity and renunciation. You might have heard it said that God is the embodiment of six attributes of which renunciation is one. You will be wondering how God can renounce things. He is not a Sannyasin. He is not an ascetic like a Vairagin or a Sadhu. What is He going to renounce? How do you conceive Siva as an austere Yogin or a renunciate? What does He renounce? The all-pervading Almighty, what has He to give up or abandon? Here is the secret of what renunciation is! It is not renunciation of anything, because, there is nothing outside Him; renunciation does not mean abandonment of any object. If that had been the definition of renunciation, that cannot apply to God. God does not renounce or abandon any object, because all objects are a part of His Cosmic Body. Then, how do you represent God as an embodiment of Vairagya (dispassion)? Bhagavan, who is

endowed with 'Bhaga' or glories of a sixfold nature, is also an embodiment of Vairagya. Do you identify Him with a Sannyasin, possessing nothing? No, never. God is the possessor of all things. Then, how can you call Him a renunciate, a Sannyasin or a Vairagin? The secret behind the concept or the consciousness of Vairagya, renunciation, is here, in the identification of this attribute with God. It is only when we interpret things in terms of God that things become clear. Otherwise, we get confused, we cannot know what goodness is, we cannot know what evil is, we cannot know what virtue is, unless we refer all these values of life to the concept of God in His Perfection. The only standard of reference for us in all matters of life's value is the existence of God. So, the concept of renunciation, which has been very much misused, also gets rectified, clarified and purified when it is understood with reference to the existence of God, whose special manifestation, in this context, is known as Lord Siva.

Taken from DL 1983

(A talk given on 22nd February 1973, a week before Mahasivaratri)

God does not renounce anything. Then, in that case what is renunciation, in this context? It is the freedom from the consciousness of externality. This is called Vairagya. How can you abandon things? All things are there in front of you, like trees in a forest or stones in the jungle. There is nothing like abandonment of things, because they are internally related to you. Nobody can renounce anything, because everything in this world is connected to everything else. Then what is Vairagya? Vairagya is not renunciation of any object; it is impossible. Everything clings to you. But the idea that things are outside you, makes you get attached to them. This false attachment is Raga, and its absence is Vi-raga. The condition of Vi-raga is Vairagya. As God has no consciousness of externality, because everything is embodied in Him, there cannot be a greater renunciate than God. And in as much as this Consciousness of God is the highest form of Wisdom, He is the repository of Jnana.

In our religious tradition, Lord Siva is represented as an aspect of God, the Almighty. He presents before us the ideal of supreme

renunciation born of Divine Realisation — Renunciation born of Divine Realisation, not born of frustration, not born of an escapist attitude, not born of defeatism, but born of an insight into the nature of things, a clear understanding of the nature of life and the wisdom of existence in its completeness — This is the source of Vairagya, or renunciation. You do not want anything, not because you cannot get things, but, because you have realised the interconnectedness of things and the unity of all purpose in consciousness. All desires get hushed, sublimated and boiled down to the Divine Being only when this realisation comes. God does not possess things. Possession is a relationship of one thing with another thing. But, God is super-relative. That is why we call Him the Absolute; He is not relative. Anything that is related to something else comes under the category of relative. God is not related to anything else; because, He is All-comprehensive. And, thus, in His all-comprehensive Absoluteness, which is the height of wisdom conceivable, there is also the concomitant character of freedom

from the consciousness of externality, and therefore, as a corollary, freedom from attachment to anything. Thus, Lord Siva is the height of austerity, Master Yogin, portrayed as seated in a lotus pose, as the king of all ascetics; not that He has the desire for self-control, but, He is what self-control is itself. He does not practise self-control. Self-control itself is symbolised in the personality of Lord Siva. Such a wondrous concept of a glorious majestic picture of the Almighty, as Lord Siva, is before us for adoration during Mahasivaratri.

We observe fast during the day and vigil during the night. The idea is that we control the senses, which represent the outgoing tendency of our mind, symbolised in fasting, and we also control the Tamasic inert condition of sleep to which we are subject every day. When these two tendencies in us are overcome, we transcend the conscious and the unconscious levels of our personality and reach the super-conscious level. While the waking condition is the conscious level, sleep is the unconscious level. Both are obstacles to God-realisation. We are shifted from one condition to

another. We are shunted, as it were, from waking to sleep and from sleep to waking, every day. But the super-conscious is not known to us. The symbology of fast and vigil on Sivaratri is significant of self-control; Rajas and Tamas are subdued, and God is glorified. The glorification of God and the control of the senses mean one and the same thing. Because, it is only in God-consciousness that all senses can be controlled. When you see God, the senses melt, like butter melting before fire. They cannot exist anymore. All the ornaments become the solid mass of gold when they are heated to the boiling point. Likewise, in the furnace of God-consciousness, the sense-energies melt into a continuum of universality.

In the famous Rudra-Adhyaya or the Shatarudriya of the Yajurveda, we have a majestic, universalised description of Lord Siva, a chant which we are accustomed to every day in the temple. Only those who know what Sanskrit is, what the Vedas are and what worship is, can appreciate what this Shatarudriya chant also is. It is one of the most powerful

prayers ever conceived by the human mind. It is filled with a threefold meaning. According to the culture of this country, everything is threefold—objective, subjective and universal. Everything in the world, from the smallest to the biggest, has an objective character, a subjective character and a universal character. Objectively you are something, subjectively you are another thing and universally you are a third thing. It all depends upon from what point of view, you interpret a particular thing, person or object. When you objectively interpret a thing, it looks like one thing; when you subjectively analyse it, it is another thing; and from the universal point of view, it is something else altogether.

Likewise, this Mantra, the Shatarudriya of the Yajurveda, a hymn to Lord Siva, has an objective meaning, a subjective meaning and a divine, supreme, supramental, universal meaning. Objectively, it is a prayer for the control of the forces of nature. Subjectively, it is a prayer for self-control and the rousing of the spiritual consciousness. Universally, it is a surge of the soul towards God-realisation. It has an Adhiyajnika, Adhibhautika,

Adhidaivika and Adhyatmika meaning, as we usually put it. It has a tremendous meaning. The Vedas, the Mantras of the Vedas, are filled with such three-fold or four-fold meaning. Hence it is difficult to understand the full meaning of any Mantra of the Veda. “*Ananta Vai Vedah*”- the Infinite is the meaning of the Vedas. The meaning of the Veda is infinite. It has no end at all. It is mathematics, it is chemistry, it is physics, it is Ayurveda, it is psychology, it is metaphysics, it is philosophy, it is spirituality, it is meditation, it is love, it is ecstasy. You will find everything in every Mantra of the Veda. All depends upon how you look upon it, how you feel it. A person may be a father, he may be a brother, he may be a son, he may be a friend, but all the while he is one and the same person. Attitudes are different on account of the various relationships connected. So, the Rudra Adhyaya is before us, a majestic prayer for world peace, international peace, subjective peace, universal peace and God-consciousness.

It is difficult to chant this Veda Mantra called the Shatarudriya, because it requires a training, as in

music, for example. Everybody cannot sing. It requires tremendous training for years together. Likewise, the chanting of the Mantras of the Veda requires training for years together and not for a few days only. Just as one who does not know how to sing will make a jarring noise and you will like to get up and go away rather than listen to it, so also when you chant the Mantra wrongly, Gods will get up and go away. They will not bear it anymore. So, it requires training. But, once it is properly learnt, it becomes a protection for you from catastrophes of every kind—physical, psychological and what not. So, those who know may chant it, recite it and take part in the recitation of it every day in the temple, at least during the worship on Mahasivaratri.

Those, who cannot do this because it is difficult, can chant the Mantra 'OM NAMAH SIVAYA', the Panchakshara Mantra of Lord Siva with Om preceding it. It is a Kavacha, a kind of armour that you put on. This armour will protect you from danger of every kind. It will protect you and also all those whom you want to be protected. It will protect your family; it will protect your

country. It will protect the whole world. It can cease wars and tensions of every kind, provided you offer the prayers wholeheartedly from the bottom of your heart. Collective prayer is very effective. If a hundred persons join together and pray, it will have a greater effect than one person praying. Of course, if that single person is very powerful, even one person's prayer is all right. But, where personalities have their own weaknesses and foibles, it is better that people have congregational prayer. When all the minds are put together, they form a great energy. It surges forth into God.

So, during this period preceding Sivaratri, prayer is to be offered to Lord Siva as the Master Yogin, as the incarnation of all virtues and powers, as a facet of the Almighty Lord. The glory of Lord Siva is sung in the Siva Purana, in the Yajurveda Rudra Adhyaya, as I mentioned, and in the Mahabharata. You will be wonderstruck at the force with which Vyasa and other sages sing the glories of God, of Vishnu, of Narayana, of Siva, of Devi in the various Puranas and Epics; because, these masterpieces have been written by those who had the

vision of God. Only one who has the vision of God can express with a soulful force. Otherwise, it will be an empty sound without much significance and thought. So, chant the Mantra “OM NAMAH SIVAYA” as many times as possible every day, mentally or even verbally as is convenient, with self-control, which means to say without any thought of sense-object. If you chant the Mantra together with the thought of sense-objects, then there is divided devotion. It is like dividing the course of a river in two different directions so that the force of the waters gets lessened. Suppose you have five sense-objects and towards all of them your senses are running, and you are thinking of God also at the same time. Then, you know, energy is divided, concentration becomes weak and meditation is not successful. No meditation will become successful, if the senses are active; because, the senses are opposite of the effort at meditation. While meditation is the collective force of the mind concentrating itself on God-consciousness, the senses, when they are active, do the opposite of meditation, and you become a tremendous extrovert. You are

connected to the objects of sense, rather than the universal concept which is God. God is unity, whereas sense objects are multiplicity. They are the opposite of what you are aiming at in your spiritual life.

With moderate behaviour in every manner in your spiritual life, you will attain success. As the Bhagavad Gita beautifully puts it, “Moderate in your eating, moderate in your activity, moderate in your speech, moderate in your sleep”—form the golden mean, the *via-media*, the golden path. God is the harmony of all powers in the universe. Harmony means the middle course, neither this extreme nor that extreme. You cannot say whether it is or it is not. We don't know what it is. As Buddha said, “'Nothing is', is one extreme; 'everything is', is another extreme. God is in the middle. Truth is in the middle.” So, the middle path is the best path, which is the path of austerity with understanding. This is the characteristic of the middle path. When there is understanding without austerity, it is useless. When there is austerity without understanding, that is also useless. There must be austerity with

understanding and understanding with austerity, knowledge with self-control and self-control with knowledge; that is wisdom. Knowledge with self-control is called wisdom, whereas knowledge without self-control is mere dry intellectuality. That is of no use. And austerity without understanding is a kind of foolishness. It will have no proper result.

Lord Siva is not merely an austere Being but also a repository of Knowledge. All worshippers of knowledge also worship Lord Siva, as He is the God of all students, scholars and seekers of wisdom and knowledge. Thus, Mahasivaratri is a very blessed God-sent opportunity for us. So, on this day, pray to Lord Siva with all your heart, with all your soul, fully trusting on the might of God, wanting nothing from the objects of sense, and delighted within that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. God is bound to come. The powers of the cosmos are everywhere and they can be invoked at any time by us, provided we are strong enough in our will and in the method of invocation. We are blessed because, we live in the Kingdom of God. We are blessed because, we are

seekers of Truth. We are blessed because, we are disciples of a great Master. We are blessed, thrice blessed, four-times, five-times blessed because, we are seeking God who also seeks everything in this creation. God seeks the world and the world seeks God. This is the mystery of creation, the subtlety of the spiritual path and the glory of the meditative life. Jnana and Vairagya combined is Lord Siva, who is worshipped on Mahasivaratri day.

Lord Siva is easily pleased. He is called Ashutosh. Ashutosh means 'easily pleased'. He is not a difficult Person. You can quickly please Lord Siva. If you call Him, He will come. Sometimes, He is also called 'Bhole Baba', a very simple, not a complicated Person. He comes to help you even unasked. He helped the Pandavas. The Pandava brothers were in war with the Kauravas in the Mahabharata battle, and Lord Siva helped them without their knowing that the help was being offered. Lord Siva helped the Pandavas invisibly and why would He not help us? He helps all those who tread the righteous path. So, let us tread the path of righteousness and be recipients of Divine Grace.

On Sivaratri, therefore, you are supposed to contemplate God as the creator of the world, as the Supreme Being unknown to the Creative Will, in that primordial condition of non-objectivity which is the darkness of Siva. In the Bhagavad Gita, we have a similar verse which has some sort of a resemblance to this situation. “*Ya nisha sarvabhutanam tasyam jagarti samyami; yasyam jagrati bhutani sa nisha pashyato muneh.*” “That which is night to the ignorant, is day to the wise; and that which is day to the wise, is night to the ignorant.” The ignorant feel the world as daylight and a brightly illumined objective something; and that does not exist for a wise person. The wise see God in all His effulgence; and that does not exist for the ignorant. While the wise see God, the ignorant do not see Him; and while the ignorant see the world, the wise do not see it. That is the meaning of this verse in the second chapter of the Gita. When we see sunlight, the owl does not see it. That is the difference. The owl cannot see the sun, but we can. So, we are owls, because, we do not see the self-

effulgent Sun—the Pure Consciousness. And, he who sees this Sun—the Pure Consciousness, God, is the sage, the illumined adept in Yoga.

So, Sivaratri is a blessed occasion for all to practise self-restraint, self-control, contemplation, Svadhyaya, Japa and meditation, as much as possible within our capacity. We have a whole of the night at our disposal. We can do Japa or we can do the chanting of the Mantra, 'Om Namah Sivaya'. We can also meditate. It is a period of Sadhana. Functions like Mahasivaratri, Ramanavami, Janmashtami, Navaratri are not functions in the sense of festoons and celebrations for the satisfaction of the human mind; they are functions of the Spirit; they are celebrations of the Spirit. Inasmuch as we are unable to think of God throughout the day, for all the 365 days of the year, such occasions are created so that at least periodically, we may recall to our memory our original destiny, our Divine Abode. The glory of God is displayed before us in the form of these spiritual occasions.

ANECDOTES FROM SIVANANDA DAY-TO-DAY

Sri Swami Venkatesananda

21st DECEMBER, 1948

FROM THE MAHARAJA

The Chief Minister of Tehri-Garhwal State has sent the following letter to Siva:

"Dear Swamiji,

The opening ceremony of the newly elected Constituent Assembly of Tehri Garhwal State will be held on December 27, 1948, at 11.30 a.m. at Tehri. We are expecting a big gathering of officials and non-officials on this occasion and I am desired by His Highness and Ministers to request you to grace the occasion by your presence.

Tehri is 40 miles from Rishikesh, which is the nearest railway station. In case you agree to attend the function, kindly intimate by telegram so that necessary arrangements for your transport may be made. I do hope that you will not disappoint us and join us in the celebrations. Tehri is a delightful place and known for its good scenery and has good climate and you will find the trouble undertaken in the

trip worth your while.

Yours sincerely,
Jyoti Prasad."

Glorious India is slowly beginning once again to honour her Saints and Sages. "Highness"es are turning to "Holiness"es for blessings and guidance. Chiefs of State understand the value of looking up to the Rulers of the Adhyatmic Kingdom, the Sovereigns of the Illimitable Realm of Satchidananda, for the light of wisdom.

At first Siva sent the following reply to the Chief Minister:

"Glorious Divinity!

Salutations and adorations.
Om Namo Narayanaya.

I acknowledge with grateful thanks thy very cordial invitation to attend the opening of the Constituent Assembly.

The invitation is irresistible, exquisitely worded as it is in the most affectionate and loving terms. Much as I should have liked to participate in the joyous celebrations, I am compelled, for

reasons of ill-health, to forego the pleasure.

I feel, too, that this very kind invitation extended to a Sannyasin to attend the meeting of what is truly the Durbar of the Ruler of an Indian State, signifies a return of the glorious days of the Epics: the honour done to me is really an honour to the entire community of Sannyasins.

His Highness the Maharaja and your venerable self have thus revealed the deepest urge—the urge of the Spirit in you—that once prompted Kings to associate renunciates in the affairs of the State. Very aptly so; for, His Highness and yourself are now presiding over that part of India which is cent per cent Indian, the ancient Home of Indian Culture and Civilisation, the Himalayas.

May the glory of His Highness the Maharaja and your venerable self reach the four corners of the earth, as did the glory of Raja Janaka in days of yore! May God bless you all!"

Later in the day, however, Siva felt that something ought to be done to honour the invitation and thereupon he wrote the enclosed

Message and gave it to us along with the letter:

"Beloved Atman,
Salutations and prostrations.
Om Namo Narayanaya.

On second thought, I felt that, especially in view of your most loving invitation to take part in the Constituent Assembly's opening ceremony, I should at least send a Message. For, as I have explained in the opening paragraphs of the enclosed Message, this part of the great Bharatvarsha I have come to regard as my Motherland! Also because, the occasion is so unique and important.

I have deputed Sri Swami Venkatesanandaji and Sri Swami Omkaranandaji to represent me at the Opening Ceremony. Swami Venkatesanandaji will read my Message. I trust this is in order.

Once again I wish the function all success. May God bless you all!
TAT TWAM ASI! THAT THOU ART!"

The text of Swamiji's Message is given below:

OM
THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY
RISHIKESH
A MESSAGE FOR THE OPENING
CEREMONY OF

THE TEHRI-GARHWAL
STATE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

At the very outset, permit me to offer my salutations to the Almighty, and to you all who are verily the very embodiments of the Divine!

As one who has passed the most eventful and fruitful part of his life in Uttarakhand, I feel a strong tie of kinship with you all. I have come to look upon the Himalayas and the Ganga as my parents, and all the inhabitants of Uttarakhand as my brothers in spirit in a special sense. And I gladly take this opportunity of delivering to you a message which is vital to the needs of the hour and which I have been striving to broadcast for the past quarter of a century, viz., that everything, be it political, economic, social or ethical, must have a spiritual basis. In the field of politics, the hallowed names of a Brahma Jnani Janaka and the idol of Dharma Sri Rama—are ever remembered as the ideals of Rulership; for, they had embodied this principle in themselves.

The present assembly is a most historic one, being a unique gathering of the sons of Uttarakhand, the holiest part of

India, the land of saints and sages; and the occasion is a happy one auguring well for the auspiciousness and glory not merely of this State but of the whole of India. It has always been the tradition here that the sacred Lord Badrinarayana Himself is the REAL ruler of the people. Thus, in pledging their allegiance, the people of Garhwal vow it not to any earthly ruler or authority but to Divinity Itself. This is no doubt a privilege. But, it entails the obvious obverse responsibility of being the custodian of the Divine heritage that is the life-principle of the culture of our land. It is incumbent upon you therefore to see that this marks the ushering in of an ideal life upon earth, the highest measure of common weal, the good life, Rama-rajya, Satyayuga.

I have no doubt, that you will all rise to the occasion and ensure for all time that the Divine Spirit embodied in Sri Badrivishal Lal manifests Itself in and through everyone of you to the glory of the spiritual culture of this land—a culture that is the most crying need of the present day.

The central fact of all human affairs is the Grand Divine

Plan—behind them all. This is the gradual evolution of mankind as a whole. And each age, each race and nation, and every generation lives but to contribute its share towards the fulfillment of the Central Cosmic Scheme; and the degree in which this contribution is made is the measure of success attained by them. The utilisation of the present occasion for contributing in an appreciable measure to the furtherance of the Divine Plan is now in your hands and can be made to be a guiding light to the whole world.

Social institutions, social reorganisations, reformations and revolutions have thrown out challenges to human ingenuity of idealism. Social and political problems had to be solved at various times in various countries; and several interesting and novel experiments have been made; from time to time, especially in the West for ensuring the greatest happiness of the largest number of human beings. But the present day plight of the many countries in the West bears eloquent testimony to the failure of all such institutions to meet human aspirations and ensure human happiness. The reason is not

far to seek; it was the failure to establish these on basis strong enough to bear all kinds of superstructure. The change in the basis has mostly been political, economic, and social. Very little of spiritual values entered into the considerations that went into the making of these changes. That is why the people had been led along a blind alley and are now groping in the dark having lost their way. If India still honours a set of sublime ideals and values that is at once the oldest, from the point of view of age, and the newest, from its living appeal to us, if Indian culture has survived the innumerable onslaughts of foreign invasions—political, cultural and religious—and if, even today we have not completely forgotten our scriptures and saints, where else has the vitality of these come from except from the spiritual basis that has formed the foundation of our whole life. Without a spiritual basis, no human institution can achieve general happiness for man or endure for long time even as a compromise.

Bear this lesson of history in mind and make the basis of your

edifice consist of the most enduring spiritual values. Let Dharma be your guide. Let universal commonweal be your ideal. Let justice be your watchword. And it will not be long before you achieve a substantial degree of success in the spread of the central spiritual ideals of Truth, and oneness of life. Success in all other aspects of life will follow as a matter of course.

In such a mission, it is not enough that only the people at the helm of affairs are animated by a sense of spiritual values and by lofty ideals of ensuring public good. Theirs is the duty, no doubt, to guide. But, unless due support and co-operation are available from the public, theirs will be a forlorn task. It is necessary therefore that people in general should also be inspired by a lofty sense of duty and by the common ideal of ensuring human happiness everywhere. Personal interest, selfishness, greed and all other manifestations of the lower nature of man should be conspicuous by their absence; and to this end, ideal of service, sacrifice and love should permeate the land. This will fill everyone with the same

intense capacity for desiring nothing but the common weal and for wholeheartedly contributing their own might towards that goal. This love, trust and loyalty of the people will be a great asset, and can be canalised into rich sources of national and human welfare.

Thus, helping each other, each section in the State acting as the complement of every other and mutually enriching the contribution of each, march bravely forward towards a new dawn and a new life. Root out suspicion, hatred, ill-will, jealousy, selfishness. Establish peace first in your own heart by the cultivation of trust, love, goodwill, generosity and selflessness. Then only you will be able to establish peace around you. Individual peace is a pre-requisite for the establishment of Universal Peace.

May you all achieve the highest success in this your labour of love, and may all endeavours culminate in a speedy renaissance of Hindu Dharma and Ideals to the lasting glory of Uttarakhand and India.

SERVE LOVE MEDITATE
REALISE



CHILDREN'S WORLD

Blessed Children of Divinity,

WEEK DAYS' WORSHIP

Seven days are there in a week, worship the many forms of the Lord on different days, He is much pleased.

God is Light—Worship Surya on Sunday.

God is Bliss—Worship Siva on Monday.

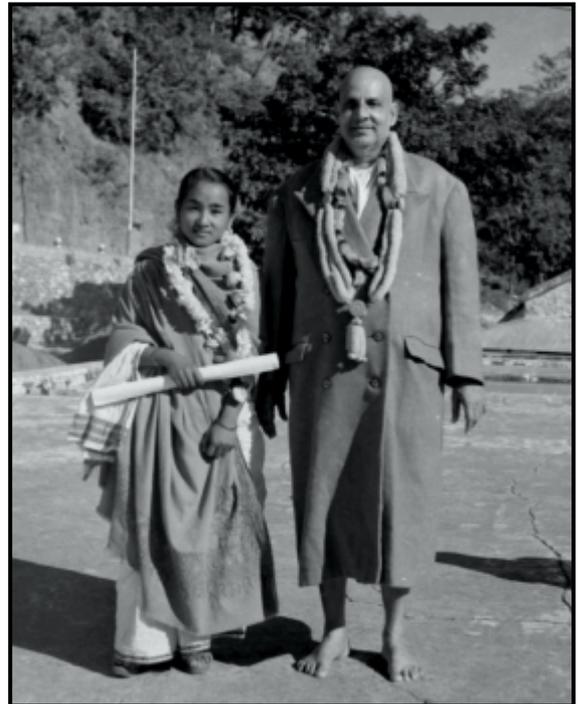
God is Knowledge—Worship Saraswati on Tuesday.

God is Love—Worship Rama on Wednesday.

God is Truth—Worship Guru on Thursday.

God is Wealth—Worship Lakshmi on Friday.

God is Power—Worship Hanuman on Saturday.



ALL RELIGIONS LEAD TO GOD

Every religion points out the way to attain God. God is the central topic of every religion.

Do not fight with your Christian friends. Do not fight with your Muslim friends or Parsee friends. Their religion also leads them to God just as your religion does.

Just as you can reach the same place by walk, by bus, tram, train or even aeroplane, God also can be seen through any religion. "All religions are roads that lead to God."

You can reach the same destination by travelling through any of the paths leading to it. All roads lead to God. Bear this in mind.

Swami Sivananda

STORY OF TWO MISERS

One miser, Rama, was eating bread,
He simply touched the ghee a little bit.
The other miser, Krishna, hung the tin of ghee
On a nail above. He looked at it and ate the bread.

Rama thought that Krishna was more clever than he,
Because, there was not a bit of decrease in his ghee.

He also followed the example of Krishna.
Two monkeys came now
And snatched the ghee of Rama and Krishna.
They enjoyed the ghee nicely.

Such is the fate of all misers,
Their sons squander the money quickly.
Miserliness is a great curse.
The lot of misers is very miserable indeed,
They enjoy neither here nor above.

O misers, spend your money in charity
And earn good merits now.
Charity purifies and expands the heart,
And leads to God-realisation.
Do not take stale things and do not wear rags,
Eat well; dress well.

Swami Sivananda

Sannyasa Diksha Centenary of Worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj

Blessed Atman,

Om Namō Narayanaya.

Om Namō Bhagavate Sivanandaya.

Loving Pranams.

The sacred day of 1st June 2024 commemorates the Centenary of a great event of supreme significance for entire humanity, and especially for all the members of the Divine Life Society. This was the blessed day when hundred years ago, Worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj renounced the secular life and embraced the Holy Order of Sannyasa. Had it not been his initiation into Sannyasa, which transformed Dr. Kuppuswamy into Swami Sivananda, the birth of The Divine Life Society and Sivananda Ashram would not have happened. Sri Gurudev's Sannyasa has indeed proved a Universal Blessing as it has granted the world the boon of a great spiritual guide whose soul-elevating teachings have inspired countless spiritual seekers all over the world and shown them the path to Perennial Peace and Bliss.

To offer our heartfelt gratitude at the lotus feet of our Adorable Gurudev and also to utilise this sacred occasion to have an in-depth contemplation about His inspiring life and divine teachings, the Headquarters Ashram is organising a series of programmes commencing from 22nd February 2024, which will culminate on the final day of celebration i.e. 1st June 2024.

As a part of the Sannyasa Diksha Centenary Celebration, 100-days Collective Mahamantra Chanting by the residents of the Ashram at the Bhajan Hall has been organised from 22nd February to 31st May 2024.

The Ashram proposes to organise various other programmes like Veda Parayana, Ramayana Katha and Path, Sri Vishnusahasranama Laksharchana, All India DLS Branches Meet, a three-day Spiritual Seminar and cultural programmes as well. The auspicious day of 1st June 2024 will be marked with grand worship and celebration. The detailed information regarding the above mentioned programmes shall be intimated as soon as they are finalised.

All the devotees of Worshipful Gurudev should utilise the coming 100 days to intensify their spiritual Sadhana as it will be a befitting tribute to our Holy Master.

With Prem and Om
Yours in the Service of Gurudev



Swami Yogaswarupananda
The President

A real Sannyasin is the only mighty potentate on this earth. He never takes anything. He always gives. It was Sannyasins only who did glorious, sublime work in the past. It is Sannyasins only who can work wonders in the present and in the future also. It was Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Rama Tirtha, Dayananda, and Vivekananda who disseminated the sublime teachings of the scriptures and preserved the Hindu religion. It is only Sannyasins bold, who have cut off all ties and connections, who are fearless, who are freed from delusion, passion, and selfishness, that can do real service to the world. A Sannyasin alone can do real Loka-sangraha, because he has divine knowledge, he is a whole-timed man! One real Sannyasin can change the destiny of the whole world! It is one mighty Sankara who established the doctrine of the Kevala-advaita philosophy. He still lives in our hearts. His name can never be obliterated so long as the world lasts.

Swami Sivananda

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

This is to announce that Sri Swami Advaitanandaji Maharaj has been elected as the General Secretary and Sri Swami Sadasivanandaji Maharaj as the Treasurer of the Divine Life Society in the Board of Trustees Meeting held on 1st December 2023. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj has been elected as one of the Vice-Presidents of the Divine Life Society in the subsequent Annual General Body Meeting held on 2nd December 2023.

All the senior Swamijis convey their heartfelt greetings in the name of Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and also humbly pray for the divine grace of the Almighty Lord and Worshipful Gurudev on all the devotees and members of The Divine Life Society for their radiant health, long life, peace, prosperity and success in all noble undertakings and progress in their spiritual journey as well.

All letters, correspondences, etc., may be addressed to the 'General Secretary, The Divine Life Society, P.O. Shivanandanagar—249 192, Distt. Tehri-Garhwal, Uttarakhand, India.' Donations in the form of Cheques/Demand Drafts, etc, payable at any Scheduled Bank in Rishikesh may be drawn in favour of 'The Divine Life Society, Rishikesh' and not in any individual name.

—THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

Cultural Tour of H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj

At the earnest request from the devotees of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, H. H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj, Vice-President, DLS Headquarters undertook a cultural tour to Andhra Pradesh and Telangana in the second week of January 2024.

On 16th January, Swamiji Maharaj arrived at DLS Vizag Ramnagar Branch and blessed the devotees in the evening Satsanga with his inspiring words. Next day, Swamiji visited DLS Vishakhapatnam Rural Branch where a large number of devotees from the nearby villages had gathered together. They reverentially received Swamiji Maharaj in a procession. Swamiji gave his blessings to the devotees in the form of a discourse on Dharma. In the evening, after his visit to DLS Vizag Rural Branch, Swamiji Maharaj proceeded to Sri Santi Ashram, Thottapalli to attend the 130th Birthday Celebration of Pujya Sri Swami Omkarji Maharaj.

On 21st January, the sacred day of Pujya Sri Swami Omkarji Maharaj's 130th Birthday Anniversary, Sri Swamiji presided over the birthday function and participated in the Paduka Puja. Following that, Pujya Sri Jnaneswari Mataji, the present Spiritual Head of Sri Santi Ashram, read the Birthday Message of Pujya Sri Swami Omkarji Maharaj. In the evening Satsanga, Swamiji gave his blessing message. During his stay at Sri Santi Ashram, Swamiji also visited DLS Kakinada Branch on 18th January and blessed the devotees with his discourse on 'The Importance of Bhakti in Daily Life'. From Santi Ashram, Swamiji proceeded to Hyderabad on 23rd January.

On 24th January, Swamiji Maharaj attended a Satsanga held at the DLS Secunderabad Branch. Devotees from Hyderabad and Secunderabad attended the Satsanga and benefitted from the discourse of Swamiji Maharaj. After

the Satsanga, Swamiji proceeded to Yadagirigutta, a pilgrim centre situated on the outskirts of Hyderabad.

The 48th All Telugu Divine Life Society Spiritual Conference was organised this year in the precincts of Sri Narasimha Swamy Kshetra at Sri Yadagirigutta from 26th to 28th January. On his arrival at Yadagirigutta, Swamiji Maharaj was accorded Ceremonial Welcome with Purna Kumbha. Thereafter, Sri Swamiji inaugurated the Conference with the hoisting of Divine Life Flag and lighting of the sacred lamp. Swamiji Maharaj presided over the Conference and also blessed the gathering with his talks on all the three days of the Conference. The Conference was well attended by nearly 2000 devotees from all over Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Swamiji left Yadagirigutta for Govindapuram.

At the humble invitation of Sri Jaikrishna Deekshithar alias Sri Vittaldasji Maharaj, the founder of Sri Vittal Rukmini Samsthan, Govindapuram, near

Kumbakonam in Tamilnadu, Swamiji visited Govindapuram for his four day stay. Sri Vittaldasji belongs to a traditional Agnihotri family lineage whose uncles had visited the holy Ashram during Sri Gurudev's time. Sri Vittaldasji Maharaj, a great exponent of Sampradaya Bhajan, has also visited the holy Ashram and offered his Seva of Bhajans at the sacred feet of Sri Gurudev. He has got constructed a huge temple of Lord Sri Vittal and Devi Rukmini at Govindapuram. A Veda-Pathashala and a Goshala are also being run by the Samsthan. During his stay, Swamiji attended the temple worship, interacted with the students of Veda-Pathashala and also visited Goshala.

On his way back to the Ashram, Sri Swamiji visited Bangalore on 5th February and had loving interaction with the devotees in a Satsanga held at the DLS Bangalore Branch. Swamiji Maharaj returned to the Headquarters Ashram on 8th February 2024.

48th All Telugu Divine Life Society Spiritual Conference

With the grace of the Lord Almighty and Worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, the 48th All Telugu Divine Life Society Spiritual Conference was successfully organised in the sacred precincts of Sri Narasimha Swamy Kshetra at Sri Yadagirigutta, Telangana from 26th to 28th January 2024.

At the humble request of the devotees of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj, Vice-President, The Divine Life Society Headquarters, visited Yadagirigutta to attend the Conference. On 26th January, Swamiji Maharaj inaugurated the Conference with the hoisting of Divine Life flag and lighting of the sacred lamp. Sri Swamiji Maharaj presided over the Conference and also blessed the gathering with his talks on all the three days of the Conference.

Every day, the morning session commenced with Nagar Sankirtan followed by Yogasana Class, recitation of Sri Vishnusahasranama and Srimad Bhagavadgita. The afternoon session started with the chanting of Sri Lalitasahasranama and Sri Hanuman Chalisa. During both the sessions, eminent saints and scholars from different places addressed the gathering on various subjects pertaining to spiritual life. Among them were Sri Swami Shankarananda Giri, Sri Swami Gurusharanananda, Sri Swami Vishnudevananda, Sri Swami Sampurnananda, Swamini Aparokshananda Mataji, Swamini Shreyananda Mataji, Sri Hayagreevacharyulu, Sri Suryanaryana Murthy, Smt. Madhavalatha Garu, Acharya Kasireddy, Sri Stithaprajnananda, Sri Masana Chennappa, Sri Yalal Srinivas, Sri Sivananda Mutturaman, Sri Alayana Srinivas Garu and Sri M.T Alwar. The evenings featured beautiful cultural programmes by the devotees. Sri M.T. Alwarji also ably conducted the different sessions of the Conference as the Master of Ceremony. Nearly 2000 devotees from all over Andhra Pradesh and Telangana devoutly participated in the Spiritual Conference.

May the grace of the Lord Almighty and Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj be upon all.



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

Barbil (Odisha): The Branch continued weekly Satsanga on Thursdays and residential Satsanga on Mondays. 322 patients had free Homeopathic treatment through Sivananda Charitable Homeo Dispensary. Gita Jayanti was celebrated on 23rd December, and Sadhana day was observed on 24th with Paduka Puja.

Bargarh (Odisha): The Branch conducted daily Puja, Swadhyaya, Yoga and Pranayama, Rudrabhishek on Mondays, Guru Paduka Puja on Thursdays, weekly Satsanga every Saturday, and recitation of Bhagavad Gita and discussion on Sundays. Homeopathic treatment of poor patients was carried on regularly. On January 1st, New Year was celebrated with Rudrabhishek, Paduka Puja, Bhajan and Kirtan.

Bhimkand (Odisha): The Branch had daily Paduka Puja and weekly Satsanga on Sundays. Makar Sankranti was observed on 15th January. The auspicious occasion of

Sri Ram Mandir Prana Pratishtha Utsav at Ayodhya, was celebrated on 22nd with Deep Prajwalana, Sri Ram Naam Japa and Hawan.

Bhubaneswar (Odisha): The Branch continued its daily Puja and Narayan Seva, weekly Satsanga on Thursdays, and free health service four days in a week. On January 1st, New Year was celebrated with Paduka Puja, recitation of Hanuman Chalisa and Jagannath Sahasranaam. Punyatithi Aradhana day of H.H. Sri Swami Devanandaji Maharaj was observed on 7th. Special Satsanga were held on 20th and 22nd with Parayan of Sundarakanda, and mobile Satsanga were organised on 22nd and 30th. The Branch conducted Chanting of "Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram" on 24th of every month.

Brahmapur (Odisha): The Branch continued Paduka Puja on Thursdays and 8th and 24th of every month. There were Gita chanting on Ekadasi day and Sundarakanda Parayan on Sankranti day. The Branch conducted Bhagavata

Saptah from 16th to 22nd January, and on 22nd, celebrated its inauguration day. Mobile Satsanga was held on 28th January.

Chandapur (Odisha): Daily Puja, weekly Satsanga on Saturdays, Paduka Puja on Thursdays, Sundarakanda Parayan on Sankranti day and mobile Satsanga on 8th and 24th of every month were the regular programmes of the Branch. There was recitation of Hanuman Chalisa on 14th January. On the auspicious occasion of Sri Ram Mandir Prana Pratishtha at Ayodhya, the Branch organised Akhand Naam Sankirtan of 'Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram' and Parayan of Sundarakanda.

Chhatrapur (Odisha): The Branch continued weekly Satsanga on Thursdays with Bhajan, Kirtan recitation of Bhagavad Gita and discourse on Ramayana, and Paduka Puja on 8th and 24th of every month. Seven mobile Satsanga were conducted in December with recitation of Sundarakanda and Hanuman Chalisa. Special Satsanga was held on 7th December. Gita Jayanti was celebrated from 24th to

26th with recitation of Srimad Bhagavad Gita.

Dunguripali (Odisha): Gita Jayanti was celebrated on 23rd December. Besides this, weekly Satsanga and Paduka Puja were continued on Sundays. On 1st January, special Satsanga was arranged with Bhajan and Kirtan.

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 Satsanga was organised on 8th of January. On the auspicious occasion of Sri Ram Mandir Prana Pratishtha day at Ayodhya on 22nd, the Branch conducted special Puja and chanting of "Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram".

Kakinada (Andhra Pradesh): In the months of December and January, the Branch continued Satsanga on Mondays with Pravachan on Bhagavad Gita. On 18th January, H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj, Vice-

President of DLS Headquarters, Rishikesh visited the Branch and blessed the devotees with his Anugraha Bhashan. Monthly Satsanga were held on 21st December and 22nd January. Gita Jayanti was celebrated on 23rd December.

Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh):

The Branch conducted special Satsanga at Lekhraj Homes on 7th January with Prayers, Bhajans, and Mantra Japa etc. Besides this, the Branch donated tin sheets for dining hall at Kushtha Ashram.

Mahasamund (Chhattisgarh):

The Branch continued daily Prayers, meditation and Yogasana class, and in the evening session Gita Path, study of Ramayan, Bhajan and Kirtan. Weekly Satsanga was held on Tuesdays with recitation of Sundarakanda and Hanuman Chalisa. On 1st January, special Satsanga was arranged with Bhajan and Kirtan.

Nandininagar (Chhattisgarh):

The Branch had daily morning prayers, Yoga class, Gita Path, chanting of Hanuman Chalisa and Vishnusahasranam. There was

Mahamantra Kirtan on 3rd December. Besides this, weekly Satsanga on Thursdays, and Matri Satsanga on Saturdays with recitation of Sundarakanda and Hanuman Chalisa were the regular programmes of the Branch. Gita Jayanti was celebrated on 23rd, and 'Character and Moral Upliftment Camp' was conducted from 25th to 31st December. Besides this, Siva Abhisheka, Hawan and special Satsanga were arranged by the Branch at different places.

Nayagarh (Odisha):

The Branch continued weekly Satsanga on Wednesdays. There was Sundarakanda Parayan, Gita Path, and recitation of Hanuman Chalisa on Sankranti day. Gita Jayanti was celebrated on 24th December with Gita Path and chanting of "Om Namoh Bhagavate Vasudevaya".

Puri (Odisha):

The Branch had daily Satsanga, weekly Satsanga 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. The Branch foundation day was celebrated on 7th December.

Rourkela (Odisha): The Branch continued daily Yoga class and weekly Satsanga on Thursdays and Sundays with Prayers, Paduka Puja, recitation of Vishnusahasranam, Bhajan and Kirtan etc. Besides this, free Accupressure treatment continued regularly. Special Satsanga was held on 12th January. On 22nd, the day of Sri Ram Mandir Prana Pratishtha

at Ayodhya, the Branch arranged Paduka Puja.

South Balanda (Odisha):

Daily Puja, weekly Satsanga on Fridays, Paduka Puja on 8th and 24th of every month were the regular programmes of the Branch. Gita Path, recitation of Vishnusahasranam and Hanuman Chalisa were done on Ekadasis. There was Akhand Mahamantra Sankirtan on 3rd January for world peace and universal brotherhood. On 15th, Sankranti day, special Satsanga was arranged.

Satsanga helps a long way in the attainment of Moksha. Satsanga with a sage even for a minute is much better than rulership of a kingdom. It gives all that is desirable and good. It overhauls worldly Samskaras and vicious thoughts, and gives a new spiritual turn of mind to the worldly man. It destroys Moha. It instils dispassion. It leads one to the right path and causes the sun of wisdom to shine upon one's mind. If you can have Satsanga, you need not go to any Tirtha. It is the Tirtha of Tirthas. Wherever there is Satsanga, the sacred Triveni is already there.

There is nothing so inspiring, elevating, solacing, and delightful as Satsanga. Satsanga is the greatest of all purifiers and illuminators of man. Faith in God, in scriptures, attachment and devotion to God, slowly develop in those who are regular in Satsanga. Satsanga is unfailing in its results. The effect of saintly contact is unerring or infallible.

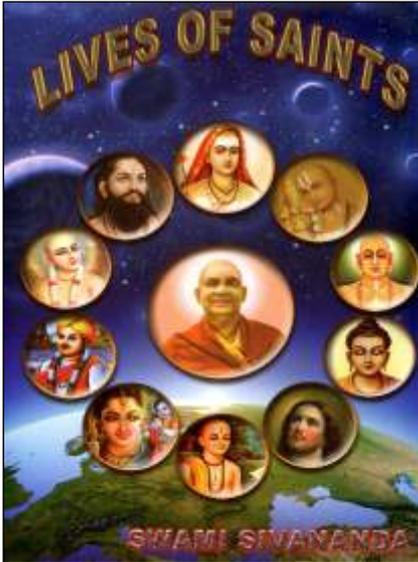
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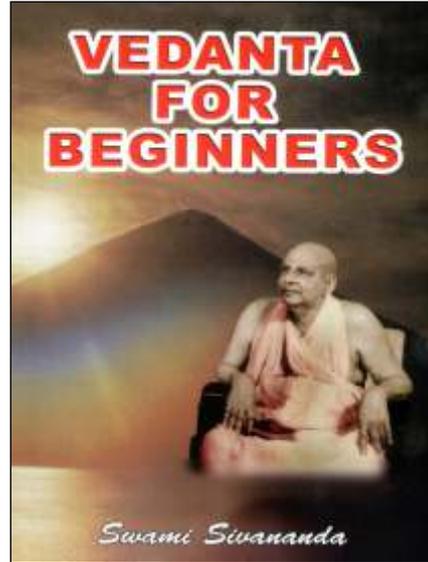
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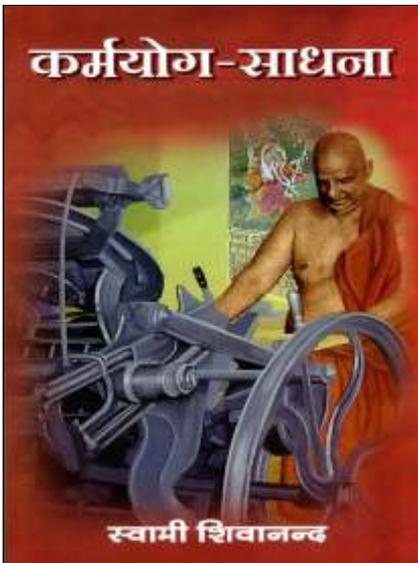
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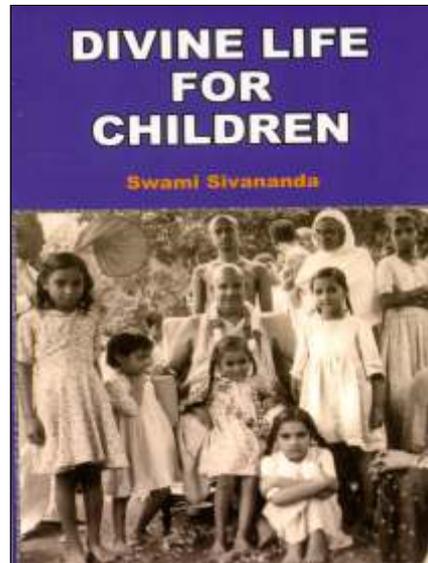
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The Irreplaceable Precedents

Without Sadhana, there is no meditation; without faith in the utterances of the sacred scriptures, there is no improvement; without vigilance and alertness, there is no progress in the spiritual path; without Guru, there is no divine knowledge.

Swami Sivananda

To