



## RAMAYANA—THE SEEKER’S GUIDE

*(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)*

**H**induism is pre-eminently a religion of realisation. Hindu polity in all its aspects is permeated with this ideal of Self-realisation or Atma-Jnana. The spirit of Hinduism is thus found to manifest ever as an unseen quest and upward urge towards perfection and super-mundane attainment. This is a vital point which one should always bear in mind when one approaches anything sacred concerned with India, her people, culture and civilisation. Then alone one will get a true and proper understanding, estimation, deep significance and peerless worth of all factors connected with the Sanatana Dharma—such as its philosophy, its scriptures, its social order, traditions, customs and practices. All these are made to serve and further the attainment of the grand and sublime central ideal of Self-realisation and divine perfection. To the Hindu, the supreme attainment of eternal freedom, infinite happiness and immortality is the great purpose of life.

The Ramayana must be viewed and approached in the above light if one really wishes to know its true nature and significance. Like all other factors, the scriptures such as the Sruti, Smriti and the Puranas, too, have as their principal aim the exposition of the spiritual ideal and its attainment. They also throw light upon the domestic, social and political life of man as well. But, above all this, the chief emphasis is ever laid upon the true and permanent ideal of God-realisation.

The wisdom of the Ramayana illumines all aspects of the inner life. It is invaluable to all seekers on the path of Yoga Sadhana.

Righteousness, purity, virtue and Sadachara (right conduct) being the very foundation of Yoga and spiritual life, the Ramayana is a Dharma Sastra as well as a Yoga Darshana.

Numerous precious lessons are found in the Ramayana. Even though the purely esoteric, spiritual significance is brought more in the Adhyatma Ramayana, yet in the Valmiki Ramayana also certain deep truths are revealed. Seek them out and spiritualise your nature. Try to assimilate them and become divine. These hidden truths will transform your life. They will help you to attain the life’s goal. You will become blessed.

### JATAYU

From the silent depths of Dandaka Forest come two radiant revelations. They are hidden lights which a great many persons do not properly perceive. They are the two luminaries, the simple seeker Sabari and the noble, self-sacrificing heroic Jatayu. To all seekers the wonderful example set up by Jatayu of a sublime adherence to one’s correct conception of Dharma and the highest call of duty will ever live as an immortal ideal. Note the magnanimity and the grandeur of Jatayu’s action. He saw the wicked Ravana forcibly abducting the helpless Sita in a most unrighteous way. Jatayu realised that this was against Dharma and was a thing to be prevented. At the same time he also realised that the protection of a helpless person in distress was his clear duty. Thus to fulfil his Dharma he rushed to Sita’s help. Now mark

the greatness and heroism of the noble Jatayu. He was perfectly aware that he was absolutely no match to the terrible and powerful Ravana. Jatayu knew full well that to oppose Ravana meant sure death to himself. In running to Sita's rescue, Jatayu was meeting his doom. There was no doubt in his mind about this, yet he courted his destruction to fulfil his Dharma and do his duty. He fearlessly faced death and readily and willingly gave up his life at the call of the supreme duty that stood before him.

O seeker! Do you have this same determination to fulfil your great duty as a human being? Are you prepared to sacrifice everything in your attempt to attain the real goal of life, i.e., God-realisation? Remember: "*Nayamatma balaheenena labhyah.*" This Atman cannot be attained by the weak. You must be strong in determination and aspiration. You must be heroic even unto death. You are not this perishable body. You are the deathless Atman. You must be a real Dheera. The courage of Jatayu is an ideal for the seeker. You must be an Adhyatmic hero, giving brave battle to the Asuric Amsa within your nature. Then alone your life will be crowned with immortality. The fruit of Jatayu's valour was the gift of emancipation through the divine hand of Lord Rama Himself. Be bold, Sadhaks! Strive. Attain the goal of life.

### SABARI

The noble Sabari teaches an equally sublime lesson. Her ceaseless aspiration, her infinite patience, her matchless faith and unbroken devotion are an eternal inspiration to all true seekers and Sadhakas, Sabari's life of dedication is indeed awe-inspiring. As a young girl she escapes from her father's house on the eve of her marriage to prevent the slaughter of innocent cattle for the mar-

riage celebrations. Taking shelter in the deep forests at that tender age she seeks refuge at the feet of the holy men. She serves the Rishis and Munis with extreme humility and Bhava and earns their blessings. Devotion to the Lord dawns in her heart. She begins to look forward eagerly to the advent of Bhagavan Ramachandra. She trusts implicitly the words of the sages who have told her that the Lord will pass through the forest. Day after day she lovingly prepares for the reception of Rama. She rises early before dawn, sweeps clean the jungle footpath leading to her humble hut of thatch and bamboo. Then she bathes in the forest stream and roams the jungle to collect edible fruits, roots and berries to offer to Sri Rama when He will arrive. He may arrive suddenly any day. Who knows when He will appear! She must not be unprepared when He comes. So Sabari repeats her routine every day. She prepares for His reception daily, nay hourly. Washing the gathered fruits in pure water, she keeps them in a clean leaf and awaits the Lord. She waits from morning throughout the day till sunset. Her heart is centered upon Rama. All her thoughts are absorbed in Rama. Her entire being is filled with Rama. Thus Sabari lives. She lives for Rama.

Days pass. Also weeks and months pass by. Years pass on. Rama has not come yet. But Sabari keeps on waiting. Her faith is unshaken, her devotion absolute. Superb, unsurpassed, unparalleled is Sabari's love and dedication. The little girl has grown up into a youthful maiden. The maiden has given place to a middle aged woman. Years have rolled on. Middle age has also gone by. Sabari has now become old. Teeth have fallen. Hairs have become silver white. But on the wrinkled face of Sabari there shines the radiance of divine love. An expression of infi-

nite peace and the sweetness of an unfathomable ecstatic love is in her ageless eyes.

Her back is doubly bent through constant sweeping. Every day she sweeps the path a few yards more than the day before. Thus, a long avenue, spotlessly clean, stretches from her humble doorway. In clearing this jungle path with such superhuman 'Nishtha' and Bhakti she has verily made clear her path to the Divine Abode of Eternal Bliss and Immortality, even while her body lived and moved about in the forest wilderness. In spirit she has already become one with Rama. In truth the seeker Sabari, even while she physically dwelt in this wilderness of Samsaric existence, has inwardly soared up and established her consciousness in the lofty spiritual realms of Para Bhakti. She was conscious of no other being except Bhagavan Ramachandra. O seeker! Note the sublimity of her devotion and the grandeur of her supreme, one-pointed 'Nishtha.' Behold the fruit of this sublime divine life. It found its fulfilment in a supreme and surpassing act of grace by the blessed Lord.

#### ULTIMATE REWARD

Rama Himself came in quest of this jewel among devotees. Even before visiting any other Rishi or Muni in the forest, Sri Rama sought out Sabari and blessed her with his visit first of all. Gracing her humble cottage with His divine presence, He ate with great relish the forest berries, already tasted by the simple and innocent Sabari, who was anxious that no sour fruit should be offered to Rama. She had the Lord in a transport of delight by her depth of devotion and her su-

preme, genuine love. Beloved aspirants, may this hidden light from the Ramayana illumine the inner path of spiritual unfoldment. May the supreme example of Sabari's matchless devotion be an ideal before you. Dedicate your entire life, even as Sabari did, to the quest of the Supreme Lord. Become totally absorbed in the thought of God alone. Live the entire life for Him. Have no other desire, no other aim. Be permeated by Para-Prem. Think for Him and act for Him. Love, move and have your being in the Divine. Your life will be crowned with supreme fulfilment. You will have the glorious spiritual experience of God-vision. You will attain the highest, transcendental bliss and immortality.

Supreme is the name of the Lord. Mysterious are its hidden potencies. Rama Nama is all-powerful. By its power the impossible is made possible. Even the laws of nature are set aside. It overcomes all obstacles. The Name takes you across the ocean of Samsara very easily. This great secret the Ramayana reveals. From the mass of divine radiance which the Ramayana is, even these three rays alone are sufficient to bestow the highest blessedness. Blessed seekers! Have the courage and heroic determination of Jatayu. Offer up your lower self to achieve the highest aim of your life. Develop the supreme devotion, dedication, unceasing aspiration and spiritual absorption of Sabari. Make the Divine Name your strength and support. Cling to the Divine Name. You will attain God-realisation in this very life. May you shine as radiant Jivanmuktas! May the light of the Ramayana illumine your life.

Constant remembrance of the Lord, active cultivation of virtues and divinisation of all activities—this is the essence of Sadhana.

—Swami Sivananda

## THE FIVE FUNDAMENTAL VIRTUES

*(Sri Swami Chidananda)*

Yoga came into being as an answer to human need, when, through experience in life, the ancients found out that human life here is limited and it is not full, it is Apoorva. There is always some sort of want in the human mind, some sense of incompleteness which he wishes to fulfil. The satisfaction which the human being derives from external physical objects by means of his senses, through his eyes, ears, tongue, sense of touch and sense of smell, is accompanied by much pain and sorrow. First and foremost the hankering is there. As long as a desire is not fulfilled, a person has no peace of mind. Then the exertion starts in order to fulfil that desire and if the exertion ends in failure, he is disappointed. If someone were to come in his way when he is exerting to fulfil a desire, he gets angry. If some other man has got an object which he has not got, then he gets jealous of that man. After an object has been acquired through much exertion and overcoming all obstacles, fear starts in his mind that the object may get out of his hands. Then the anxiety to keep the object safe arises. When anxiety and fear are there, no peace of mind can be there. After these exertions, fear and anxiety, if the object goes out of his hand, sorrow comes. Thus the mind never gets rest. The very nature of the mind is desire. Constantly thoughts come and they are at once helped by imagination, and imagination takes the form of a desire. From memory thought comes, and thought at once with the help of imagination takes the form of a desire. And once the desire is there, the mind is immedi-

ately at work and thinks how can I fulfil it? First the self-arrogating principle, the 'I' comes there, then the determining faculty appears and then action. Exertion, anger, jealousy, fear, anxiety, disappointment follow. Disappointment, because in imagination our conception of an object is one thing, but when we actually get it, we find that it falls far short of our expectation. The reality is different from our conception of it. This is the case with ninety-nine per cent of our experiences. Further, all relationships are temporary. So when the objects leave you, or you have to leave the objects, you experience sorrow. Therefore, we must somehow try to get beyond sorrow, by getting rid of our desires for sense-objects, by subduing the Indriyas. How to subdue the Indriyas and how to free ourselves from the tyranny of the mind is taught in Yoga. Yoga is the method to enable us to go beyond the experiences of sorrow, anxiety, fear, jealousy, disappointment, and to take us to the highest spiritual experience.

Let us consider, in brief, what are the fundamentals of Yoga, why is it that the mind goes towards objects, why is desire the nature of the mind? Is it possible to stop the process of the mind? These considerations, the ancients tried to find out and thought what is possible for man to do with this thing called 'mind', through which so much sorrow and other limited experiences result. How did they set about doing it? What is the fundamental thing that is being worked out through Yoga? Here we have to consider the state of the human being. They found that the human

being is a curious mixture of three ingredients. First of all, we all know what we are; we think, we make use of the intelligence, reasoning and logic. Man is a rational being. So we know ourselves as human beings who can think, who can co-ordinate experiences, who can infer, who can come to fresh conclusions, who are endowed with intelligence. But then, there are times when certain urges get hold of the person and he immediately forgets all about his intelligence and logic and he becomes very much like an animal. When there is violent fit of anger or jealousy, you behave like any other animal. It shows that there is in the composition of every human being, some part which is subhuman, some part which is unrefined, some part which is absolutely animalistic; though through centuries of refinement, man has evolved, and due to mass-evolution of the race the subhuman part has been to some extent subdued.

When a man is under the grip of a violent fit of anger, he may go and manhandle and physically harm a person, which no man in his normal human consciousness would do. Then after some time he himself feels aghast, he questions, "Could I do such a thing?" When the human faculty or human restraint is blown off, then the subhuman element takes full control of the personality. This happens to everyone. Our ancients found out that this is also a fundamental part of man, but it is only suppressed in some human beings. Where the race has not evolved, this element is very active even now. Take the case of the aboriginal in Africa or anywhere in the world. They are just like animals, though they are in human form. This portion of the human personality is called in theosophical language, the lower self. In Tantric language they call it 'Pasu', and in Vedantic parlance they call it as 'Asuddha Manas' or impure mind, which is characterised by Mala, the ani-

mal characteristic. This Asuddha Manas is there in every person sometimes under control, sometimes not under control.

All the while we are told that the real man is not the body, mind or the intellect. Actually man is a spiritual entity. He is immortal in essence, full of bliss, full of joy, full of knowledge, pure consciousness. That is the true nature of man—Satchidananda. His real nature is eternal, full-consciousness, unlike a piece of stone. He knows "I am that I am". The bliss of Self-awareness is the fact of man's being. Being-Consciousness-Bliss is the definition of the real Self of you all. But this consciousness is covered by the mind and the senses, and the man says, "I am the body; I am doing this; I am full of sorrow; I rejoice, etc." He identifies himself with the body and the mind.

Man is constituted of three ingredients. There is his essential divine nature, there is the animal nature full of Tamas (full of bestial qualities), and in between there is the human nature. Sometimes when he is in the company of saints and wise men, pure feelings come. At other times when he is in bad company, bad feelings come to him and he feels like getting out of the place. Man is tossed about between pure self and impure self. There is on the one side the pull of his higher, divine self, and on the other side the pull of his lower animalistic self. His own habits, friends, environments, etc., tend to keep him in a lower state. So the fundamental problem before Yoga was to somehow or other enable the man to liquidate the lower self, the animalistic nature. Every time the human element in man tries to go up, the lower nature in him pulls him down. The purpose of Yoga is the purification of the mind so that there is no bar for the divine Consciousness to manifest. When the mind is purified, we can partake of



that wonderful experience of the ever blissful Self. They call it '*Swarupa*', which means 'Own nature'. And this being the problem, it stands to reason, that Raja Yoga must also work out the process of eliminating the impure side of man and training up the human self to rise to the Divine Self, and all the different Yogas do the same thing in various ways.

According to Vedanta, *Mala*, *Vikshepa* and *Avarana* are the three obstacles that hold the Jiva in check, from going upwards. Again, anger, hatred, jealousy, selfishness, passion, etc., are the impurities in man, and these centre round his identification with the body, the body-feeling. So, the first thing is the removal of the gross physical personality. The second obstacle is the *Vikshepa*, or oscillation of the mind. The mind is never able to concentrate on or stick to any single point or idea. The mind always flits from one thing to another. Now on something in Canada, now in Germany and then in America and so on. This fleeting nature is called *Vikshepa*. Hence, it is said, if you purify your lower nature, you must also get rid of *Vikshepa*, and even after that is done, there is the primal delusion, the *Avarana*, the veil, on account of which you think that you are the physical body.

That subtle illusion, that subtle wrong notion, is called *Avidya*. As it hides the true nature of the ultimate Reality it is called *Avarana*. Anything that screens is called *Avarana*. Just as in the systems of Yoga there are the *Pasu*, *Manushya* and *Deva*, in Vedanta they speak of *Mala*, *Vikshepa* and *Avarana*. Patanjali taught, 'If you wish to dream of spiritual progress, first and foremost, purify your nature, remove all the undesirable qualities.' As the very first step in Raja Yoga, he laid down the cultivation of all virtues. The aspirant must become the very model of virtue, attain perfect *Sadachara*.

This is the basis over which all the superstructure is to be built. How many virtues are there? If you take Swamiji's books, you will find hundreds of virtues which are to be developed by the aspirant. Patanjali solved the problem in a very intuitive way. He selected five fundamental virtues, and we have to go on cultivating them. They are the parent of all goodness, prolific source of all goodness, and if you firmly establish yourself in these five fundamental virtues, all other virtues will come to you by themselves. If you capture the commander, the whole army is at your disposal. So it is insisted to cultivate the five fundamental virtues and become perfect in that. Then your entire nature will become virtuous. That is the power of these virtues.

Cultivation of the five fundamental virtues constitutes the first step of *Ashtanga Yoga*, called *Yama*. They are: *Ahimsa* (harmlessness). Never hurt any creature, not even an ant, not even a plant; not only physically, but mentally also, never think of harming any living being. Never cause sorrow, never cause any loss, or injury to any living creature. This one virtue is quite enough to mould a man into a saint. *Satya* is truthfulness. One should be perfectly established in truthfulness, sometimes life may be at stake, but do not go against truth. Do not subscribe to falsehood deliberately. Do not do an action that contradicts truth. Do not think one thing, speak another thing and do entirely a different thing. This way comes purity of mind, purity in motive, in speech and in action, absolute purity. Next is *Brahmacharya* (continence) and it is chastity from the point of view of ladies. The fourth is *Asteya* (non-covetousness). Never try to take that which belongs to another. Never covet your neighbour's wealth. Never deprive another man of what rightly belongs to him. If all nations stick to this principle, what need will there be for

quarrels or wars! The fifth is *Aparigraha* (non-appropriation of others' property). Do not receive anything from others that is conducive to luxury. Only take that much as is necessary for your living. That means simple living, not sensuous indulgence. Of course the standard of life differs from person to person. For instance a prince's interpretation of *Aparigraha* will be something different from that of a peasant. The peasant is, from generation to generation, accustomed to take simple food, perhaps five or six *rottis* and Dal. And if a prince also says, "I will take five *rottis*", he will get dysentery. So you must use commonsense in determining what is necessary for your living, and what is luxury for you. A man living in the tropics may not need a coat. But a man living in colder zones needs a coat. So *Aparigraha* means not keeping more than what one needs. At the same time refusing to wear coats at all thinking that it is a luxury is foolishness because he may be subjected to an attack of pneumonia, and may

die. Hence you must know in what circumstances God has placed you and know correctly the meaning of *Aparigraha*. For example, a Brahmachari need not accept a golden chain, if it is offered to him. But if a girl in a family is offered a golden-chain by her father or some relation, she should not refuse it, for ornament is a sign of auspiciousness for girls.

Therefore, the first step in Raja Yoga aims at making the individual perfectly virtuous. Harmlessness, truthfulness, purity, non-stealing and non-receiving of that which is conducive to luxury—these form the five-fold virtues to be cultivated by the seeker in the first stage of Raja Yoga. A life of harmlessness, a life of universal love, a life of selfless service—these things establish the sincere seeker on the pattern of a saintly life. These give the foundation for developing the individual more fit to proceed to further stages of Yoga and help to march swiftly towards his final Goal.

#### IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

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**"State Bank of India, Punjab National Bank, Punjab and Sind Bank, Union Bank of India, State Bank of Patiala, Oriental Bank of Commerce, Canara Bank, Indian Overseas Bank, Bank of India, Bank of Baroda."**

\* Please always write the purpose of remittance, full postal address and Telephone Number.

\* Personal Cheque can be sent, if the remittance is more than Rs. 200/-.

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**—THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY**



## THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH

(Sri Swami Krishnananda)

[Continued from the previous issue]

### IX

Now, in Sanskrit, there are certain technical names given to these desires. The whole of economic or material requirement comes under what is called *artha*. Anything that is material or economic comes under this head. In short, it means all material values. And the vital longings come under what is known as *kama* (not *karma*). *Kama* as a desire of an emotional or instinctive type is different from the grosser ones that are material.

But there is a need for another regulative principle to assist in the fulfilment of these longings which are material and vital. These desires, when they arise from within an individual, come with a tremendous vehemence. They have a power of their own. They insist on satisfaction, and everyone has this urge from within. The peculiarity of these desires is that they are never satiable. They have an endless requirement. However much we may feed them, they do not appear to be satisfied, and this for certain other reasons which we shall not touch upon just now. It is well known that a person cannot be satisfied with any amount of material property. One wants more and more of everything. Similar is the case with the desire for emotional satisfactions.

One requires more and more, and as much as possible, and this strange devilish implication behind these desires bordering upon an endlessness of their longings affects

the similar longings of other people. If each one wants things endlessly, what will happen to human society and life as a whole? One cannot have endlessness everywhere. If one wants endless things and another also wants endless things,—and two endless things cannot exist,—there would be a clash of desires and personalities. There would be battles and wars.

It is not possible to give a long rope, in an indefinite sense, to the desires of people. There should be a restriction, not in the manner of a pressure or subjugation by force, but a rational acceptance of the presence of similar needs in all people, everywhere. If I am hungry and I want food, a fact that has to be accepted, it is also to be accepted that another will also be equally hungry and he needs food. It does not mean that I am the only person who requires food. But the selfishness of a person can go to an inordinate extent and can violate the rationality of the presence of similar needs in others. Selfishness is a devil. If there is a Satan, here is he, violating law and asserting isolation. Such an impetuosity of the will conflicts with everybody else, because it wants everything for itself. And if each one is to project a similar attitude, there will be a complete chaos and an imminent destruction of human existence itself. Each one will fly at the throat of the other and no life will be there in a few days. This is

not a happy state of affairs, and human beings who are selfish are also intelligent.

Intelligence is used even to fulfil the demands of selfishness, and when selfishness realises that its own purposes are going to be defeated by an excessive asking or an over-dosed projection of itself, it accepts the necessity to collaborate itself with the similar needs of other people. This is the social side of the law or *dharma* that people generally speak of. We should be righteous. We must be virtuous. Righteousness, goodness, justice, rationality are essentials. These are only various terminologies indicating the need on the part of every individual to accept similar needs in other persons also. Only then, there can be social peace and human solidarity. We cannot get on in life, or even exist in this world, if we insist on an infinite satisfaction for our own selves, individually, personally. The law of mutual respect and co-operation is called *dharma*, or the righteousness of the law.

And our *artha* and *kama* are not going to succeed if *dharma* is not to be there. Their very purposes may be defeated without it. They defeat themselves by a wrong notion of their own good. *Dharma* has many other implications, but we are here concerned with the basic notion of it,—namely that the longing of the human personality, material, vital, or psychological, cannot succeed unless there is a collaboration and co-operation with the vast creation called humanity. *Dharma* may extend even beyond humanity to other regions also, with which we have a secret connection. *Dharma* is the regulative principle of life which conditions or puts a limit upon the extent of satisfaction that one can have without detriment to the similar requirements of other persons.

This attitude of charity and regard is called goodness. If I can accept that you are in as much need of things as I am, I can be called a good person. “Yes, he is good, he knows my difficulties,” say people. But if I refuse to accept your difficulties and insist on my own, then I would be called a selfish person. Thus, *dharma* is there as inviolable, inexorable insistent law, which is to be accepted on the very nature of things. Human rules, political laws, social customs, etc., are based on this natural law of the necessity for mutual collaboration and co-operation in life.

But what are all those for? Why should we fulfil all these desires? We have to observe the principles of *dharma* because our longings can receive a logical listening only if *dharma* is followed. Our material needs and our vital longings can have justifiable satisfaction only on the basis of *dharma*. Yes, *dharma*, *artha* and *kama* are the three absolute, categorical imperatives of life, without which we cannot live. But what are we living for? Why should we live at all? Let nobody live. What is the harm? Why should there be a law? Why should there be regulation and system? Why should we eat and drink? Why should we fulfil our emotional needs and have satisfactions? What is the matter? What is the point in all these? What is this great drama of life? Why stress? Why run about? Why work? These are more difficult questions to answer than anything else. We may with some acumen of our learning and education be in a position to answer the lower questions of immediate existence. But these latter poses take us beyond the human and even the natural realm of things. Here is a metaphysical question, if you would like to call it so. It is to enter the realm of philosophy. It is a bordering upon spiritual life, to put it in another way.

These questions concerning the very existence of a person go beyond the ordinary understanding of the intellect. I have to live, but why should I live? There is no answer to this question. It is an answer to its own self. It answers without raising a question. It is taken for granted that one should exist, one should live. Why should we live? "Do not put such a question," says the conscience. It is a foolish question and one would laugh at this very point itself. Why should I exist? Because, that is the base of everything else. One cannot put a question about the basis itself. But what is the base? The base is the love for existence, love for life, love for one's own self, for as long a period as possible, a struggle for existence, or a survival of the fittest, as our present-day men put it.

These doctrines arise from a fundamental trait of the human personality, which is present in everything, and not merely in the human being. It exists in a measure which can be as large as possible. We do not wish to merely exist like a tree or a stone. Accepting the fact that our final aim is existence, what sort of existence is it that we are longing for? We qualify this existence with certain characteristics. We do not like to exist merely, like a nobody, just vegetating. This is not our intention. We wish to enhance this existence by a qualitative improvement of understanding and satisfaction.

The characteristic of existence in its desire to enhance itself is intelligence and joy.

We wish to know more and more, become wiser and wiser, have greater and greater intelligence for the purpose of greater and greater satisfaction. Why should not we exist like a tree or a stone? We feel there is no sense; there is no joy in it. If a human being is happier than a tree or a stone, we can imagine that an animal is not happier than a human being. Even if you are a beggar, you are happier than a pig because of the increase in the intensity of knowledge in the human being. The capacity to appreciate is more in man than in swine or an ass. We seek an existence which is to be qualified with higher knowledge and which goes simultaneously with greater joy.

So, what is the kind of existence that we long for through *artha, kama, dharma*? It is an existence which is to be coupled with intelligence, consciousness of an intensified type. "How much intelligence?" may be another question. "Endless" is the answer. And if we are asked how much knowledge we want, we will not say, "It is one kilogram or two quintals." We want to know everything. We desire to know all things, as much as possible, in as intense a manner as possible. The largest amount of knowledge in the greatest intensity and quality is what we would like to have. People are never satisfied with knowledge and learning and education. Man wants to know the whole universe. *(To be continued)*

The Jivanmukta-Purusha, the one liberated while living, during this state of spiritual expansion, sees no difference between the different types of activities in the world, because, from his standpoint, all movements are movements within the Absolute. —Swami Krishnananda

## CONNECTING OURSELVES WITH GOD

(Sri Swami Atmaswarupananda)

In his book *Ponder These Truths*, Pujya Swami Chidanandaji has a talk entitled “Connect Yourself with God.” In one passage of that talk, he says, “Do it by any means—by meditation, enquiry, study—but by any means do it.” In other words, what Pujya Swamiji is suggesting to us is that the essential thing in the spiritual life is to develop a vital living connection with God—not a theoretical one, but a vital one.

But then, a very real objection can come up: That may be all right for monastics, but what about people in the world nowadays, when everyone is so busy? Usually the answers are: Remember God. Repeat His name. Work is worship—treat it as such. Those answers are absolutely valid, and will be sufficient if we are able to follow them. But then, the reality of the modern world is that very often people hardly have time to remember their own name let alone remember God. There are so many distractions.

Is it then impossible to connect ourselves to God when we are so busy night and day? Perhaps there are a number of things that we can work into our present life that will actually do it for us, if we understand them properly. One of those things is simply to try to do the right thing in all circumstances. We are always being asked to compromise. We get confused about the right thing to do. We often take the easy way, or when we struggle to do it the right way we react from our conditioning: “This is the way I think it should be

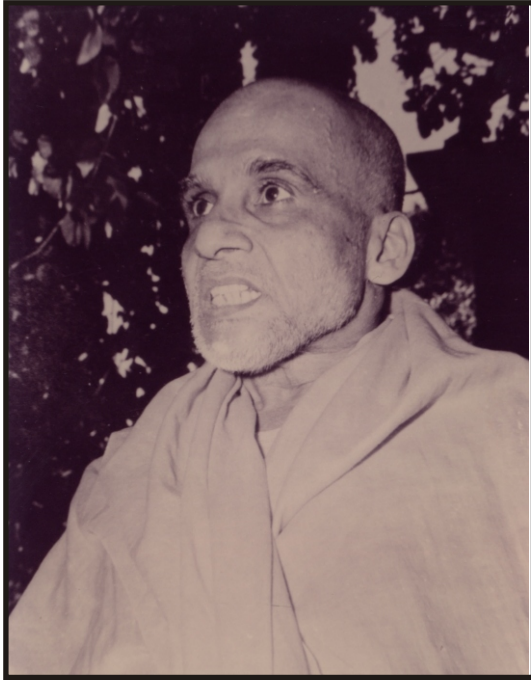
done.” But perhaps the other person doesn’t agree and sometimes they are right.

It is because, like children, we are still reacting from what we have been told, rather than taking into consideration higher truths and what God wants us to do. Therefore our moral choices, our choice between what we should do and what we should not do must be based upon something deeper within ourselves than our conditioning. We have to pause and go deep down within, which means to be silent and let something suggest to us the right course of action.

But then, one asks, “How is that a connection with God? My idea of a connection with God is a sense of expansion or wonderful feelings or deep peace,” That is because we think that God is something tangible, whereas God, according to all the scriptures, is absolutely unknowable. When we seek deeply within ourselves, we find that there is nothing there speaking to us and yet the answer comes.

The great German mystic Meister Eckhart got into a lot of trouble by saying, “I am greater than God.” He meant that he was greater than any tangible God. When we are really interested in doing what is right—not what we think is right, but what the universe thinks is right—then we go to a silent place within ourselves where there is nothing tangible. We alone are there, and when the answer comes it is evidence of our connection with God.

The world is to be contemplated upon as a kingdom seen in a dream. —Swami Krishnananda

Yoga for Health**SITKARI***(Sri Swami Chidananda)***TECHNIQUE**

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

**BENEFITS**

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

A genuine, authentic positivism is an indispensable requisite of successful spiritual striving and ultimate attainment—a keen positivism that looks at the positive aspects of things and exults that God has been so gracious, that rejoicingly moves forward with enthusiasm, with interest, with eagerness, longing for nothing else, wishing for nothing else, caring for nothing else, and, paying attention to nothing else but this central quest. This indeed is the sure guarantor, that which ensures the successful culmination of the spiritual quest, the successful fruition of spiritual sadhana, the successful attainment of enlightenment and illumination. Be this so in the life of each and every one of you!

—Swami Chidananda



## LUST AND PASSION

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

*[Continued from the previous issue]*

### POWER OF LUST

When a man is excited by passion, the Prana is set in motion. Then the whole body obeys the dictates of the mind, just as the body of a soldier obeys the command of the commander. The vital air or Prana moves the internal sap or semen. The semen is put into motion. It falls downwards, just as the clouds burst into the rain water, just as the fruits, flowers and leaves of the tree drop down by the force of the blowing winds.

If the Veerya is lost, Prana gets unsteady. Prana is agitated. Man becomes nervous. Then the mind also cannot work properly. The man becomes fickle-minded. There is a mental weakness. There is no hope for you to have Self-realisation or knowledge of the Self, if you are not well-established in Brahmacharya. Brahmacharya is the master-key to open the realms of eternal bliss. Brahmacharya is the very foundation of Yoga. Just as a house that is built on a rotten foundation will surely fall down, so also, you will fall down from your meditation if you have not laid proper foundation, viz., the attainment of perfect Brahmacharya. You may meditate for a period of twelve years and yet you will have no success in Samadhi, if you have not destroyed the subtle lust or the craving-seed that lingers in the innermost recesses of your heart.

You will have to search carefully for this dire enemy—lust—that lies hidden in the var-

ious corners of your heart. Just as the fox hides itself within the bush, so also, the lust hides in the substratum and corners of the mind. You can detect its presence only if you are vigilant. Intense self-examination is very necessary. Just as powerful enemies can be conquered only if you attack them from all sides, so also, you can keep the powerful senses under control if you attack them from all sides, from within and from without, from above and from beneath.

Regular meditation and Japa of Mantra, Sattvic diet, Satsanga, practice of Pranayama, Sirshasana and Sarvanga Asana, study of religious books, Vichara or enquiry into the nature of Atman or “Who am I?”, seclusion for three months on the banks of any holy river will entirely annihilate lust, however powerful the old Samskaras and Vasanas may be. Positive always overcomes negative. You need not be discouraged at any rate. Plunge yourself seriously in meditation, kill Mara (temptation) and come out victorious in the struggle. Shine as a brilliant Yogi. There is ever pure Atman. Feel this, O Visvarajan (emperor of the universe)!

Anger is nothing but a modification of passion like curd from milk. If passion is not gratified and if anyone stands in the way of his gratification of lust, the passionate man is sure to become indignant and furious. When the lustful man becomes furious, infatuated or full of delusion, confusion of memory, loss of reason, etc., follow in the wake and he per-



ishes. When a man is furious, nothing in the world can stop his anger. He will speak harsh words and do anything. He becomes uncontrollable. The fight begins with a few hot words and ends with Lathi (stick) blows, stabbing, free fights and murder.

There is no panacea more potent than Brahmacharya to eradicate the dire malady (lust) of ignorant persons and to make the aspirant well established in Brahman (Brahmasthanthi).

All sorts of sex-anomalies and evil habits of various sorts, masturbation, sodomy, etc., must be completely eradicated. They bring about total breakdown of the nervous system and immense misery.

A gentle man who has given up smoking and drinking, though married, wants to practise Brahmacharya. His wife has no objection, but he himself finds this discipline hard. His trouble is especially in the control of sight. "The street is my chief enemy," he said to me. This means that the eyes are attracted to well-dressed ladies. An aspirant says, "While I practised vigorously Pranayama, Japa and meditation, my mind was not polluted even if I saw half-nude young ladies. But when I left the practice I was not able to control my sight and I was attracted by well-dressed ladies in the streets and half-nude pictures that are

pasted in front of picture houses. The sea-beach and the Mall road are my enemies."

Bhartrihari says: "For food, I have what begging brings and that too tasteless and once a day; for bed, the earth; and for attendant, the body itself; for dress, I have a worn-out blanket made up of a hundred patches; still alas! Lust does not leave me."

Jerome writes to the Virgin Eustochium about his struggle for abstinence and the power of lust: "Oh, how many times, while in the desert, in vast solitude, which, burnt by the heat of the sun, offers but a horrible dwelling to monks, I imagined I was among the delights of Rome. I was alone, my limbs were covered by a wretched sack and my skin was as black as an Ethiopian's. Every day I wept and groaned and if I unwillingly was overcome by sleep, my lean body lay on the bare earth. I say nothing of my food and drink, for in the desert even invalids have no drink but cold water. Well, I was out of fear of hell, had condemned myself to this prison, companion of scorpions and wild beasts, often seemed in imagination among a band of girls. My face was pale with fasting and my mind within my frigid body was burning with desire. The fire of lust would still flame up in a body that already seemed to be dead."

*(To be continued)*

Avoid loud and aggressive persons, they are vexations to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain and bitter; for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself. Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans.

Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time. Exercise caution in your business affairs; for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals; and everywhere life is full of heroism.

—Swami Sivananda

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*Sivananda's Gospel of Divine Life*

## VEDAS—THE WISDOM-SOURCE

### JUVENILE ENTHUSIASM

Sri P.K. Subramanian wants to give up his studies and join the Ashram.

“Swamiji, of late I am not able to study my class books, because as soon as I take them up, I feel that they are not worth studying, since they do not contain the elements that would satisfy my hungering soul.”

“Beloved child, it is too early for you to renounce the world. Besides, you have your parents. You should serve them well. Earn your livelihood by honest means. Work hard and at the same time adopt the feeling that you are an instrument in the hands of the Lord. Cultivate this feeling. Continue with your studies also. No doubt the knowledge of this phenomenal world will not confer liberation upon you. Yet it has its own uses. Nothing is bad in itself; it is the use to which a particular branch of knowledge is put that matters.

“Try also to carry on your personal Sadhana side by side. Practise my ‘Twenty Spiritual Instructions’ to the best of your ability. Maintain a spiritual diary and send me a copy every month. I will guide you. Always keep the goal in view. When the time comes,

God Himself will facilitate your renunciation. Om Namo Narayanaya!”

When the young man had left the place after prostrating and with tearful eyes, the Master added, “So many young men are eager to renounce the world.”

“Yes, Swamiji,” said a visitor, “your writings are so inspiring that those who read them get such a burning desire to pursue the path of renunciation that they have no further taste for worldly pursuits or studies.”

“That may be, but I do not encourage any kind of juvenile enthusiasm. Often this ‘desire to renounce’ is a bubble that bursts after some time and vanishes into an airy nothing! Advaitanandaji used to tell me the very interesting story of his own brother.

“This young man suddenly felt himself drawn to the path of renunciation. He neglected his studies. He used to shut himself in a room, always repeating that the world was false, and other Vedantic ideas. He thought that he had full dispassion. His family people succeeded in due course in tempting him from this assumed saintliness. They did this through a woman. The man changed his mind, married and is now the father of many children.”

You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore, be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be and whatever your labours and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life keep peace with your soul.

—Swami Sivananda

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Children's Page

## OUR GREAT HERITAGE

*(Sri Swami Ramarajyam)*

A king had two sons. After the death of the king, the elder son was asked to ascend the throne. He said, "I am suffering from leprosy. I am not fit to become a king. My younger brother should be on the throne."

The younger brother became the king. The elder brother went to a jungle to lead an austere life. These events were soon followed by a famine. The younger brother said to himself, "It is unbecoming of a younger brother to ascend the throne in the lifetime of his elder brother. I should not have come to the throne. This famine is the consequence of this unethical action of mine."

He went to the jungle. He bowed down to his elder brother and said humbly to him, "I have committed a sin by mounting the throne in your lifetime. The subjects have been cursed with famine for my sin. Their sufferings are unbearable. I do not wish to be the ruler any longer. Please take charge of the kingdom."

The elder brother said, "You should perform a Yajna (A sacrificial rite) to

please the god of rain. I will be present on that occasion as a priest."

So the elder brother came from the jungle to perform the duties of a priest during the Yajna. And, it rained after the Yajna was over.

The younger brother again prayed to his elder brother to ascend the throne. The senior citizens of the kingdom also said, "You are older than him. It befits you to come to the throne." The elder brother said, "I do not want to become a king. I am going back to the jungle. If ever any calamity befalls the people of this kingdom, and you feel that I can help them out, you can recall me."

Dear children, this has been the glorious tradition of our country—to make oneself useful to others, to perform the duties rather than claim what one is entitled to and to feel no attachment for wealth.

This is our extremely valuable and great heritage.

Our ancestors preserved this heritage with great care. You should follow their lead.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### NEWS FROM THE HEADQUARTERS

#### SEVA THROUGH SIVANANDA HOME

Sivananda Home has been started by the Divine Life Society Headquarters to humbly serve the needy and the poor, those who require medical aid, but have no resources, no human help, no shelter, no attendant and those who are suffering from contagious diseases.

Needy and poor. Who are these so-called needy and poor people and in what aspect are they lacking? It is interesting to observe the life of some of the inmates of the Home. It is a privilege to meet those blessed souls, who were once without a single material possession, but cherish a treasure in the heart which is more precious than any other. Suppose we ourselves enter the life and living experience of a patient, affectionately called Dadaji. He is an elderly leprosy patient, with chronic ulcers on both his legs, abandoned by his kith and kin; he is completely bedridden due to a fracture of his hip, suffering from osteoporosis, gastric discomforts and needing support in many of his daily activities like bathing, etc. In spite of all these afflictions, one can find him always with a smile on his face and occupied with one thing or the other. He knows the ins and outs of all the other inpatients, their struggles and their troubles and will talk on their behalf if the need arises, gently and softly. His spare time is spent in reading scriptures, just for himself or reading out loud for his neighbour too. His neighbour in the ward happens to be a gentleman who suffered a

stroke which made him paralysed and which left him without the ability to speak.

Dadaji's helplessness invites one and all to approach him for any advice or help. Not even once a complaint was heard from his mouth, though he may pour out his sighing in silence. Only God knows. But the wealth in his heart reflects through his eyes and vibrates through his whole being. What is his poverty? What is our poverty? What is the poverty of those who call others "poor" and "needy"? People like Dadaji are real examples for those who try to serve, try to still their own mind, try to remain calm and composed and try to find peace in their own heart. He is an example of from which viewpoint Seva is performed in Sivananda Home, in a spirit of togetherness, inspiring and activating each other, be it a so called "helper" or "patient", since each and every one of us has a part of a patient and a part of a helper inside: All are His instruments and at the same time all are His patients.

*"This should be the firm conviction in the heart of a believer, in the heart of a devotee: 'When I have God, what do I lack? Even if I have everything in this world, but have not God, I have nothing, I am lost, and I am finished. But if I have God, even if the whole world is against me, I have everything.' This is an eternal truth: One who depends upon God lacks nothing."*

(Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj)

Feed the hungry. Clothe the naked. Serve the sick. This is Divine Life (Swami Sivananda)

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**REPORT OF THE INAUGURAL FUNCTION OF  
THE 61ST BASIC YOGA-VEDANTA COURSE**

The 61st Basic Yoga-Vedanta Course of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy was inaugurated on Sunday, 1st March, 2009 in which 38 students from 9 states joined. After Puja in Sri Dattatreya temple and chanting of Jaya Ganesh prayer and Guru Stotras in the Academy's Lecture Hall, Sri Swami Yogavedantanandaji Maharaj, Registrar of the Academy welcomed all those present. H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj, President, The Divine Life Society Headquarters graced the function and lighted Deepa in token of the auspicious commencement of the course. Thereafter the students were introduced by Prof. Rajinder Kumar Bhardwaji, Asst. Registrar of the Academy.

H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj welcomed the students to Worshipful Gurudev's Ashram which is situated on the bank of Mother Ganga. Swamiji pointed out that the place where they were sitting is very sanctified because in all of this area Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj used to move about and did intense Tapascharya and attained the Highest State. Out of love and compassion, Gurudev used to share with others what he had gained. To come here and practise Sadhana is due to the grace of the Divine. Swamiji told them that when he came here in 1953, he stayed in an artificial cave below Sri Dattatreya temple and spent all his life at the holy feet of two great Masters—Worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and His Holiness Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj and never missed Gurudev's Satsanga. The students

are very fortunate to have come here and joined the course. If they tune their minds towards the teachings of Gurudev they can derive a lot of benefit and grow spiritually. Swamiji said, there are millions of people who live in a narrow circle; they eat, drink, sleep and die one day. Swamiji narrated briefly the life of a Tibetan saint named Milarepa and advised the students to make concerted efforts to achieve the goal of life, i.e., God-realisation. They should spend their precious time in contemplation and Japa of the name of Lord. This land and the atmosphere is full of Sattva, therefore when they will sit and meditate, they will be able to concentrate easily. In the end, Swamiji blessed all the students.

Sri Swami Yogavedantanandaji told the students that Gurudev was a great Yogi and God-realised saint who wrote more than 300 books in simple English to suit the needs of different types of people. Gurudev first practised all that in his life and then wrote, therefore, the books leave a lasting impression upon the readers. Gurudev never went on tour to foreign countries except on All-India and Ceylon tour in 1950. But innumerable people from all walks of life including foreigners used to come to meet him, get spiritual guidance and blessings. Swamiji advised the students to be punctual and attentive in the classes, maintain the discipline of the Academy and try to derive maximum benefit during their stay here.

After Saraswati Puja and Prasad distribution, the function came to a close.

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**CULTURAL TOUR OF H.H. SRI SWAMI VIMALANANDAJI MAHARAJ,  
PRESIDENT, THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY**

At the kind invitation of the Divine Life Society Branch of Chandigarh, H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj and H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj left the Headquarters Ashram for Chandigarh on 6th March along with Sri Swami Dharmnishthanandaji Maharaj, Sri Swami Bhaktibhavanandaji Maharaj and Brahmachari Sri Atmanishta Chaitanyaji to participate in "The Annual Day Celebrations and Zonal Spiritual Conference" of South Zone. The Annual Day Celebrations and Zonal Spiritual Conference were held on 7th and 8th of March at Chandigarh. Representatives had come from Panchkula, Kalka, Sirsa, Rewari, Faridabad, Ladwa, Ambala, Patiala, Nabha, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Jaipur, Jodhpur and Bikaner besides Chandigarh, the venue of the Conference. The main theme of the Conference was "SWAMI CHIDANANDA, HIS LIFE AND MISSION."

During the two days Conference Re-

vered Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj, Sri Swami Dharmnishthanandaji Maharaj, Sri Swami Premanandaji Maharaj of Uttarkashi and Sri Swami Vedanandaji Maharaj spoke on this subject. Sri Swami Dharmnishthanandaji Maharaj conducted morning prayers, Hatha Yoga and meditation. Sri Swami Bhaktibhavanandaji and Br. Sri Atmanishta Chaitanyaji gave inspiring Kirtans and Bhajans.

During the two-day conference two booklets "You are the Light" and "Be Committed to the Highest" and a table calendar "Ponder This Today" were released. Sri R.K. Bhardwajji, the chief patron of the D.L.S. Branch, Chandigarh was the master of ceremonies and conducted the entire proceedings in a systematic manner.

By the grace of the Divine and Guru Bhagavan the Conference attained fullest success.







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## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

As a need of the time and as required by the Government Agencies we are compelled to adopt certain measures in respect of receiving Guests and Visitors to Sivananda Ashram, The Divine Life Society Headquarters at Rishikesh.

Sivananda Ashram is basically a monastic set-up where inmates are Sanyasis, Brahmacharies and Sadhaks pursuing their spiritual practices. They do selfless service and try to maintain the serenity of the Ashram and a spiritually vibrant environment by their Sadhana and collective participation in day-to-day programmes.

Guests and visitors of the Ashram who stay for a few days are expected to spiritualize their days of stay by tuning themselves to the Ashram's atmosphere. Tourists, week-end holidayers and fun seekers are not expected to seek accommodation in the Ashram. They may stay elsewhere and visit the Ashram for prayer, Yoga and meditation, etc.

### Guidelines to Guests and Visitors

1. Guests/visitors must write to the General Secretary by letter, E-mail, etc, seeking permission for accommodation, well in advance so that the permission reply letter can be sent. Request for accommodation should be in the following format:

- i. Name:
- ii. Gender and Age:
- iii. Nationality:
- iv. Full Residential Address:
- v. E-mail Address:
- vi. Telephone/Cell No. with Code:
- vii. Passport/Photo Id type and number \* :
- viii. Reference of your known person in the Ashram:
- ix. Profession and Brief Spiritual Background:
- x. Are you Associated with Divine Life Society? & How?:
- xi. Purpose of Visit:
- xii. No. of Persons Accompanying (Indicate Name, Gender and Age of each):
- xiii. Date of Arrival:
- xiv. Date of Departure:

2. Request for accommodation over phone will not be accepted.

3. Guests and visitors are expected to co-operate and adjust with the available accommodation allotted by Reception Office.

4. Guests are expected to attend all the programmes of the Ashram during their stay, especially the Morning Prayer and Night Satsang.

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\* The passport or any photo Identity must be presented at our Reception desk on your arrival at Reception. This is a requirement as per Govt. Rules.

5. Guests and visitors are expected to take care of their valuables and belongings. The Ashram Management will not be responsible for any loss.

6. Working hours of the Reception Office will be from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.. The Reception Office will remain closed from 10.00 p.m. to 6.00 a.m. Therefore guests and visitors are requested to plan their travel accordingly to reach the Ashram during the working hours.

7. Guests/visitors seeking accommodation in the Ashram without prior intimation and permission will not be entertained.

### Information to The Divine Life Society Branches

Branches recommending guests and visitors to Sivananda Ashram, The Divine Life Society Headquarters, Rishikesh for accommodation are requested to comply with the above guidelines.

The Branches can always recommend the members/devotees to Headquarters for accommodation but they should ensure that the intimation is sent well in advance and confirmation obtained.

Members, devotees, guests and visitors approaching Headquarters for accommodation with recommendation letters from Branches without prior intimation and permission will not be entertained.

—The Divine Life Society

*Applicable in India only*

### MEMBERSHIP FEE AND BRANCH AFFILIATION FEE OF THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY HEADQUARTERS

1. New Membership Fee	Rs.	150/-
Admission Fee . . . . .	Rs.	50/-
Membership Fee . . . . .	Rs.	100/-
2. Membership Renewal Fee (Yearly)	Rs.	100/-
3. Life Membership Fee	Rs.	3000/-
4. Patronship Fee	Rs.	10,000/-
5. New Branch Opening Fee*	Rs.	1000/-
Admission Fee . . . . .	Rs.	500/-
Affiliation Fee . . . . .	Rs.	500/-
6. Branch Affiliation (Renewal) Fee (Yearly)	Rs.	500/-

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

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

⇒ Regarding Membership Enrolment, Magazine Despatch and matters related to D.L.S. Branch please contact Magazine/Branch Department, Phone: 0135-2442340

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## REPORTS FROM THE D.L.S. BRANCHES

### INLAND BRANCHES

**Ahiwara (Chhattisgarh):** To commemorate the occasion Mahasamadhi of Brahmaleen H.H. Sri Swami Devanandaji Maharaj, a special Yajna for World Peace was organised. Regular evening Satsangas and 108 Mahamrityunjaya Japa for World Peace on Ekadasis were conducted.

**Ambala (Haryana):** Special Satsanga with distribution of Gyana Prasad for the New Year celebration, and Lohri was celebrated on 12th January this year. Regular weekly Satsangas with special hymns to the deity of the day continued along with daily homeopathic medical services.

**Anna Nagar (Chennai, T.N.):** Special Satsanga on the 1st of February was conducted with prayers, Bhajans and a talk by Sri Swami Suryachandrananda. The topic was Yoga, the Divine Culture and Power of Man-kind.

**Badakuanl (Orissa):** Second anniversary of the Branch was celebrated on the 4th of January with Gurupaduka Puja and Special Satsangas. Regular monthly Satsangas and weekly Gurupaduka Puja along with daily Puja and Sahasranama Archanas continued.

**Barbil (Orissa):** Four weekly Satsangas and five mobile Satsangas along with Geeta Yajna celebration of the 3rd of December were organised. Homeopathic clinic served more than 400 patients last month.

**Bilaspur (Chhattisgarh):** Weekly Satsangas were conducted and special Satsanga on the occasion of Sarswati Puja on Basanta Panchami day was organised as annual Branch Day.

**Bhanjanagar (Orissa):** Weekly Satsangas and Ekadashi Satsangas were

conducted. Special discourses at the Chidananda Culture Centre on the 30th and 31st December 2008 were organised.

**Bhongir (A.P.):** Regular evening Satsangas were conducted.

**Faridpur (U.P.):** Regular weekly Satsangas on Wednesdays were conducted.

**Gandhinagar (Gujarat):** Regular thrice-a-week Satsangas, daily Yogasana sessions separately for men and women, homeopathic clinic twice a month. Narayana Seva on the 8th and Bal Narayan Seva on the 24th of January. Special Satsangas from the 17th to 20th of January with Rev. Sri Swami Premanandaji Maharaj. Special evening Satsanga at Varsoda Vrundavan Ashram on the 19th. A spiritual talk by Rev. Sri Swamiji on 20th of January at an I.T.I. Centre for the students.

**Gumergunda (Chhattisgarh):** 16th Punya Tithi Aradhana of Brahmaleen Sri Swami Sadapremanandaji Maharaj was celebrated from the 30th of December 2008 to 1st of January 2009. Rev. Sri Swami Sivanandagurusevanandaji Maharaj, Sri Swami Sivadasanandaji and Swami Vishuddhanandaji along with other Mahatmas and senior Sadhakas offered special tributes to Brahmaleen Swamiji and elucidated on the need for Divine Life. Special Akhanda 'Om Namah Shivaya' chanting, and Satsangas and Bhandara were organised to commemorate the occasion. Regular Nitya Puja (3 times a day) at Sri Vishwanath Mandir and Samadhi Mandir at the local Sivananda Ashram; daily morning prayer-meditation, Yogasana class, evening Satsanga, Paduka Puja on Thursdays, Sundarkanda Parayana on Saturdays, Shiva Chalisa on Mondays and Devi Chalisa on Fridays.

**Hansura (Orissa):** Special Satsanga to commemorate the Shodashi Aradhana of H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj was conducted with distribution of items of daily needs and Dakshina to Mahatmas (Sannyasi and Vaishnava) and other needy people.

**Jagdarpur (Chhattisgarh):** New Year's Eve midnight Satsanga with chanting of Om Namah Shivaya. 2nd of January saw special evening Satsanga and Bhandara to commemorate the 16th Punyatithi Aradhana of Brahmaleen Sri Swami Sadapremanadaji Maharaj. Revered Sri Swami Sivanandagurusevanandaji Maharaj gave a special talk on the occasion. Regular morning and evening Satsangas, and Yogasana classes for the children continued.

**Jagatsinghpur (Orissa):** Special Shodashi Satsanga was conducted on the 12th of September, 2008 along with distribution of sweets amongst 600 students to mark the occasion.

**Jaipur, Raja Park (Rajasthan):** Daily spiritual talks by Revered Sri Swami Yogavedantanandaji from 20th December, 2008 till mid-February, 2009. 6th of January saw the celebration of Paush Bada Mahotsava at Siddheshwar temple with Sundarkand Path and Bhajans. Regular activities include daily morning talks on Devi Bhagvat, evening Satsangas, Sundarkand Path on Saturdays, Sunday morning Satsangas. Medical services include homeopathic clinic, Yoga classes and spiritual library. Financial assistance is provided to widowed women, Daily Narayan Annakshetra Seva and Seva for leprosy patients. Scholarships for economically challenged children.

**Jeypore (Orissa):** Regular Puja, weekly Satsangas at the Branch premises and mobile Satsangas at the houses of the devotees were organised. Special Geeta Yajna was organised on 10th December,

2008. Revered Sri Swami Sivanandagurusevanandaji Maharaj spoke in one of the Satsangas on the 30th of December.

**Khatiguda (Orissa):** 12 hours of Mahamantra chanting on Sadhana Day, Vishnu Sahasranama on Ekadashis and mobile Satsangas, apart from weekly Thursday Satsangas.

**Langthabal (Manipur):** Special Satsanga on the New Year eve with special discourse on the Bhagavad Gita along with Bhajans, Kirtans and Mahamrityunjaya chanting.

**Madhavapatnam (A.P.):** Regular weekly Satsangas were conducted on Sundays. Special Rudrabhishekam and medical camp on the 28th of December. Special Satsanga on the 4th of January, 2009 in honour of Brahmaleen H.H. Sri Swami Devanandaji Maharaj.

**Nalgonda (A.P.):** Regular Satsangas and special mobile (daily) Satsangas were conducted both in the months of December and January.

**Nandini Nagar (Chhattisgarh):** Regular Brahmamuhurta Satsangas, 12-hour Mahamrityunjaya chanting on the 3rd of January, weekly mobile Satsangas, Matri Satsangas every Saturday and Ekadashis and a special Ramcharit Manas Parayana and Havan in remembrance of Brahmaleen H.H. Sri Swami Devanandaji Maharaj.

**New Delhi:** Gita Yajna on the occasion of Gita Jayanti on 7th December, 2008, and Special visit of H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj along with other Mahatmas to the Sivananda Cultural Bhavan on the 14th of December. This was his first visit here as the President of the Divine Life Society (HQ).

**Phulbani (Orissa):** Regular Puja and Satsanga at the Branch, weekly Satsangas, Mobile Satsangas were conducted. 28th of

January was dedicated for Narayan Seva (Anna Dana).

**Salipur (Orissa):** Regular morning and evening Satsangas with special Parayanas on weekdays was performed. Gita Yajna on Gita Jayanti Day, Publication of Oriya version of Bhajagovindam (talks by H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj); Yoga training at Salipur College were conducted on 20th December, 2008, 13th and 20th January, 2009, for 41, 185 and 175 students respectively. New Year's Day and D.L.S. foundation day on 13th of January, were celebrated with special Satsangas. More than 260 and 300 patients were served in the months of December and January respectively, at the Charitable Medical Centre.

**Sikkim:** Ten-day residential Yoga Camp for 50 boys was conducted for training in Asana, Pranayam and meditation. There were eminent guest speakers for the occasion along with a special presentation on the flora and fauna of Sikkim region. The Camp was dedicated to H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj.

**South Balanda (Orissa):** New Year celebration and observance of Branch day, Sivananda Day and Chidananda Day on the 3rd, 8th and 24th of January respectively with special Satsangas. Weekly Satsangas were conducted and celebration of Holy Makara Sankranti on 14th January was carried out.

**Sunabeda (Orissa):** Regular evening Satsangas, Yogasana classes separately for men and women were conducted. Karthik Purnima was celebrated with special 24 hour Kirtan and free medical camp at Branch Ashram site was conducted.

**Surada (Orissa):** Branch Day was observed on the 14th of January with Prabhat Pheri, Gurupaduka Puja, Satsanga and Bhandara.

**Vadodara (Gujarat):** Weekly Satsangas, Mantra Japa and Gurupaduka Puja on Sivananda Day and Chidananda Day on the 8th and 24th of the Month. Discourse on Sri Dattajayanti on 11th of December by Rev. Dr. Dineshbhai Pathak, group discussion on Ishavasya Upanishad on 7th and 21st of December, guided meditation session on 28th December and free medical facilities for patients once a week.

**Vishakapatnam (A.P.):** Daily Yogasana classes, evening Satsangas, and Gita chantings on Ekadishis were conducted. Special Gita Jayanti programme was organised on 9th December. Weekly free medical camps were also organised.

**Hamiragachhi (West Bengal):** Annual Sadhana Shibir was organised at Hamiragachhi, 70 km from Kolkata, from 21st to 25th of January, 2009. It was blessed with the august presence of H.H. Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj, Rev. Sri Swami Sivachidanandaji Maharaj, and other Mahatmas from the Headquarters. Morning meditation, Yogasana sessions, Gita chanting, Gurupaduka Puja and elevating discourses by the Mahatmas were scheduled during these five days.

#### OVERSEAS BRANCHES

**Hong Kong (China):** H.H. Sri Swami Yogaswarupanandaji Maharaj visited the Branch from the 9th to 21st of November 2008, during which special programmes were organised. The Branch assisted the Yoga Promotion Activities organised by the Consulate General of India, Hong Kong at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Regular Yogasana classes helped 228 new participants in November and 154 new participants in the month of December along with the earlier classes running smoothly. Weekly Satsangas were conducted.







