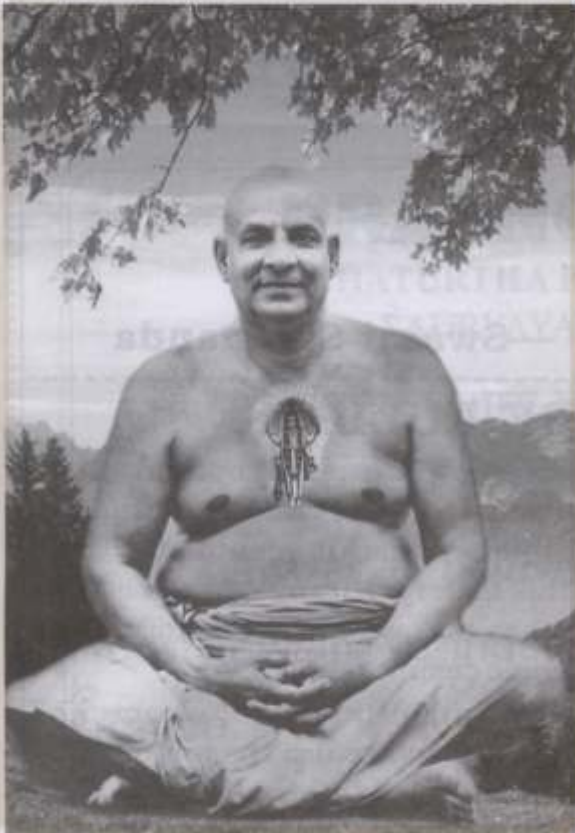




The DIVINE

LIFE



God
is in heaven.

That heaven is in your
heart. You will find Him
there. But you will have to
purify your heart first. Remove
the weeds of jealousy and lust;
withdraw the senses, still the mind;
subdue the bubbling thoughts;
silence the surging emotions.
You can meet your Beloved
now.

Sri Sri Sri Sivananda

NOVEMBER 2020

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

THE COSMIC WIRE-PULLER

My silent adorations and prostrations to the Cosmic Proprietor, the inner ruler, the Superintendent, the Supreme head, the President-founder, the silent Sakshi and the Governor of this wonderful mental factory! Brahman (Absolute) is the silent Sakshi of this factory. Hiranyagarbha is the supreme Director of this factory. Every man has his own mental factory. The Absolute has to manage and supervise the whole cosmic factory.

He who dwells within the mind, who is within the mind, whom the mind does not know, whose body the mind is, and who rules the mind from within, is the Self, Inner Ruler, Immortal. Salutations to this Inner Ruler who illumines the minds and the mental factory.

Swami Sivananda



THE DIVINE LIFE

Vol. LXXIX

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No. 04

PRASNOPANISHAD

CHATURTHA PRASNA (QUESTION IV)

SAURYAYANI AND PIPPALADA

स यथा सोम्य वयांसि वासोवृक्षं संप्रतिष्ठन्ते ।

एवं ह वै तत्सर्वं पर आत्मनि संप्रतिष्ठते ॥७॥

7. Just as, O beloved one, birds repair to a tree to roost (dwell), so indeed all this rests in the Supreme Atman.

महागुरुवर्णमातृकास्तोत्रम्

MAHAGURU-VARNA-MATRIKASTOTRAM

(Jnana Bhaskara Mahamahopadhyaya Sri S. Gopala Sastri)

टंकाराश्रितवल्लकीरवधृतानन्दाय वन्द्यात्मने

ठंकारोपमकल्मषाय करुणापाथोधये वाग्मिने ।

डम्भापेतहृदे दृढशयजुषे धन्याश्रितश्रीपदे

वीणापाणिकटाक्षिताय गुणिने योगीन्द्रतुभ्यं नमः ॥१५॥

15. Salutations and prostrations to Thee, O King of Yogis who is very much pleased with the sound of the lute, who is worthy to be adored, who is free from sins, who is the ocean of compassion, is an eloquent speaker, whose mind is devoid of vanity, who has firm ideas, whose holy feet have been resorted to by the fortunate ones, who is greatly blessed by Goddess Saraswati and who is an abode of virtues.

तारानाथधरांघ्रिपद्मशरणात् तत्त्वज्ञचूडामणेः

तीर्थीभूतहिमाचलात् सुरनदीतीराधिवासप्रियात् ।

दत्तात्रेयनिभात् क्षमादमदयाशान्त्यादिरत्नाकरात्

धन्या लब्धवरा जनाः खलु शिवानन्दाख्ययोगीश्वरात् ॥१६॥

16. Those devotees are really blessed who have received benedictions and boons from Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, who is the crest-jewel among the Knowers of Truth, who has taken refuge at the lotus feet of Lord Siva, whose life has been sanctified by the Himalayas, who loves to live at the banks of Mother Ganga, who is a great Tapasvi like Lord Dattatreya and who is an ocean of virtues like forgiveness, control of senses, mercy and peace.

(To be continued)

THE INNER IMPORT OF SKANDA WORSHIP¹

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivananda)

Prostrations and salutations to Lord Subrahmanya, the Supreme Being,—who is the ruler of this Universe, who is the Indweller of our hearts, who is the second son of Lord Siva, who is the beloved of Valli and Devayani, who bestows boons quickly on His devotees and who is an embodiment of Power, Wisdom, Love and Bliss.

Lord Subrahmanya is an Avatara or incarnation of Lord Siva. All incarnations are manifestations of the one Supreme Lord. Lord Subrahmanya and Lord Krishna are one. Lord Krishna says in the Gita, ‘*Senaninam Aham Skandah*—of the Generals, I am Skanda.’ The Lord manifests Himself from time to time in various names and forms for establishing Dharma and punishing the wicked. Lord Subrahmanya is also known as Skanda, Kartikeya, Muruga, Shanmukha, etc.

Lord Subrahmanya is a ray born of the Chaitanya of Lord Siva. He is the energy of Lord Siva. In the picture, Lord Subrahmanya holds

the Vel or spear in His hand, just as Lord Siva holds the Trident or Trisula. Vel is an emblem of Power, and indicates that He is the ruler of this Universe. His vehicle or Vahana is the peacock; this is by way of representation that He has entirely conquered pride, egoism, vanity. There is a cobra under His Feet; this is to indicate that He is absolutely fearless, immortal and wise. He bestows on His devotees material and spiritual prosperity and success in all their undertakings, even at the slightest devotion shown to Him.

The origin of Lord Skanda, the purpose of His Avatara and its significance, are of much importance to all seekers after Truth. During the battle between the Asuras (demons) and the Devas (gods), the latter were defeated several times by the former. The Devas were unable to resist the onslaught of the Asuric forces. Then in despair, they approached Lord Siva and entreated Him to give them an able Leader under whose heroic

¹ From DL 1968 The holy Skanda-Shashthi festival will be celebrated this year from the 15th to 20th November

lead they might obtain victory and prayed to Lord Siva sincerely. The gracious Lord granted the request by creating the mighty Divine Warrior, Lord Skanda, out of His Divine Power. This great son of Lord Siva at once assumed leadership of the celestial forces, organised them, inspired them and attacked the Asuric forces. The Asuras were routed and a glorious victory gained by the Devas. Thus it was through able guidance and leadership of Lord Skanda that the Divine forces obtained victory over the demoniacal.

The inner life of the spiritual aspirant is precisely such a constant struggle between the divine and the demoniacal aspects in him. The seeker's Sadhana is this determined battle against the Asuric forces that try to drag him down into deeper darkness and take him away from his ideal. At times, he becomes so totally helpless under the violent attacks of his lower nature that it seems as if all hope of progress is doomed to failure. He feels that he has fallen, never to rise again. But, let all Sadhakas take heart that the compassion and grace of the Divine Lord is never-failing. It will never let

you down. '*Nil desperandum*' should be your guiding motto, for the eternal law is 'darkness cannot stand before light'. Make a whole-hearted surrender at the feet of the Divine even as the Devas surrendered themselves to Lord Siva; and like them pray earnestly with Bhava and sincerity. The divine help will surely come, and in your heart there will spring up the routing torrent of Divine Shakti. The Lord's grace will become manifest to you in the form of inner Soul-force. This power is the Skanda manifest in inner being to aid in your battle against the lower Asuric self with its devilish minions like passion, anger, greed, jealousy, falsehood, deceit, cruelty and thousand other aspects of evil. No more are you helpless! The descent of the Divine Grace with this Atma Bala (soul-force) with this Skanda Shakti, will vanquish all the undivine forces that attack you on the spiritual path and you emerge triumphant and victorious. You achieve your life's goal.

Therefore, Lord Kartikeya is the very embodiment of the Divine grace. He is the personification of the Daya Shakti or Kripa Shakti of the Lord. The

grace of the compassionate Lord, when prayerfully and sincerely invoked, manifests as such irresistible Divine Power that all Asuric forces fly away in holy terror at its mere approach. The Lord's grace is the ultimate resort and unfailing support of all struggles in the inner warfare of everyone's spiritual life. The significance and the spiritual message embodied in Skanda Avatara is the message of supreme importance of self-surrender, the supreme efficacy of sincere prayer and the unfailing compassion of the Lord. If you truly surrender yourself to the Lord with Bhava, He will at once shower His grace upon you. No real prayer from the bottom of your heart will remain unanswered. If you obtain Lord's grace, you will certainly succeed and overcome all obstacles and annihilate the forces of darkness that stand against you. There is no force that can stand against the supreme power of Divine Grace.

Take shelter at the Lord's feet. Pray to Him earnestly and invoke His aid and obtain His grace and compassion. Emerge triumphant and victorious. Attain the lofty and glorious spiritual state of freedom, perfection and bliss. Upon the joyous occasion of

Skanda Shashthi, when you all celebrate the victory of the Lord over the demon, Tarakasura, the powerful leader of the Asuras, remember these great truths and be courageous. Surrender yourself afresh at His feet.

Of the 18 Puranas, the Skanda Purana narrates the Avatara and the Lilas of Lord Skanda, the second son of Lord Siva. It relates how the Asuras, who were tyrannising over the Devas, were destroyed by Lord Skanda. Also, it gives in detail the marriage of Lord Skanda or Shanmukha with Valli and Devayani.

The worship of Lord Shanmukha is very common in South India. Almost every town in the South has its temple dedicated to Lord Shanmukha. The Tamils have named Shanmukha as Murugan. Just as the God of Winds is Vayu, the God of Waters Varuna, the Tamil term for the Lord of Nature is Murugan.

To lead a natural life is to live with Nature. This is the life in consonance with the Divine Will. Control of the senses, anger and lust is the way to achieve the higher life. And the most important form of worship that a human being can offer unto the Lord is by not hurting others, either by

thought or word or deed. Only then, life in nature becomes smooth and happy. It is this kind of worship and life that the Skanda Purana teaches us through the worship of the Saguna form of Lord Skanda. Indeed, it is the counsel of Christ: "*Treat Thy neighbour as Thy own Self*", and "*Do unto others as thou wishest to be done by*". And the essence of all religions is only to abstain from inflicting injury on any one. *Ahimsa Paramo Dharmah*.

Hence, whenever we worship Lord Murugan, we should have the Bhava 'I pray unto Him, who is the all-pervading Beautiful One, the Indweller of all, in the form of Lord Subrahmanya or Murugan'. This Saguna form of the Lord is only to give a hold and grasp for the mind to understand the Immortal, the Omnipotent and the Omniscient attributes of the Almighty, Who is at once Infinite and the Indweller of every heart.

As in the worship of other Gods, in the Saguna worship of Lord Skanda also, there are some Vratas or observances. There was once a king, Muchukunda by name. He was a staunch Saivite. He approached Sage Vasishtha to advise him on the

importance and methods of observing some Vrata by which he could gain personal success, peace and prosperity. Vasishtha indicated the Vratas of Lord Skanda and detailed their significance.

One of the most important Vratas of Lord Shanmukha is the Skanda-Shashthi Vrata. It is observed for six days from the Prathama Tithi of the Shukla-Paksha (bright fortnight) following Dipavali in the month of October-November; a complete fast is to be observed and the devotee should engage himself solely in the Puja of the Lord, in reading and learning of the glories of Lord Skanda. If fasting for six days continuously is likely to prove too much of a strain, he may have one meal per day and fast completely on the last day i.e., the Shashthi Day. This is the day to commemorate the victory of Lord Shanmukha over the Asura king, Soorapadma. Persons who observe this Vrata will derive immense spiritual benefit.

May the glorious Lord Skanda inspire you all and infuse you with inner spiritual strength! May He lead you all to victorious triumph against the demons of nescience and worldliness! May He bless you all!

Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj's Letter to the devotees (November, 1967)

BELOVED IMMORTAL ATMAN!

Blessed Seekers after Truth!

Om Namo Narayanaya! Om Sri
Maha-Lakshmyai Namah!

Salutations and greetings for this season to you all. In the holy name of Sri Gurudev, I wish you all a most happy Dipavali and pray that the radiant Goddess Lakshmi may shower Her Grace upon you and grant you prosperity, plenty, success and all-round blessedness! May auspiciousness attend upon you at every step. May health, beauty, virtue and spiritual progress accrue to you. I wish you and all your near and dear ones health, joy and advancement in life!

This bright Festival of Lamps comprises a Universal collective expression of the spirit of our ancient Vedic prayer '*Tamaso ma jyotir gamaya*, — from darkness lead us unto Light'. Upon this Dipavali night, we affirm every year our determination to banish darkness with bright light. Spiritual ignorance is darkness. Anger is darkness. Hatred is darkness. Greed is darkness. Illiteracy and lethargy are darkness. Deceit and treachery are darkness. Disloyalty and subversion

are darkness. Unrighteousness is deep darkness. So is gross materialism. The opposite of these comprises light.

Through virtue and wisdom, through purity and truthfulness, through unselfishness and service, awaken the Light of Divine Life and banish this darkness. Let the light of virtue and goodness shine bright in your character and conduct. Let your thoughts be noble, your feelings sublime, your speech polite and friendly and all actions kind and good. Let every noble word and deed be as so many bright lamps in this darkness of selfish materialistic earthly life. Become a Centre of Light!

My special greetings this month to all devotees and votaries of Lord Kartikeya or Skanda Bhagavan, the warrior-son of Uma-Maheshvara. The devotees of Velayudha Muruga everywhere in India will be observing the holy Skanda Shashthi this week. Places like holy Palani, Tiruchandur, Tiruttani and similar Kshetras will be overflowing with Subrahmanya Bhakti and the praise of the youthful wielder of the Divine Spear. Earnest devotees in our country's Capital will be worshipping on 7th November at His

shrine at Uttar Swamimalai. Bhagavan Kartikeya bestows success in Sadhana to spiritual aspirants. He is the embodiment of Daivi Sampatti and Sadhana Shakti. He personifies the power of Divine Grace as the irresistible inner force that ultimately overcomes all unspiritual and ungodly factors in the seeker's life. His Divine Spear is the power of sustained meditation which overcomes all obstacles and pierces the veil of Ajnana, bringing the Sadhaka face to face with God.

We bow to the exalted memory of the great sage Yajnavalkya, the most towering spiritual personality of the Upanishadic era. His Birth Anniversary falls on the 11th of this month. He was the grand old man of Divine Wisdom who shone resplendent in the great royal court of the philosopher-king Raja Janaka of Mithila. Some of the most precious wisdom gems from the priceless Upanishadic treasure are the illumining words of sage Yajnavalkya. In his immortal discourse to his perceptive wife Maitreyi, the venerable sage expounds the Atman as the one and the only Supreme Value in all existence. In this inspiring dialogue between the sage husband and the aspiring wife, we find the essence of the Indian spiritual genius and the central concept of the Indian vision of man and

his life's goal. In this, we have the keystone to the invisible structure of our sublime spiritual heritage. I salute that great soul Yajnavalkya who gave us this inspiring and electrifying truth. O children of Bharatavarsha, lose not this vision of life! It is the very life-impulse in Indian culture.

A unique worship takes place in this month. It is the worship of the sacred Tulasi (holy Basil), exclusively conducted by ladies only. It is a woman's worship of a Holy Lady who has been sanctified and elevated to the status of a celestial being. There is deep significance in this worship. For, Tulasi personifies the lofty virtue of feminine chastity. Tulasi is the ideal of faithful and unswerving loyalty to the chosen Lord of one's heart. It is a singleness of devotion and dedicated adoration of the one and only chosen partner of your life. Tulasi is Maha Pativrata. She ranks with Anasuya, Sita and Tara. Feminine chastity is a Divine virtue. It is the glory and resplendence of Bharatiya Samskriti (Indian Culture). It is a rare fragrance in a woman's personality. It is a real power possessed by a lady which makes her a Goddess in her family and a shining light of the home. A chaste woman is worthy of worship. The Gods themselves bow at her feet. A woman who is firmly established in this lofty virtue of chastity is verily a divine being

though in human garb. She purifies the entire society in which she lives. She can overcome the whole world. All men are as mere children before such an exalted soul. This is the true glory of Indian womanhood. Hail to Devi Tulasi! Hail to all ideal women of chastity, purity, spotless morality, nobility and sublime dignity. My silent prostrations and adorations at their worshipful feet again and again!

I should not conclude without recalling to your mind two great religious reformers and spiritual leaders who have left their mark upon Indian Society and given to us a heritage of wisdom and worship. The great Guru Nanak in the Punjab and the extraordinary Sant Jnaneshvar Maharaj of Maharashtra opened up a new era of religious toleration, broad-mindedness and universality. They form a common heritage of the whole nation. The teachings of Guru Nanak Dev are incorporated in the holy 'Guru Granth Saheb'. The teachings of Sant Jnaneshvar Maharaj are enshrined in his immortal classic 'The Jnaneshvari Gita'. These great leaders brushed aside empty forms and rituals and brought out the spiritual essence of real religion. They strove to root out blind superstition and to give back to man a living faith in and love for the Universal Godhead. They boldly

proclaimed the spiritual oneness of all men. They challenged the claim of selfish orthodoxy to a monopoly of man's approach to his Creator. They expounded the indescribable greatness of God's Divine Name and the importance of leading a pure life of good conduct and service unto others. They stressed upon the spiritual meaning and purpose of man's life on earth. The culture of this country has been indeed enriched by the lofty contribution made by the life and work of these two noble sons of Bharatmata — namely Sant Jnaneshvar Maharaj and Sadguru Nanak Dev. May their teachings spread. May their names live forever. May they be ever enshrined in your heart. Glory to Guru Nanak! Glory to Sant Jnaneshvar! O you resplendent sons of Mother India, may you guide the people of this blessed land towards unity, selflessness, mutual co-operation and a life of purity, service and sacrifice. May your inspiring teachings guide us all along the path to a Good Life and God-vision.

With my prayers to the Lord for your highest happiness and welfare and with my best Dipavali wishes and greetings, I close this letter. Accept my best regards and Prem.

Yours at Sri Gurudev's Feet,

Swami Chidanandaji
ॐ

THE FOUNDATION OF SPIRITUAL LIFE¹

(Sri Swami Krishnananda)

God's grace be upon you all, is my sincere prayer at this auspicious moment. God bless the whole world, the entire mankind, with His benign abundant grace which is shed upon the whole of creation like the rays of the sun which knows no beginning, no middle and no end. May this soul-sustaining, energising, compassionate, divine grace be upon us all.

What I would like to place before you, children of God, seekers of Truth, at this moment is something which would be worthwhile for you to ponder over and contemplate in a consistent and systematic manner. We have heard of gatherings, conferences, religious activities and functions galore through the history of mankind. This is not something new to you, not something with which you are unfamiliar. You have attended temple worships, prayer meetings and religious gatherings a number of times throughout your life. Many have done this, many are doing it, and many will be doing it in the future.

But mankind does not seem to have progressed much, either culturally or spiritually, if we go deep

into the matter. If we study the history of the human mind as it existed and operated some centuries ago, we will find that it is in the same condition today. We cannot call this 'advancement' in the real sense of the term. People have turned to religion and spirituality for solace. The solace and peace which man imagined cannot be had from public activities, commercial dealings and engagement in business of any type. The usual workaday activity did not seem to satisfy human nature. The so-called busy life of active work did not give him peace of mind, and so he began to turn to a new type of activity, called religion. I would like you to underline this word 'activity' because we think that religion also is a kind of activity.

Fortunately or unfortunately for us, we cannot get rid of the idea that life is activity, and we have also a very peculiar definition of activity which we have been carrying with us through centuries of human life. When we turn to religion or to the life spiritual, we seem to have turned ourselves away from one kind of activity to another kind of activity, so we are still in the

¹ Discourse given on December 26th, 1973 at a conference in Delhi.

realm of activity only. People who are ill may move from one kind of medicine to another kind of medicine, but this does not mean that they are cured of the illness. They are still ill; they have only changed the medicine, but have not moved from illness to health. They have only moved from one type of treatment to another type of treatment.

What we need today is an entirely reoriented type of thinking, a transfiguration to be brought about in the very system of the evaluation of the values of life—a new kind of education, to put it in the proper sense of the term. We have to think in a new manner altogether. Before we try to do something new, we have to think anew.

I would like to remind you that religion, or the way to God, is not a new kind of activity into which you are asked to enter. It is a rebuilding of the very tissues of your body, a reconstruction of the entire setup of your thinking and an introduction into your life of a vitality, a force and a power which cannot be identified with anything that is visible in this world. To regain health after a period of illness is not to enter into a new kind of work or business or transaction. It would be difficult for you to consider and understand what actually happens when you shift from the level of illness

to the level of health. You do not do anything new there. Something happens, and that is what is called health.

When you are suffering from a serious illness of high fever, for example—it may be due to malaria, flu or typhoid—you know what happens and how you feel at that time. The whole of life looks meaningless when you are in such a state of fever. All values lose their sense. You do not want to speak to people. You cannot think at all. When the temperature comes to normal, what happens to you? You have not done anything; something has happened to you, and that happening has brought about a complete change in your way of thinking, feeling, understanding and action. A new appetite has arisen in you, and you say you are normal, though you do not know what that normalcy actually means. Your system has become entirely different; the whole of your personality has become completely new. You are a new man altogether. Health is not the opposite of disease, but it is something entirely different from disease. We cannot compare illness with health, as there is no relationship between them. We cannot even say that they are related as the negative and positive poles of

human life. The only comparison or analogy that we can bring before our mind here in this connection is the relation between dream and waking.

What happened to you when you woke up from dream? Did you bring something from the dream world to the waking world? Is it only a continuation of the activity of the dream world? You will realise that waking is not in any way a continuation of the values of the dream world but an entire transfiguration of values. A wholeness, a completeness, a totality, a sense of a new being altogether has crept into you when you woke up from sleep or dream. You have become a whole. You have not moved from the dream to the waking world as you move from one place to another place. It is not shifting yourself bodily from one realm to another realm, from one country to another country, etc. It is not a movement from one place to another place when you move from dream to waking. It is a movement from one sense of values to another sense of values wherein you do not merely change your way of thinking, but your being in itself has been transformed. You are not the same person that you were in dream when you wake up into this consciousness

of the world in which you are today. You have grown into a new reality altogether. This would be something worthwhile for you to ponder over deeply.

Some such inscrutable transformation takes place when you shift your sense of values from the earthly way of thinking, with which the man on the street is familiar, to the spiritual way of thinking. Spirituality is not one of the types of business that you do in the world. It is not any business at all. It is to introduce health to your total personality. That would be not merely a change of thinking, but a change of being. The life spiritual is a state of being, and there are degrees in the concept and experience of this being that I am just now referring to.

It is difficult to explain in language what your being or existence is, as different from what you do, think and feel normally in the ordinary sense of psychological activity. While everything that you do produces an ulterior effect in the empirical world, an effect that is different from the cause, as people would generally like to put it, when you change your sense of being from one degree to another degree, there is no production of an effect as different from a temporal

cause, but something altogether different happens. The entry of the sense of spiritual values into your being is the same thing as the entry of God into your being.

Spiritual life and divine life mean one and the same thing. We are usually accustomed to identify life with activity, but life is not activity, though it is connected with activity and vice versa. The activities of the world are intended to bring about a reorientation in the life of the individual concerned, to bring about a new kind of experience which is non-distinguishable from your own being. You feel a sense of relief of tension when a desirable result is produced by the activity in which you are engaged. Why do you work from morning to evening? What is the purpose? Why do you sweat and toil? Why do you run about? It is to create in your own self, and in the atmosphere in which you are living, a consciousness of relief from tension, an awareness of a new type of values which becomes identical with the feeling of happiness and satisfaction within. You feel relieved, which means to say you feel happy, and you are happy not because you are physically in contact with

something, which is usually the case when you are in a world of activity and work, toil and labour.

This toil and labour and work and sweating is intended to relieve you from the necessity to come in contact with things of the world so that you feel a sense of relief from within your own self. This relief is different from the agitation of nerves and a feeling of insecurity and anxiety that you usually feel when you are to come in contact with other persons and things in the world. Contact is not the way to happiness, is the great truth we have been bequeathed by Bhagavan Sri Krishna in his gospel, the Bhagavadgita. *Ye hi samsparsaja bhoga dukkhayonaya eva te* (B.G. 5.22): Contact is not the source of happiness, is not the way to happiness, but the way to pain. Every kind of contact, physical or psychological, outward or inward, or merely conceptual, is an artificial process of pressing down the tension of the nerves and the mind, like pressing a spring with the force of your thumb, and when the force is lifted, the spring comes up again. It will regain its original position. Every kind of contact, whether physical or psychological, is an artificial contrivance conceived by the mind to

gain a temporary relief from the agony of life which has arisen on account of our separation from Reality, or Truth, *satyam*, which we say alone triumphs: *satyam eva jayate* (M.U. 3.1.6). We are cut off from the source of abundance and real wealth like a schizophrenic who imagines that he is something different from who he really is, and he cries and weeps and sobs, and runs about and hits his head against the wall that something has happened to him.

Something like that has happened to mankind as a whole. Every individual has, by a peculiar freak, as it were, isolated itself from the very source of which it is an integral part, and to come to normalcy in this context would be to regain that state of health of consciousness, which is the actual treatment. When a schizophrenic realises that he is a healthy human being, he is cured of his illness, and this has taken place on account of his realisation of his own self-identity. Nothing else has happened to him.

In our attempt at spiritual practice, which we call sadhana, we try to bring about this inner transformation which is the sense of wholeness that we introduce into

every kind of work and activity of ours, so that we cannot distinguish between spirituality and work. Your spiritual life is not confined to your puja room or temple or to the venue of a conference, but is wherever you are and in whichever condition you may find yourself. All the circumstances in which you are placed become a source of supply of energy to you. To touch spiritual life is to touch a live wire. Energy infuses itself into you. Spirituality is the nature of God, and God being present everywhere, you can contact Him in any place, at any time and in any manner whatsoever, provided this sense of wholeness, totality of being, a completeness of purpose, is enshrined in your heart.

This is the foundation of spiritual life, and this is the basic rock bottom of all sadhana. Whatever be the name it takes or assumes, sadhana is one, spiritual life is one, as God to Whom the sadhana is directed is also one. Finally you will realise that mankind is one. We are not many individuals. We are a corporate body, a single power that aspires to reach the destiny of evolution which is cosmic salvation, towards which we are really heading.

GOOD AND BAD ACTIONS¹

(Swami Gurusarananda)

7th DECEMBER, 1956

Out of the many devotees who were having Darshan of Swamiji this morning, one devotee asked, "If God does all actions through man, why should we call some actions as good and some actions as bad?" Swamiji replied, "God does not act through man until he has surrendered his ego to the Lord. Now you are doing according to the promptings of your ego. You are not doing according to His Will. You are egoistic. So you do good and evil. But when you surrender your ego to the Lord and He does, there is no good and bad. Now you say, 'I did this', 'I exerted'. But when you have removed this egoism and placed it at His Lotus-Feet, when you have effected complete surrender to the Lord — *Sarvadharmān parityajya*—God does everything, and there is no question of good or bad actions."

TWO SEEDS OF SAMBARA

Swamiji asked, "What are the two seeds of the tree of Samsara or world-process?", and himself replied, "Vibration of Prana and Vasana (subtle desire) are

the two seeds for the tree of Samsara".

THE ORGANS IN THE FACE

Swamiji asked, "How many organs are there in the face? Name them". Sri Beatrice Vigo replied, "Eyes, nose, mouth, ears". Swamiji observed, "You have missed skin, the organ of touch. There are five organs of perception and one organ of action in the face. Tongue is both an organ of perception and an organ of action. It is used both for tasting and for speaking. It is like a double-edged sword. So it is very difficult to control it".

WHO DRINKS COFFEE?

Swamiji asked, "Who drinks coffee?" (At the time of this question, Swamiji and others were taking coffee). Sri Beatrice Vigo replied, "The Self". Swamiji disapproving the answer, said, "The Self does not eat or drink. It does nothing. It enjoys nothing. It is only a silent witness. The individual soul combined with the mind and the organs enjoys. *Atmendriyamano yuktam bhoktetyahurmaneehinah*, says the Kathopanishad. The individual soul associated with the organs and mind is said to be the enjoyer. The Self is only a witness".

¹ From Sivananda Day-to-Day

MEANING OF OM

An Australian visitor asked, "What is the meaning of OM?" Swamiji replied, "OM is the symbol of Brahman. OM is Satchidananda, Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. OM is Infinity. OM is Eternity. OM is the Light of lights. The first vibration that arose at the time of creation was that of OM. Everything came out of OM. If you hear attentively the sound of the flow of Ganges, you will hear the sound OM. From a distance if you closely hear the sound of a market, you will hear it as OM. The Bible says, "In the beginning there was the word. The word was with God. The word itself was God." That word is OM. OM and Amen

are one. OM and 'Sat Nam' (true name) of the Sikhs are one. OM is the all-pervading Immortal Self. OM is the underlying Reality in all things. All sounds have emanated from OM. 'A', 'U' and 'M' are the three letters that make up OM, and they denote the Omnipresence, Omnipotence and Omniscience of God. Meditate on OM, feeling that you are the Infinite, Eternal Brahman. You are Satchidananda. Meditation on OM removes the impurities of the mind such as lust, greed, anger, etc. It steadies the wandering mind and leads to the attainment of Self-realisation. Meditation on OM bestows inner strength and peace."

The Divine Name is God Himself Manifest as a spiritual force. God and name are one. He who clings to the divine name verily clings to the Lord Himself. The divine name shall take you across the ocean of Samsara. The divine name shall bestow upon you freedom from births and deaths. Practise Japa of the divine name regularly every day without fail. Do mental Japa also. Chant the divine name with love and joy. Feel the presence of the Lord everywhere. Have firm faith in the divine name. It will bestow upon you divine love. It will open for you the realm of God-consciousness. It is the golden key to unlock the mansion of divine bliss.

—Swami Sivananda

THE OCEAN AND THE RIVERS

(Sri Swami Sivananda)

Yudhishtira said, “O Venerable Grandsire! Tell me how a king should behave towards a powerful enemy?”

Bhishma said, “Just listen to the discourse between the ocean and the rivers. You will get a solution to your problem.”

The Ocean said, “Ye rivers! All of you bring to me trunks of large trees. You root them out with branches and leaves. But you do not ever bring a cane! May I know the reason for this?”

The River Ganga said, “The trees resist our currents. They do not bend. They are proud. They are unyielding. They do not know to move with the time and to adapt themselves to circumstances. On account of this disposition, they are uprooted and washed away by our current. But the cane behaves in quite a different manner. It sees the advancing current and bends to it. After the current passes away, it resumes its former position. It is humble. It is

yielding. It adjusts itself to time and tide. Therefore, it stands in its own place. We are not able to root it out. Further, we do not wish to do any harm to those that are humble, obedient and yielding. We like the cane for its good qualities. We destroy the big trees as they are arrogant and proud of their might and strength”.

He who does not yield to a powerful enemy competent to imprison or kill him meets with destruction quickly like the big trees. Whereas the wise man who acts prudently after judging fully his own strength and weakness and that of his adversary rarely undergoes any trouble or suffering. When a wise man realises that his enemy is more powerful than himself, he behaves like the cane. This is certainly an indication of wisdom. He who adapts himself to circumstances and conditions always attains success and prosperity.

(Shanti Parva, Chapter 113).

THE HERE NOW TRUTH

(Swami Atmaswarupananda)

A number of the students of one of the Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy courses were expressing their gratitude for what they had gained here, but were also expressing some concern as to how they could preserve that gain when they went back home.

There are, of course, many practical answers that can be given. One very simple one is to make just one small, but fundamental, change in their lifestyle. It can be anything, but it is something that they are determined to follow through on, something that will help keep alive that which they have gained here. At another level an answer could be to trust That which has brought them this far. Something prompted them to travel all this distance to attend the two month course. That which prompted them has their highest welfare in mind. It will continue to have their highest welfare in mind, and at the appropriate time will take them further on their journey.

One of these answers, or answers like them, could be very helpful, but in one sense they miss the point. They miss the point because they are answering the question from the point of view of the student, not necessarily from the point of view of the truth. The truth is that they have already reached the goal, indeed they never left it. They have always been That. Yet there is subtle thinking

within them that they have to do more to attain something new. More will need to be done, no doubt, but it is actually to discover what is here and now.

It is impossible for us to be more divine than we already are. What can change is our understanding of our present situation. It is not that we find a new world. We see our present world in a different light, or as Gurudev used to say, from a different angle of vision. What is it that is here and now, that has always been with us and always will be? It is this that we must realize, or make real. It is this position that we must rest in and make the basis of our life. We should enquire into what it is that is ever present? It is getting rid of our ignorance that is spiritual life—not obtaining something new.

Pujya Swami Chidanandaji once said, “Every day rub away the ego a little bit.” We do it through selfless service, devotion to God, meditation, enquiry—the same things we always knew, but we do it from a different angle of vision. We finally discover what we already are, and always have been, instead of trying to attain something new. The Truth is what we already are and have ever been. As our late revered Vedanta teacher Swami Brahmanandaji used to say: “You just can't believe that this world just as it is is God.” That includes us.



STUDENTS' SUCCESS IN LIFE

GLORY OF CHARACTER

Beloved Immortal children!

You should endeavour your level best to mould your character properly. Your whole life and your success in life entirely depend upon the formation of your character. All the great persons in this world have achieved their greatness through character and character alone. The brilliant luminaries of the world have won their laurels of fame, reputation and honour, through character and character alone.

Develop virtues. Conserve your energy. Wish eagerly and fervently to attain God-realisation. Have the ideal before the mind. Develop faith in the Vedas and in the power of the Mantras. Do Sandhya and Gayatri Japa daily. Do meditation daily. Understand and realise its potency and efficacy. Do some form of worship or the other and realise the splendour of the Atman. Regain your lost divinity.



May the divine splendour shine in your faces! May the supreme Light of lights enlighten your understanding! May the divine power and peace abide in you forever!

—Swami Sivananda

CULTIVATION OF VIRTUES

CHEERFULNESS

Cheerfulness is the state or quality of being joyful, lively and of good spirits.

A cheerful man will do more work, in the same time, will do it better, and will persevere in it longer than a cheerless man.

Cheerfulness is the best tonic. It gives radiant health and peace.

A kind and sympathetic man will be ever cheerful. A cheerful man is full of good spirits. He is lively. He radiates joy everywhere.

Be cheerful always. You will become very healthy and you will radiate health in every direction.

—Swami Sivananda

ERADICATION OF VICES

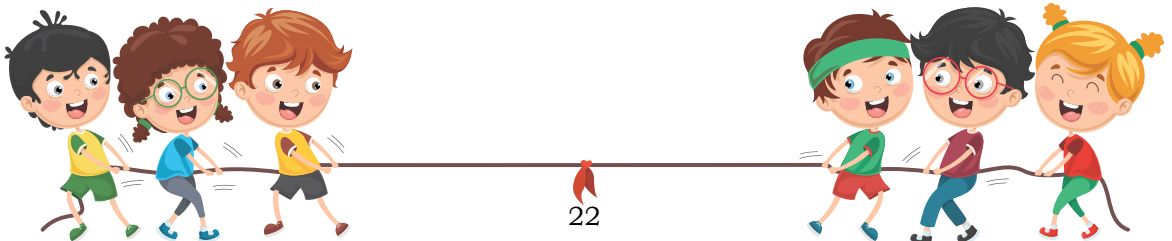
BACKBITING

This is a dirty, abominable habit of petty-minded people.

The root cause of backbiting is ignorance or jealousy. The backbiter wants to pull down or destroy the man who is in a prosperous condition by false vilification, slander, calumny, false accusation, etc. There is no other work for a backbiter except scandal-mongering. He lives on backbiting. He takes pleasure in backbiting, mischief-making.

A backbiter can never have a calm, peaceful mind. His mind is always planning or scheming in wrong directions. An aspirant should be absolutely free from this dreadful vice.

—Swami Sivananda



MATSYASANA (Fish Posture)

This Asana should be done immediately after Sarvangasana. The duration prescribed is one-third of the time for Sarvangasana. If one does the Sarvangasana for three minutes, this should be done for one minute. In this posture, one will derive some of the benefits of Sirshasana and Sarvangasana. In Sarvangasana, there is a forward bend of the throat region, while here in this pose the neck region is stretched backward, so that fresh blood from the heart can flow abundantly to the brain where the pituitary and pineal glands are situated. During the practice of this Asana, the apices of the lungs (upper portion of the lungs) begin to function without any exertion to the body. Generally, this can be effected only after considerable physical exertion.



Technique: Sit in Padmasana on a blanket spread on the floor. Slowly go back by resting on the elbows. Arch the back by lifting the chest and trunk and bend the neck backwards. Draw the head back and rest it on its crown. Raise your hands and catch hold of the big toes and gradually increase the arch by pressing further back the position of the crown of the head and pulling the toes by the hands. Concentrate on the chest, throat, crown of the head and the rear end of the spine, with normal breathing. Retain the posture for 20 seconds to one minute i.e., one-third duration of Sarvangasana. Release the toes by resting on the elbows and rest the back of your head on the ground. Slowly get up and sit in Padmasana and release the legs one by one.



As you gain mastery over this Asana, you may gradually increase the duration of the posture. Do slow, deep breathing while in posture.

Note: Beginners, who are not in a position to sit in Padmasana, can stretch their legs and practise this Asana. The palms may rest on the thighs throughout.

Benefits: The chest and the dorsal regions are well expanded and breathing becomes more full. The pelvic joints are rendered more flexible. Due to the stretching of the neck, the thyroids are benefited. The spasm from the bronchial tubes are removed. This will effect some relief for the Asthma patients.

—Swami Chidananda

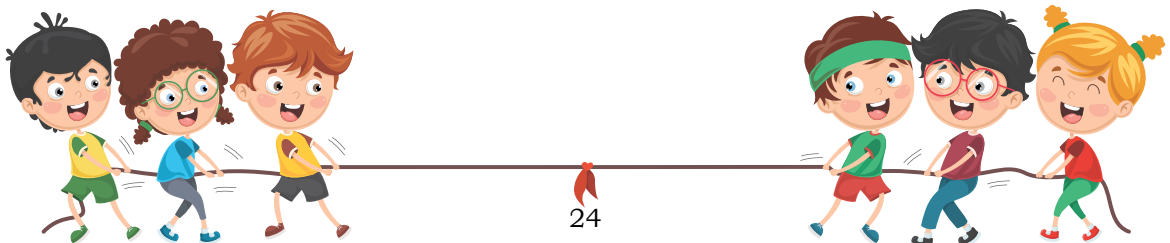
DEEP BREATHING EXERCISE

Technique: After relaxing in Shavasana, sit in any one of the sitting postures according to your convenience. Inhale and exhale through both the nostrils, without producing any sound. During inhalation, expand the chest and lungs and feel that fresh oxygen is entering the system, and during exhalation, contract the lungs as much as possible and also feel that all the impurities are going out.

If you feel that the nostrils are blocked due to cold, gently press the right nostril with the right thumb and breathe in and breathe out through the left nostril, without producing any sound. Then close the left nostril with the help of the little and ring fingers of the right hand, slowly inhale and exhale through the right nostril, without producing any sound. Do this process six times. Gradually increase it to twelve times. This is one round. You can increase the number of rounds according to your strength and capacity.

Benefits: This clears the bronchial and nasal passages, frees one from cold, headache, etc., and increases the breathing capacity of the lungs.

—Swami Chidananda



NAVARATRI AND VIJAYADASHAMI CELEBRATION AT THE HEADQUARTERS ASHRAM



देवि प्रपन्नार्तिहरे प्रसीद, प्रसीद मातर्जगतोऽखिलस्य ।
प्रसीद विश्वेश्वरि पाहि विश्वं, त्वमीश्वरी देवि चराचरस्य ॥

O Mother, Thou art the destroyer of the afflictions of Thy supplicants, be Thou gracious! Thou art the mother of the universe. Let Thy mercy be upon all. O Devi, Thou art the ruler of the moving and non-moving! Do Thou protect the world and shower Thy mercy on all!



The auspicious occasion of Navaratri was celebrated with great devotion and sacredness at the Headquarters Ashram from 17th October to 24th October 2020. The Divine Mother in Her three aspects – Sri Maha Durga, Sri Maha Lakshmi and Sri Maha Saraswati — was devoutly worshipped all these days in the beautifully decorated altar at Sri Vishwanath Mandir with the humble prayers to free the world from Covid-19 pandemic and to bless one and all with radiant physical and mental health.

In the forenoon, the Sivananda Matri Satsanga Group of the Ashram offered worship to the Divine Mother with the singing of Her Sacred Names and recitation of Sri Lalitasahasranama and Mahishasurmardini Stotra. During the night Satsanga of the first seven days, Sri Durga-Saptashati was recited in Sanskrit by H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj. Thereafter, the Hindi and English meaning of Sri Durga-Saptashati was read by Sri Swami Dharmanishthanandaji Maharaj and Sri Swami Krishnabhaktanandaji Maharaj respectively. It was followed by the chanting of Tantroktta Devi Suktam by Sri Swami Vaikunthanandaji Maharaj.

On the eighth day, Navaratri message of Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj was read by H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj after the soulful singing of Bhajans, Sri Hanuman Chalisa and

Sankatmochan Ashtakam by the residents-Sadhaks. All these days, the Satsanga concluded with the floral Archana to the chants of Ashtottarashata-Namavali of Goddess, Arati and distribution of Prasad.

On 25th October, the Vijayadashami Day, the programme commenced in the forenoon with Jaya Ganesh prayer followed by Bhajan-Kirtan glorifying the Divine Mother. It being the sacred day to commence the study of holy scriptures, the selected portions from the Vedas, Upanishads, Brahmasutras, Srimad Bhagavad Gita, Sri Valmiki Ramayana, Mahabharata, Srimad Bhagavata, Patanjali Yoga Sutra and Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's book Sadhana were read by H.H. Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj.

Thereafter, H.H. Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj in his blessing message highlighting the significance of Navaratri worship inspired all to propitiate the Divine Mother through sincere devotion and thereby receive Her grace to ensure victory in spiritual life. H.H. Sri Swami Yogaswarupanandaji



Maharaj in his brief message urged all to feel the divine presence of Sri Gurudev and follow his sublime teachings to attain the supreme goal of life. One book of Sri Gurudev and one booklet of Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj's Birth Centenary Series were also released to mark this auspicious occasion. The celebration concluded with Arati and distribution of Prasad.

May the blessings of the Divine Mother and Sadgurudev be upon all.

SEVA THROUGH SIVANANDA HOME

'Sivananda Home is a Center for the loving care of the destitute and the dying people who are found by the roadside, with no one to care for: the people who are home-less, temporary or permanent, fell sick, got lost or were abandoned'.

(Swami Chidananda)

During the lockdown, the main gate was closed, even then they managed to enter. Searching for shelter, food and security, these two small kittens miraculously had come inside. Whereas the street is being dominated by monkeys, langoors and dogs, it looked they knew where to go. They were picked up, brought into safety, and they enjoyed a good meal with milk. Surprisingly, the next morning, still being dark, loud screaming was heard, high pitched and desperate. And after searching, another, even smaller kitten presented itself near the entrance. This one too was taken care of by one of the residents. Empathy in the hearts is triggered and compassion lightened up. Helplessness and utter loneliness are recognized without words. A joy to see, that people who are not able to talk, can communicate so well in their own unique way and shower all their love and affection upon these small kids, who just cannot get enough of all the patting and pitting. They bring liveliness, while running after each other, playing with their own tails, climbing on the trees, and afterwards crying that they are scared to come down and needing rescue....

Communication without words too, such a beautiful sight when these two elderly ladies walking hand-in-hand from the ward towards the outdoor section. Whereas the eldest one originally hails from Punjab, the younger one comes from our own Garhwal region only. But they found each other, and moreover, were brought together by Gurudev's grace, and their whole world is comprised and exists in the other person alone. One of them can hardly see and is physically weak, the other one limping while walking. But together they are strong, and they hold each other, catch each other, call each other or indeed...pat each other. Living in the moment, no worries about future, no concept about future at all. Innocence is bliss indeed...

Little moments of joy, in times so dark and difficult for many others, where lives at present seem to be dominated by anxiety, insecurity, loneliness, pain and suffering. Pray that the presence of God Almighty may be felt and experienced in the hearts of all, and console and inspire all who are feeling hopelessly alone, lonely and lost.

Om Sri Satgurudeva Karunaya Namah.

“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

GUIDELINES REGARDING DONATIONS

Donations towards the Divine Life Society may be made 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.

ONLINE DONATION

Those who would like to avail the 'Online Donation Facility' for sending donations may do so, either 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**.

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

Ballichi (Odisha): 133th Birth Anniversary of Worshipful Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj on 8th September and 104th Birth Anniversary of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj on 24th were celebrated with Paduka Puja, Bhajans and chanting of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra etc.

Bargarh (Odisha): The Branch continued daily Puja, Rudrabhishek on Mondays and Guru Paduka Puja on Thursdays. Birth Anniversaries of Worshipful Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj on 8th and H.H. Sri Swami

Chidanandaji Maharaj on 24th were celebrated by the Branch with Paduka Puja and chanting of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra. The Branch conducted a special Prayer on 19th for the Supreme Peace of the departed soul of Late Sri Kalapata Sahu, Editor of monthly Oriya magazine 'Mahatvani'.

Bhimkand (Odisha): Birth Anniversaries of worshipful Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj on 8th and H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj on 24th were celebrated by the Branch with Paduka Puja and chanting of "Om Namoh Bhagavate Sivanandaya" and "Om Namoh Bhagavate

Chidanandaya". Besides this, morning prayers and weekly Satsang on Sundays continued regularly.

Bomkoi (Odisha): Weekly Satsang on Sundays, Gita Path on Wednesdays and Paduka Puja on 8th and 24th were the regular programmes of the Branch. There was also recitation of Hanuman Chalisa on Sankranti day and Vishnusahsranam on Ekadasis.

Dhenkanal (Odisha): Birth Anniversaries of Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj on 8th September and H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj on 24th were celebrated by the Branch with Paduka Puja, Bhajans and discourse on life and teachings of Gurudev.

Kabisuryanagar (Odisha): Daily Narayan Seva and weekly Satsang on Thursdays and Sundays were continued regularly. Birth Anniversaries of worshipful Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj on 8th and H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj on 24th were celebrated with Paduka Puja and japa.

Lucknow (U.P.): During Covid-19 Lockdown, the Branch celebrated Birth Anniversaries of Worshipful Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj on 8th and H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj on 24th. Besides, Chanting of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra was continued daily.

Rourkela (Odisha): Daily Yoga class, weekly Satsang on Thursdays and Sundays continued with Paduka Puja, Archana and chanting of Vishnusahasranam etc. Birth Anniversaries of Worshipful Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj on 8th and H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj on 24th September were celebrated with Paduka Puja.

Steel Township - Rourkela (Odisha): The Branch continued free Yoga and Music classes on Mondays, Guru Paduka Puja on Thursdays and Swadhyaya on Saturdays. Sri Krishna Janmashtami was celebrated from 4th to 12th August.

Visakha Rural Branch (A.P.): During Covid -19 pandemic Lockdown, the Branch celebrated 2nd anniversary of Sri Annapurna Sahitha Vishwanath temple on 3rd August with Rudrabhishekam. In the evening session, there were prayers, Guru Stotram and Bhajans. 133 Birth Anniversaries of Worshipful Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj on 8th September and 104th Birth Anniversary of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj on 24th were celebrated with Paduka Puja and talk, and children recited Guru Stotram, Bhagavad Gita and Shanti Mantra.

AVAILABLE BOOKS ON YOGA, PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

By H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj

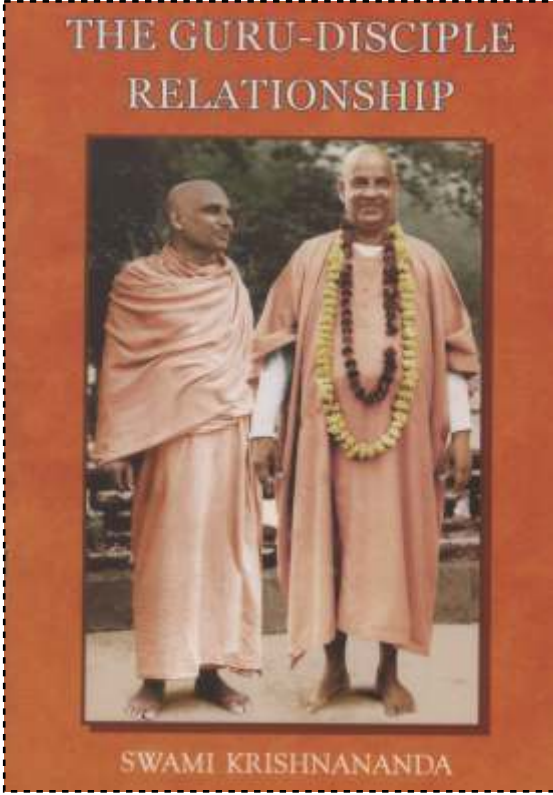
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TWENTY IMPORTANT SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTIONS

By H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj

- 1. BRAHMA-MUHURTA:** Get up at 4 a.m. daily. This is Brahmamuhurta which is extremely favourable for meditation on God.
- 2. ASANA:** Sit on Padma, Siddha or Sukha Asana for Japa and meditation for half an hour, facing the east or the north. Increase the period gradually to three hours. Do Sirshasana and Sarvangasana for keeping up Brahmacharya and health. Take light physical exercises as walking, etc., regularly. Do twenty Pranayamas.
- 3. JAPA:** Repeat any Mantra as pure Om or Om Namō Narayanaya, Om Namah Sivaya, Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya, Om Saravanabhavaya Namah, Sita Ram, Sri Ram, Hari Om, or Gayatri, according to your taste or inclination, from 108 to 21,600 times daily.
- 4. DIETETIC DISCIPLINE:** Take Sattvic food, Suddha Ahara. Give up chillies, tamarind, garlic, onion, sour articles, oil, mustard, asafoetida. Observe moderation in diet (Mitahara). Do not overload the stomach. Give up those things which the mind likes best for a fortnight in a year. Eat simple food. Milk and fruits help concentration. Take food as medicine to keep the life going. Eating for enjoyment is sin. Give up salt and sugar for a month. You must be able to live on rice, Dhal and bread without any Chutni. Do not ask for extra salt for Dhal and sugar for tea, coffee or milk.
- 5. MEDITATION-ROOM:** Have a separate meditation-room under lock and key.
- 6. CHARITY:** Do charity regularly, every month, or even daily according to your means, say six Paisa per rupee.
- 7. SVADHYAYA:** Study systematically the Gita, the Ramayana, the Bhagavata, Sri Vishnu-Sahasranama, Lalita-Sahasranama, Aditya Hridaya, the Upanishads or the Yoga Vasishtha, the Bible, the Zend Avesta, the Koran, the Tripitakas, the Granth Sahib, etc., from half an hour to one hour daily and have Suddha Vichara.
- 8. BRAHMACHARYA:** Preserve the vital force (Veerya) very, very carefully. Veerya is God in motion or manifestation—Vibhuti. Veerya is all power. Veerya is all money. Veerya is the essence of life, thought and intelligence.
- 9. PRAYER SLOKAS:** Get by heart some prayer Slokas, Stotras and repeat them as soon as you sit in the Asana before starting Japa or meditation. This will elevate the mind quickly.
- 10. SATSANGA:** Have Satsanga. Give up bad company, smoking, meat and alcoholic liquors entirely. Do not develop any evil habits.
- 11. FAST ON EKADASI:** Fast on Ekadasi or live on milk and fruits only.
- 12. JAPA MALA:** Have a Japa Mala (rosary) round your neck or in your pocket or underneath your pillow at night.
- 13. MOUNA:** Observe Mouna (vow of silence) for a couple of hours daily.
- 14. SPEAK THE TRUTH:** Speak the truth at all cost. Speak a little. Speak sweetly.
- 15. PLAIN LIVING:** Reduce your wants. If you have four shirts, reduce the number to three or two. Lead a happy, contented life. Avoid unnecessary worry. Have plain living and high thinking.
- 16. NEVER HURT ANYBODY:** Never hurt anybody (Ahimsa Paramo Dharmah). Control anger by love, Kshama (forgiveness) and Daya (compassion).
- 17. DO NOT DEPEND UPON SERVANTS:** Do not depend upon servants. Self-reliance is the highest of all virtues.
- 18. SELF-ANALYSIS:** Think of the mistakes you have committed during the course of the day, just before retiring to bed (self-analysis). Keep daily diary and self-correction register. Do not brood over past mistakes.
- 19. FULFIL DUTIES:** Remember that death is awaiting you at every moment. Never fail to fulfil your duties. Have pure conduct (Sadachara).
- 20. SURRENDER TO GOD:** Think of God as soon as you wake up and just before you go to sleep. Surrender yourself completely to God (Sharanagati).

Om Santih Santih Santih!

This is the essence of all spiritual Sadhanas. This will lead you to Moksha. All these Niyamas or spiritual canons must be rigidly observed. You must not give leniency to the mind.

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2020**

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THE WEB OF MAN

The spider pours out of its mouth long threads and weaves them into cobwebs and gets itself entangled in the net of its own making. Even so, man makes a net of his own ideas, conceptions and abstractions and gets entangled in it. The wise man should therefore abandon all worldly thoughts, sophisticated ideas and know his own essential nature.

Swami Sivananda

To