

**GURUDEV SWAMI SIVANANDA
AND
DR. DEVAKI KUTTY MATAJI**



**SERVE, LOVE,
GIVE, PURIFY,
MEDITATE,
REALIZE
So Says
Sri Swami
Sivananda**

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*A Love-Offering From
Matri Satsang on the Occasion of
the Amrit Mahotsava
in October, 1998 of
Dear and Revered
Dr. Devaki Kutty Mataji.*

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DR. DEVAKI KUTTY—A LEGEND IN HER OWN LIFE TIME

(Sri Swami Chidananda)

Worshipful homage to the Eternal and Infinite Supreme Universal Spirit, the Param-Atma.

This is a tribute to Dr. Devaki Kutty, my spiritual sister due to her discipleship to our most revered Guru Bhagavan, H.H. Parampujya Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. This special tribute is upon her completing her 75th Birthday Anniversary on 8th October 1998. But, if she told someone she was 75 years old, they would immediately retort, “Impossible! Don’t pull my leg! Tell me truly, what is your age?” Because, in her appearance Dr. Kutty belies her age. No one would believe that she is even a day older than the early sixties. She is a slim, trim and active person who even today puts in a 5-6 hours work schedule 6 days in a week from 8 am to almost 2 pm in the women section of her Gurudev’s Sivananda Charitable Hospital at Sivananda Ashram, on the sacred banks of holy river Ganga near Rishikesh. She is something of a mini-phenomenon in her own personality and daily activities.

All religions in our human world believe that God, the Supreme Universal Spirit, is an ocean of compassion. God is the all-merciful, says the Holy Koran. He is ever gracious. He is infinite Love. These are the terms by which scriptures refer to God. He rescues those who are in danger. He is the reliever of pain and suffering. He removes the distress of those who are in distress. He is solace and hope to those in grief and despair. He is all these and much more. Therefore, the sorely afflicted beings fervently pray to the Lord for succour. He is the answer to our prayers. He is the one Being to whom we can turn when we have no one else to turn to. This is the truth. This is also the fact.

However, in this world of human beings the Supreme Universal Spirit does not personally come down and attend to all our aches and pains and problems and life’s complications. It is only upon very very rare occasions, when some extremely grave situation arises in this world, that we hear of an incarnation taking place in order to set right such a situation by doing the needful at that critical juncture. Otherwise it is the divine plan that He manifests His divine grace, compassion and active help by and through chosen human agencies and instruments, that have proved worthy of being thus used as channels by their exemplary lives and their exceptional character, conduct and their noble and benign nature. Dr. Devaki Kutty Mataji is one such worthy person, whom the Lord Almighty decided to make a channel and an instrument for the manifestation of His kindness, compassion, solace and succour. He chose her as an instrument for the active expression of His healing, curing and pain relieving grace. He made her a super person *par excellence* for presiding over His work of creating new life in this human world. He blessed her with great skill in the field of Gynaecology and Obstetrics. Thus, she became well known as a top surgeon and an expert maternity specialist in the greater part of North India in Uttar Pradesh as well as in several neighbouring States. Countless couples flocked to the King George’s Hospital where she worked as well as to her residence on Jagat Narayan Road in Lucknow. They were prepared to wait for hours together for obtaining even 5 minutes of her personal professional attention.

Hailing from Kerala, graduating from Madras Medical College, destiny made North India the field of her work. To her parents she was one among three sisters and two brothers, she being the

eldest among the sisters. Her career took on a dual capacity as a member of the teaching staff of the Lucknow Medical College and at the same time as a member of the medical staff in the King George's Hospital. Soon she became well known both for her academic as well as for her Hospital work. Her parents decided to live with her, because she had determined to be single in order to dedicate herself totally to her dual work as mentioned above. While living thus, a wish arose in her to take her parents on a pilgrimage to holy Badrinath in the Himalayas during her annual leave. In those days Dr. Kutty used to have an annual leave period of about 40 days. Little did she know that the wish in her mind was prompted by the Divine Indweller, Antaryami Bhagavan. For, the time had come for a transformation in her life. It was a moment of destiny in which she was to be blessed by a glance of grace from a towering spiritual personality of this Himalayan location. This great soul was no other than the saint and sage H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj of Muni-Ki-Reti, Sivananda Ashram, a couple of km further from Rishikesh on the road to Badrinath Dham.

You might have heard about the brief Latin saying “Veni, Vidi, Vinci”, ascribed to Julius Caesar, implying “I came, I saw, I conquered”. Similar was the experience of Dr. Kutty but with a slight difference. Namely when she came into the presence of H.H. Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, she came, she saw. But here the similarity ended. She came, she saw, but she DID NOT conquer. Instead she was conquered by the magnetic divine personality of worshipful Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji within moments.

She had the feeling that she was not before a stranger whom she was meeting for the first time in her life. She felt that she was in the presence of a person whom she had known all her life. After making kind enquiries about her and her professional work, Gurudev said: “Remain here. We have our hospital in this Ashram. Do some Seva there for some weeks. Then have a period of Satsang and study before you return to Lucknow to resume your duty after your vacation. I shall give you some books. You can study them while here. This is a very sacred place. You can go to Badrinath later. Badrinath is always there. You will not miss the darshan.” Thus, a link came into being between the famous doctor from Lucknow and this Himalayan saint and sage who was soon to become her spiritual preceptor. This meeting was like the resuming and renewing of a relationship that had already existed in a previous birth also. Very soon the Sivananda Ashram and the radiant personality of worshipful Swami Sivanandaji himself were to become her Badrinath, Kedarnath and all the other Himalayan Dhams. Added to it was the pleasing knowledge that Swami Sivanandaji himself was a practicing doctor in his pre-monastic days. Here she was not only before a Swami, but also before a very senior professional colleague. She felt she was on familiar ground, professionally at least. Naturally, the first conversation touched upon medical matters as well.

Dr. Kutty postponed her trip to Badrinath. Her parents were also fascinated by Gurudev's cheerful, friendly and enthusiastic personality. Dr. Kutty was soon to discover that the work at the Ashram hospital was not merely a professional technical functioning, though a relationship between doctor and patient was there, but it was a spiritual process in which one encountered God. Swami Sivanandaji's approach to all activity was WORK IS WORSHIP. He approached the world seeing God in all beings. Any act of service was an act of adoration to God in man. This was the opening up of a new vision in Dr. Kutty as a result of her meeting with this renunciate Himalayan sage, who still occupied himself with ceaseless selfless service unto all beings with the inner attitude of worship. For him everything was spiritual. Nothing was merely secular and worldly. When the time came for Dr. Kutty to return to Lucknow, Gurudev presented to her a whole lot of

books and also some Chyavanprash, Himalayan honey and Brahmi-Amla cooling oil etc. He said: “When you go back, this is how you must work. This is your Sadhana. Do it with devotion and dedication. You will simultaneously achieve both ends, the secular as well as the spiritual.”

His idealistic approach revolutionised the life of this Lucknow doctor. His simple yet sublime teachings proved to be the commencement of a gradual subtle inner transformation in her lifestyle. God had prepared her for this. Because, she had the right background in her upbringing as both father and mother were deeply religious persons. Their piety, their intense faith in God and their daily devotional practices at home had made a deep impression on the daughter’s mind. Gurudev imparted a spiritual impulse to her life and set into activity her latent spirituality. The devotee in her also became a Sadhika. She returned to Lucknow with this spiritual gift and Gurudev’s charming invitation, “Ojee! Come again!” She did not need this invitation! She had already decided that she would return to this wonderful spiritual environment during the next year’s annual leave. Then onwards every year, year after year, she would depart from Lucknow the evening of the very day her annual leave commenced and arrive in Rishikesh the next morning and immediately start her Bhakti and Karma Yoga Seva at the Ashram for 30 days. After a month’s Seva the last ten days were quiet days of Darshan, Satsang, spiritual Sadhana, Japa and study etc. Gurudev asked her to open a Branch of the Divine Life Society in Lucknow. Her house at Jagat Narayan Road itself became the venue for the spiritual gatherings and Satsang and Bhajans for the devotees of the Lucknow DLS Branch. One year her pilgrimage to Badrinath and Darshan and worship of Lord Badrinarayana was also achieved. Her name became a by-word all over this hill area. Countless patients eagerly awaited her annual arrival. During the years from 1953 to 1963 she became a regular “visiting doctor” at the Ashram. She was looked upon as a ministering angel bringing healing and relief to eagerly awaiting patients. Gurudev was full of appreciation and admiration for her expertise and her untiring service to the sick and to the ailing. After Gurudev attained Mahasamadhi in July 1963, Dr. Kutty’s dedicated work at the hospital continued without a change as her Guru-Seva. Meantime her parents gradually became old, and her old father began to feel a little anxious about his favourite daughter’s future. Because, his other two daughters were both married and well settled with their spouses. The elder brother made his career in England as an expert Neuro-surgeon. The younger brother got good service in the city of Madras, South India. Dr. Kutty’s old father was determined that when he passed on, his daughter should no longer continue in Lucknow. He used to tell me that Lucknow was not a good city. He said that Dr. Kutty must settle down in the Ashram permanently when he is no more. He approached me with a sense of urgency, requesting me to identify some suitable location where he would arrange to have a cottage constructed for the comfortable stay of his daughter. He very much wanted to see the completed cottage with his own eyes before he departed from this world. He had the immense satisfaction of seeing this accomplished in his lifetime well before his departure. As he felt his end approaching, he suggested to Dr. Kutty that she might take voluntary retirement. But, this was not so easy, because the governor of U.P. would not allow this step. The Medical College where Dr. Kutty worked was part of the Lucknow University. According to the government act pertaining to the universities, the governor of any province (state) was ex-officio the chancellor of the university. The Vice-Chancellor was the second in status to the governor or Rajyapal as they used to refer to him. He turned down Dr. Kutty’s request to relieve her. Things were at a stalemate. The old father was insistent. Then matters took an unexpected turn when the chief administrator of the hospital was soon due to retire, having reached the ceiling age of government service. The governor sent for Dr. Kutty and informed her that he had decided to make her the chief administrator. Dr. Kutty was taken

aback. As much as she liked her teaching work in the college and her medical and surgical work in the hospital, she was quite against entering into any administrative function. She politely refused to succeed the outgoing administrator. The governor insisted. Not wanting this confrontation to continue, Dr. Kutty applied for long leave, left Lucknow and went away to the South. Her leave could not be refused. Because, she had never taken leave and as such she had accumulated considerable leave which was her rightful due. On his part the governor could not keep the administrator's post vacant when the incumbent retired. So he was obliged to appoint the administrator's immediate subordinate next in status to her. Thus, Kutty Mataji was able to circumvent this distasteful situation. At the end of her leave period, Dr. Kutty submitted her resignation. This could not be rejected. At long last her secular medical career concluded.

Dr. Kutty had already made up her mind that the last chapter of her life was to be her own sacred Guru-Sthan, i.e. Gurudev's Ashram on the holy banks of Mother Ganga. She had made this her "inner Sankalpa". So when the Lucknow chapter closed, a new era began for the Sivananda Charitable Hospital of this Ashram. Dr. Kutty took charge of the hospital, streamlined it and plunged into the hospital work with unsparing zeal and dedication. The medical work at the Divine Life Society got a fillip. The hospital had the great good fortune of having an expert surgeon and a top maternity specialist at its head. The work progressed by leaps and bounds. Soon the hospital became the destination of countless couples from all walks of life and all strata of society. There is an old adage "All roads lead to Rome". Similarly it could be said with equal truth that "all roads lead to Sivananda Ashram Hospital". Private cars, jeeps, motorcycles, taxis, vans and all manners of vehicles began to be parked in a long line before the hospital, long before its opening time. You wouldn't believe it, even as early as 4 am and 4.30 am in the morning when it was still dark, these vehicles were already arriving to obtain priority numbers in the queue when the registration work started before the opening of the hospital.

The Birth Centenary of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj was to occur in the year 1987. It was decided by the Trustees of the Ashram to observe this great event for a full year with 12 month long on-going programmes in different parts of India. Gurudev's disciples and devotees were all over India. Nationwide programmes had to be planned and celebrated. A Swami Sivananda Celebration Central Committee was constituted in Sivananda Ashram, Rishikesh. The unanimous choice of the General Secretary for this Committee was Dr. Kutty. She was the chief executive to direct all the plans and programmes. This dimension of her work commenced from September 1985. The big hall next to her residence upstairs of Sivananda Bhavan became her office. With the active assistance of many colleagues taking up the responsibilities of different aspects of this eventful work, Dr. Kutty was able to make the Centenary Celebrations an admirable success. This experience made her the right person to function in a similar capacity when the Amrita Mahotsava, the 75th Birthday Anniversary of Pujya Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj took place in 1997. Naturally, as was expected Dr. Kutty rose to the occasion once again and fully proved her worth by making it a wonderful success, as everyone saw it for themselves as they participated in this event of last year. We have in Dr. Kutty "a gem of purest ray serene". Thus, I drop my cap and bow down in obeisance to her upon this present most auspicious event, her own Amrita Mahotsava. Long may she live and prosper and be an inspiration and light to many many aspiring souls. May God and Gurudev shower their grace and blessings upon her. Hari Om! Jai Vishvanath! Jai Sri Gurudev!

DR. DEVAKI KUTTY

(Swami Krishnananda)

When I was in the Roorkee Cantonment, living in the house of a Lieutenant Colonel who was the Chief of the Military Hospital of the Cantonment of Roorkee where I went for medical treatment many many years back, I received from the Ashram a small magazine called Wisdom Light, on the front cover page of which there was a photograph of Sri Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj with an unknown lady doctor, whose name was inscribed there as Dr. Devaki Kutty. From the way she was described in that magazine, I felt that she should be some important person. After the treatment was over, I came back to the Ashram. This Doctor was a Reader/Professor in the King George's Medical College and Hospital Lucknow, associated with the University of Lucknow. She used to come to the Ashram regularly, now and then, and meet me whenever she happened to pay a visit to the Ashram. What I gathered from people in Lucknow is that she was a strict disciplinarian in the Hospital. I also heard that she was a kind of fear to people working under her or with her, due to extreme strictness and punctuality. I came to know from stray reports that she was an experienced Doctor.

Those days Sri Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj was all in all and no visitor would visit personally any inmate of the Ashram. All visitors would go straight to Gurudev since he was the central spiritual figure and the inmates in the Ashram had nothing to do with the visitors. But Dr. Kutty somehow seemed to have come to know that I am a person of some significance in the Ashram and so, she used to have some Satsanga with me very often. All the talks between her and myself were totally spiritual, pertaining to different aspects of spiritual life.

During that time, Dr. Swami Hridayananda Mataji was the Chief in the Hospital. Later on, Dr. Hridayananda Mataji left on visit abroad and Dr. Devaki Kutty who was here, was requested to take charge of the Hospital, to which she very graciously acceded.

Dr. Kutty became all in all in the Ashram's Hospital—though she is specially qualified in Gynaecology and Obstetrics. The other Doctors in the Hospital worked under her instruction and guidance. During the occasion of my 75th Birthday Anniversary which was vigorously proposed by Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, Dr. Kutty Mataji voluntarily took up the charge of a chief organiser of the function, which she did so excellently and so perfectly that one may say that she exhibited her Administrative capacity. The role she played by bringing out a beautiful Souvenir on the occasion, revealed her many hidden capacities, both literarily and executively. Dr. Mataji has a special regard for me and considers my opinion on any matter as practically conclusive. As a person with a conscience of responsibility, she makes it a point never to go out of station without informing me through a letter. She would not even go to Hardwar or Dehra Dun without giving me intimation. I asked her one day why she writes a note to me whenever she goes to Dehra Dun, her answer was “How will anyone in the Ashram know where I have gone? I did not want to cause anxiety to anybody.”

At the present moment she has given up the responsibility of managing the Hospital, though she is doing the service of Gynaecology. At present, the Chief of the Hospital is Dr. Samatvananda (Dr. B. Babu). Dr. Mataji is a non-interfering person, does not come in conflict with anybody. On

this occasion of the 75th Birthday Anniversary of Dr. Devaki Kutty Mataji, for whom Sri Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj was all in all, we invoke upon her the benedictions of God Almighty!

DR. DEVAKI KUTTY'S LECTURES

*Sivanandaya Gurave Satchidananda Murtaye
Nishprapanchaya Shantaya Niralambaya Tejase.
Nityam Shuddham Nirabhasam Nirakaram Niranjanam
Nitya Bodham Chidanandam Guru Brahmam Namamyaham.*

GURUDEV'S PERSONALITY, LIFE AND TEACHINGS

Talks given at the Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy in 1996

To talk about Gurudev or any great saint is very difficult. It is like when several blind persons try to describe an elephant—each one can only talk about one little aspect. And so can I talk only on a little facet to which I was exposed when I was with Gurudev. Whatever I tell you will be an infinitesimal part of Him, but it is that which I have understood.

Let me first tell you something about His personality. Swami Sivananda had a very imposing, a tremendous personality. Whatever standard, whatever idea you had about a great person, He would measure up to the farthest imagination.

If you think of Him in His physical aspect, I can tell you that He had a very impressive appearance. He was more than 6 feet in height, huge, and not tall and thin, but very fat. He had very broad shoulders and very long arms. All our Indian classics say that great people are *Aajaanabahu* (their arms come right down to their knees). This is considered a sign of manliness, and Gurudev had long arms. He had a very majestic gait. He walked with a regal appearance, and that regal look impressed people as soon as they saw Him. He was very poised, but at the same time very simple and very charming.

If you think of His intellectual capacity—He had a very brilliant and a very inspiring intellect.

If you take Him as a human being, He had great virtues of heart and head, and His love for humanity had no parallel. If we put great personalities like Buddha, Christ and Krishna, about whom we all have read, together, we would find all the qualities which they have represented in their lives in Swami Sivananda. You could take the presiding qualities of these people and compare them with Swami Sivananda and you would find all of them in Him. That is why so many people could find in Him their ideal. His appeal to people was universal and went beyond any concept of caste, creed, sex, age or geographical and cultural boundaries. He never disappointed us. We always found Him right up to what we thought He would be. And if we tried to understand Him, which all of us did, it was very baffling; every attempt on our part to understand Him, would make

us more confused. In the second chapter of the Geeta is a verse which reminds me of this fact, I think it is verse 29:

*Aascaryavat pasyati kascid enam,
aascaryavad vadati tathai 'va caa 'nyah
Aascaryavac cai nam' anyah srnoti
srutvaa 'py enam veda na cai 'va kascit*

meaning thereby “People look at Him as a wonder, they talk of Him as a wonder, they hear of Him as a wonder, and in spite of all these, seeing, talking, hearing, nobody understood.” When I learnt this verse, I always thought of Gurudev. He was such a wonder, nobody understood Him. He was beyond our sense perceptions and beyond our words of description. To sit in front of Him, was being face to face with a tremendous moral force, which we could never understand. He was a superb masterpiece of the Divine Artist. God has made Him that way. And the fundamental thing of His philosophy was, to do the maximum good to the maximum people for the maximum time. If we could take all this maximum together, the underlying philosophy was what is called “*Loka Sangraha*”. “*Loka Sangraha*” means for the upkeep and the good of the whole world. That is what He stood for.

Another thing that struck me about Him was, that there was nothing trivial for Him, nothing was insignificant. Everything was important. A thought, a word, an action, however small, however great, to Him all was equally important. If you have a very sophisticated precision instrument, there may a very sophisticated micro chip in it, but there also are nuts and screws and you cannot say that the micro chip is important and the nuts and screws are not. All of them put together contribute to the proper functioning of the instrument. That is what He always emphasised. Actually that was the first lesson I learnt from Him, namely that nothing is unnecessary or insignificant in life. All things are equally important. Everything you do, everything you think and everything you talk everything is important for your Sadhana. He said, whatever you do is also one brick in the edifice of your Sadhana. If you have a huge building and you remove only one brick, it takes away the beauty of the building, and apart from that dust and water can go right inside. So you cannot say that one brick was unimportant. It is a great lesson I learnt, because we all have, particularly in India, this “*chalta hai*” philosophy; we say, as long as it works, it works. But Gurudev always emphasised that everything counts, and every step is important. When we talk about God, we learn how to reach Him. That is what we are all here for. We learn that God is an embodiment of perfection, and the whole life is a movement towards that perfection. So, if your aim is perfection, the means also must be perfect. And in the means you can't have half-face, everything must be equally perfect. And in perfection there is no half-measure. Perfection is a whole thing, it is all-inclusive, and if you make only one part perfect, the whole thing becomes lop-sided.

When I was a very young person, before I came into contact with Gurudev, I always used to wonder, being a doctor, particularly a junior doctor, how can I find time to do Sadhana. We had no time for anything, we were called up all the time. For example, I had just sat down for my prayers, the telephone rang, and I was called to a serious patient. All the time I used to grumble that I had no time for Sadhana. No time! But this completely changed when I came into contact with Gurudev. He emphasised that Sadhana was not confined to the Pooja room. You may sit in the Pooja room for a specific period of time, do your prayers, do your meditation, do your Yoga or Pranayama or

whatever you are used to, but once you are out of your Pooja room, you are completely forgetting all that and come back to your mundane life, which you think is distinct from your Sadhana. He told us that Sadhana is not distinct from life. Everybody has to do some work. It may be your office work, it may be in your play field, or it may be in your house as a husband or father, as a wife or a mother. It is the role God has given you to perform, and if you do it properly, then it becomes Sadhana. What makes it a Sadhana is the motive with which you do it. Very often our motive is just to succeed in the thing we are doing. That is all. And very often the means are forgotten for the end. Gurudev put a lot of emphasis on the means and less on the end. If you want to make your action into Sadhana, then the motive behind it should be one of complete selflessness or unselfishness. And it should not be tainted with things that are not correct. So, the first thing is to have an unselfish and pure motive, and the second thing which He always emphasised was, that all work should be towards excellence. You should do everything in such a way that nobody can do it better. What transforms an ordinary action into a spiritual action, is the motive. It should be pure and unselfish, and it should be towards excellence. Gurudev even said, if destiny demanded that you be a rogue, be the best rogue you can be. Don't be a half-hearted rogue, become a big rogue, a good rogue. In whatever way you are measured, it will not be by the quantum of your achievements, because a spiritual measurement is not concerned with your achievements. A spiritual measurement is done by the excellence you show in leading your life. Whatever God has put in your life, you may be a doctor or an engineer or a teacher or a sweeper, if you do it to the best of your ability and make it most excellent, then it is Sadhana.

This move towards excellence and a pure and unselfish motive, these transform all your actions into Sadhana. It is not necessary that you have read all the Upanishads and do hours of meditation and all the prayers. All these are important, but they are not exclusively Sadhana. Sadhana has to have a much wider perspective in Gurudev's vision. And it also has been said that in His teachings He never condemned anything. Suppose you are a person who is debased or who has got a lot of negative qualities, a lot of baser qualities. People are different in different walks of life. But Gurudev never condemned anyone. There are many people who are not good, who are not allowed in an Ashram, but in this particular Ashram everybody was welcome. That was His way. He never condemned anyone, because He used to say that everybody is on the path and that one day, maybe not today and not tomorrow, but one day they too will reach. Some may be ahead, some may be behind, but all are on the path. This He emphasised all the time.

His way of teaching was also very peculiar. He never used to give big dialectic lectures, sitting on a platform, at least not when I came into His contact. He never gave us big instructions. He put a lot of emphasis on Swadyaya, but He never told us to read this or that, to go to a library, or to leave the home, run away to the forest, take a book and read. That was not His idea at all. He said, whenever you have time, read the scriptures. His way of teaching was very subtle. One hardly realised that He was teaching, it was so subtle. Very very imperceptibly our thoughts were changed by Him and like that He changed the whole direction of our lives. We never understood what He was doing, it was so subtle, but that made Him so wonderful.

Now it is also important to have a little peep into His personal ways. As I said, He was 6 feet tall, and He had a charming face, very charming, always smiling. I have never seen Him serious in my life. And there was something fresh about Him. He was not like one of those Sannyasins who think to be austere means to be untidy, dirty, unbathed and with torn clothes. No, He always looked

as if He had just come out of a refreshing bath, clean, neat and tidy. And never have I seen Him unshaven. He was always clean shaven, no stumps on His face. He only wore a gerua dhoti and a gerua upper cloth. But in this He used to dress up so well, not a crease was out of place. When He was eating, he ate nicely, heartily. Everything was perfect in Him. He said: “Whatever you do, do it heartily, with all your might, and make it a perfect show.”

And then his way of scanning people! He had a peculiar way of looking at people. He did not look at people with His two eyes. He closed one eye, like this, and concentrated on you with the other eye, and under that sort of concentration the person felt like being X-rayed. His gaze used to go right to the very depth of a person, and we used to feel uncomfortable, when He looked at us like that. For a while He would just stare at you, go through you like a scanning machine, and He knew in a split second all about you, all that is positive in you and all that is negative in you, your attitudes, your achievements, all was clear to Him. But even if He knew that there are negative qualities in a person, He never, never touched upon those. He only talked about this positive side and that positive side, and He harped on it so much that they were blown out of proportion, so much out of proportion, that it completely stamped out the negative qualities. Actually this is a superb method of good psychiatric treatment. And this made Him a Guru or a teacher par excellence. It was really wonderful to watch. And in these days when Institutes of Management are coming up like mushrooms all over the country, I don't doubt that this is one of the methods they follow for Man Management. Man Management means that the directors should have a proper idea of the human being and learn never to harp on the negative sides, otherwise they will not get any good results. I don't know who taught Gurudev, but in all His dealings and in all aspects He was very particular that no negative qualities should be harped upon.

In those days this was not a big Ashram. Only about 50 or 60 people were living there. And Gurudev used to take anybody in. He had a weakness or rather love for the social drop-outs, even for criminals, escapists and vagabonds. When I came for the first time I was very surprised, and I thought, what kind of an Ashram is this. Because we all have a certain concept of an Ashram, that all are great Sannyasins there, ideal persons, and we want to see only good in an Ashram. But I saw criminals, vagabonds, there was the never-do-well type, all kinds of people. I will tell you a few instances, so you can see how people learnt from Gurudev.

At that time a person came who had jumped out of jail, he was a criminal. As usual he was given accommodation, he was given food. We didn't have Reception, and so no questions were asked. After a few days one of the inmates came to Gurudev and said: “Gurudev, this man is a criminal, we should not keep him. He is a very bad man, he has jumped out of jail.” Gurudev only smiled and said: “Keep him, keep him!” I stared at Gurudev, I was very young then. I stared, just imagine, how can you keep a criminal in an Ashram? So I stared, but I didn't speak, because one couldn't speak in front of Him. He turned round and asked me: “Oh jee, to what type of people do you give extra care in your hospital?” I was a doctor, but this didn't click immediately. So I told Him: “Swamiji, of course to the serious patients.” Then He asked: “Do you sit with them all night?”—“Yes, Swamiji, if necessary we sit all night. We give them oxygen, we give them Glucose, we sit with the patients.” He said: “Everybody does the same. I do the same. Yours are physical rogis, mine are bhava-rogis. So I look after them like that. How can I say go away? This is not an Ashram, this is a hospital, a hospital for those who are ill, may be physically, maybe mentally, ill due to circumstances. So I would like to take them in and look after them.” And He

said: "There are two advantages in my doing this. One is, the world will have one bad person less, because that person has come to Sivananda Ashram. And the second is, while he is here, we will give him all the chances to improve." That showed His supreme optimism in human nature. He never thought that this person, because he was a criminal once, will be a criminal for all times to come. He had the firm belief, that even the worst person, when he is given all the chances to improve, can become a good person. You all know the saying "The bigger the sinner, the bigger the saint." So it is only the two sides of the same coin. If you take a saint and if you take a sinner, it only means, the one is improved and the other is not. That is why He never even discouraged anybody from being bad. He said: "Go, go to the other extreme, to the extreme of being bad." A time comes when the person can't go any further. He has reached a turning point and he only needs a change of direction, because the excellence is already there. Until now it was directed towards the bad, and if he pushes the same excellence towards the good, then he will be better than all of us who think we are no sinners.

I will tell you another instance which shows what a wonderful person He was. I had come on holiday from my college. An elderly blind man had arrived. I do not know whether he was really blind, but he sang beautifully. And any good quality meant that Gurudev would take him in. So there he was, singing every night at the Satsang. He sang beautiful Bhajans. Then after four or five days he told Gurudev: "Swamiji, this harmonium is not very good, I would like to have a better harmonium." And this man had come to the Ashram only four or five days earlier. In those days Rishikesh was a small town, and nothing was available here. So Gurudev asked him: "Where do we get good harmoniums?" And the man said: "In Lucknow." And you know, Lucknow is far from here. Swamiji called a man and said: "Oh jee, go to Lucknow tomorrow and get him a harmonium according to his specifications." So this fellow went and within three or four days he came with a beautiful harmonium. And for four days we had beautiful music on that harmonium. On the fifth day the man disappeared from the Ashram with the harmonium. At the Satsang somebody went to Gurudev and said: "Gurudev, that man, you were so good to him, that man has taken the new harmonium and has gone!" Gurudev smiled and said: "But there is one thing. How will he sing without the tabla? He should have taken the tabla also and not only the harmonium." Look at this! Many of us were furious, my blood was boiling. I thought: "Look at this stupid man! How good was Gurudev to him. And he took the harmonium and went away." But nothing worried Gurudev. And look at His attitude. He should have taken the tabla also, not only the harmonium. He could have made a living by it. This is the attitude towards life we have to develop. It is far beyond us, but we have to develop it.

I will give you one more instance, just to illustrate His approach to life. It must be about forty years ago. I was a young doctor in Lucknow. In those days there were no telephones in Rishikesh. So I got a letter from Gurudev: "I am sending a patient for you with somebody. Kindly keep the patient, make her all right." That was all. I could not make out, what was wrong with the patient. The "patient" came, she was a young girl, a college student somewhere. She had gone astray and became pregnant. And in those days this was not easily accepted neither in society nor at home. So she had come to the Ganga to commit suicide. A policeman saw her and brought her to the Ashram, where there was a hospital, where there was a doctor. They brought her to Gurudev. The whole Ashram was up at once: "How can we keep such a woman? She is a condemned woman! How can we keep such a person in an Ashram, just imagine!" Gurudev did not bother. He said "Keep her" and first sent the letter to me and then the girl. Nobody knew where she was from,

nobody knew anything about her. She was a nice, well educated person and seemed to come from a good family. I was then living with my parents, and they also had old-fashioned ideas. My mother put a big stop and said: “You can’t keep this girl in our house. Gurudev is a Sannyasin, He doesn’t know the world. I will not keep her in my house.” So I was in a terrible situation. Gurudev has sent a patient, and I didn’t know where to keep her. She was about seven months pregnant. Where will I put her? I have to keep her until her confinement. For three months where will I keep her? I was in a mess, and the Swami who had brought her, went away. Then I admitted her in the hospital under a lie that she is not well with severe anaemia and all that. For three months I kept her in the hospital and then she delivered a girl. Gurudev had given me the instruction that He should be informed as soon as she delivered. So I wired to Him that she had given birth to a girl. You won’t believe it, but after ten days a man came to collect her. She was brought to the Ashram with the child. You can imagine, who but Gurudev would do such a thing. Even parents will not do this much. Then, among Gurudev’s disciples there was a couple who had no children. They were in Andhra Pradesh. Gurudev sent someone, brought them here, and in front of Gurudev’s Kutir, on the Ganges bank, a Havan was done and this child was handed over to that couple for adoption. And He told the girl: “Look here my dear girl, you are free now, you can go wherever you want. Go back to your college.” And she went back. Can you believe it? Her parents didn’t know, her college people didn’t know. The college people thought she had gone home and the people at home thought she was in college. All this happened with the intervention of a saint, under Gurudev. No other saint would have done it. I can tell, because I know the reactions in our Ashram. In fact the news also spread outside, and other Ashrams started talking about it. But do you think Gurudev bothered? “Let them talk” He said, “for how long can somebody talk bad about you? After some time they will keep quiet.” Nothing bothered Him.

I have told these instances just to show you, how He was, what a supreme love He had for humanity. He never condemned anybody because he went astray. He never condemned anybody because he did something wrong. To him these were all little mistakes, as He said in His overpowering love. And this overpowering love brought them back. And sometimes when He tried to transform people—of course some of them have been transformed—but others... after exploiting all the love and care, they used to run away. And that of course annoyed people like us. We couldn’t understand it; so much love had been given to them. You know what Gurudev used to say? He said: “Let them go. At least the seed is sown. In some life it will sprout. If not in this life, after some lives it will sprout. Nobody can be condemned for life.” That was His supreme optimism. That is what He taught us. That should be our ideal. And our ideal should always be beyond our reach. Nobody is bad, nobody is condemnable, and people who make mistakes are bound to improve. That is what we have to learn if we want to follow Swami Sivananda. He was like a shepherd. It says in the bible “The Lord is my shepherd and I shall not want.” The shepherd, when a sheep goes astray, will go out of his way to bring it back to the flock. That is what He did with us. Whatever we did, whenever we did anything wrong, he didn’t mind. He was always kind, He was always loving. He brought us back, and in fact, the more mistakes we made, the more love we got from Him!

Greatness consists of a very lofty idealism plus an excellent character which is measured by the solid work done for the welfare of humanity. And you find that great peoples’ lives are actually lights on the highway of human progress. So if you want to understand these great people, you have to observe them with an open heart and mind.

Gurudev was a personification of synthesis. There was intense renunciation on one side and a super dynamism on the other side. These two opposing forces found a confluence in Him. Also there was an absolute inward God-awareness covered by an active outward interest in all the problems of humanity. But if somebody deeply observed Him, he could find nothing contradictory in Him. Because His extremely dynamic altruism was based on very genuine renunciation. To Him renunciation and outward activity were complimentary and not opposing.

And Sannyasa to Him, eventhough He was a Sannyasin of the highest order, was not retirement from life to a forest or an alienation from the world, but a total perspective of life where cosmic love and worshipful service to humanity coexisted. His Sannyasa was a blessedness, not only for Himself, but also for all mankind. He was a man who lived His teachings and preached His life. The best way to understand and know Him a little is to watch His life. Observing Him were better instructions to us than reading all the books. So, let us have a look at His everyday life.

There was His obsession with punctuality. He was terribly punctual. I have never seen Him come late for any function, whether it was an important function with VIPs coming or whether it was an informal get-together with the Ashramites, He was there in time, bang on time. Even if it was an insignificant Ashram affair or a children's programme, even then He was right on time. One could set one's watch by His appearance. He was very methodical, very systematic in everything He did, and He had time for everything. That we could learn from Him. You know how people say "I am too busy, I have no time." You would never find that with Him. He wasted no time, but He had time for everybody. Most of you probably know the poem by Rudyard Kipling "IF". There is a line in it which says "He filled every minute with 60 seconds of distance run". It always made me think of Gurudev, how He filled every minute with 60 seconds of work. He did the same routine every day. But there was nothing stereotyped or monotonous in His life. He could add a new dimension or a new outlook to his everyday work, and watching this was a great inspiration for us. Sometimes we just sat with Him, and we were completely satisfied, we didn't want anything anymore, He filled us. Eventhough he was very busy with seeing people, doing office work, Ashram work, He never neglected His daily Sadhana. He got up at 4 a.m., He did His Asanas, Pranayamas, prayers, meditation. Whatever He asked us to do, He did Himself too, eventhough He was a realised saint. He said that if you have a mirror, you must keep it free from dust and clean it every day. That is why He did His daily Sadhana early in the morning. At 7.30 a.m. sharp He was in the office. The present S.P.L., where they sell the books, was His office and there was nothing spectacular about it, but people used to crowd there. The visitors, devotees, all who wanted to see Him, the office people and the typists who took papers from Him or gave typed papers, the executives of the Ashram, the secretary, the treasurer, the heads of the different departments of the Ashram, the children and local people. You can imagine how the two little rooms used to be full. He always came with a junior Swami from His Kutir.

All His writings were in English, in simple English. He didn't know Hindi. In His books you will find a lot of repetition, because they were not written for one person, and so He said the same thing differently in different books. He reminded me of a mother. Maybe because I am a gynaecologist this idea comes to me. A mother eats so many different things, bitter things, hot things, sour things, but in her body everything becomes sweet nourishing milk for the infant. So what is mother's milk actually? Mother's milk must be digestible and assimilable because the infant cannot digest like an adult. In the same way, because we are spiritual infants, Gurudev made

mother's milk out of all this inscrutable knowledge in the scriptures. His books are very very simple, and even a person with only a little education can understand them. He wrote on all subjects, spiritual and mundane, because for Him all knowledge came from the same source, the highest source. About 300 books He wrote, on every subject conceivable: Ayurveda, Alleopathy, Literature, Bazaar Drugs, Poems, Ethics, Brahma Sutras. Each of His books was and is useful to some part of the community. According to His mood He wrote on a certain subject, and then He had His ablution, He had His lunch and then He rested for a while. In the evening He was ready, refreshed to receive new visitors, to see people. He was informed about every visitor and He called them to His Kutir, and also those who wanted to take leave of Him, He gave them prasad, books, blessed them. So all of us, when we came we had a personal interview, and the day we were leaving we also could go and meet Him. It gave everybody such a satisfaction to come to a saint and be looked after by Him. And then it became evening, He had a cup of tea or something and by 7.30 sharp He was at the Satsang.

Satsang, to Gurudev, was the life-line of the Ashram. It was the most important thing, and it was compulsory for everybody, Brahmacharis, Sannyasins, visitors. It was entertaining, elevating and most fascinating. Visitors from all walks of life came to the Ashram, Gurudev would find out their subject, and they had to give a half hour lecture on that topic. Like that we had the best lectures on anything, mountaineering, archaeology, philosophy. It widened our outlook on life, there is so much knowledge. Once He asked me to talk. I told Him: "Swamiji, my subject is Gynaecology, it is not something you can talk about in an Ashram." He said: "Oh, but after delivery, there are little children. Talk about that." I could not escape Him. My sister used to do Sociology. He made her talk on Sociology. And great artists used to come, and we enjoyed wonderful music concerts, dance recitals and even drama performances. Everybody liked the Satsang, because there was something in it for everyone. Conclusion of the Satsang was done by Gurudev Himself. Apart from encouraging and appreciating the person who had talked, He gave special Prasad to him. And then He commented on the subject we had heard and made us understand that all knowledge is part of the cosmic knowledge. He resolved everything in such a way that it became a spiritual study. He could "twist" anything and make it spiritual. And He also used to emphasise that everything is there, all the knowledge is there in the textbooks, the saints have interpreted it. But then you have to absorb this knowledge. You have to become a fit recipient. You have to become a Patra. All His life He has done yeoman service just for that. He used to say: "I only want two things, dissemination of spiritual knowledge and service to mankind." Dissemination of spiritual knowledge He did beautifully. But then He said: "If you want to receive spiritual knowledge, you have to be fit to receive it. For that you have to develop your personality. As you are you are not fit. You must understand what you are and know your weaknesses. These weaknesses you have to weed out and then harmoniously develop head and heart and hand, the three "H"s you have to develop together. For this you have to practise all Yogas, the Yoga of Synthesis, that is Raja Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Karma Yoga." Each of us has a certain predominant trait. Accordingly we may be Bhaktas, Karma Yogis or Jnana Yogis. He wanted us to follow that predominant aptitude, but a little of all the other Yogas should also come into our lives. Suppose somebody is a Karma Yogi, he is dynamic, then he should combine with the work a little Bhakti, a little Jnana and a little Raja Yoga. Then only he can have a comprehensive growth. Otherwise people become lopsided individuals. The practice of the Yoga of Synthesis will act like a catalytic agent in your spiritual studies. As a lop-sided individual you cannot do spiritual studies. Very often, when people come newly to the Ashram to do spiritual studies, they want to meditate. Meditation is not the first thing in

the spiritual practice, it comes at the very end. Many people used to come to Gurudev and say: "Gurudev, I want to meditate for so many hours." Gurudev smiled very significantly: "Oh jee, you are just becoming tamasic. Meditation is not easy, nobody can meditate. Do a little Japa, do a little Pooja, do a little Seva in one of the departments of the Ashram, do a little study. Do a little of everything." His philosophy was little by little. According to Him there is no instant progress in spirituality. These are days of *instant*, instant coffee, instant tea, instant everything. But there is no instant God-realisation. If you want anything, you have to go slow and steady. You have to go part by part, but every step taken should be so thorough, that you don't have to take a reverse step. He was teaching "evolution" and not "revolution".

In the Geeta it is written "*Yogastha Kuru Karmani Sangam Tyaktva Dhananjaya*" ("Being established in Yoga, abandoning attachment, perform action, O Dhananjaya", II/48). Gurudev used to say: "You have to work, you have to perform Karmas, but be established in Yoga and don't be too attached. If you keep these two points in mind, then you will have success." *Yogastha* means all these teachings which make us steady and absolutely straight. And then *Samatva*, you must be controlled, you must have equanimity in your heart. All this will only come by practice, step by step. If you want to be a *Yogastha*, it is not enough to go to a library and read all the books or listen to cassettes, you have to put it into practise in your daily life. Whatever you learn, you have to put into practise.

He was very particular about service and charity. He used to give so whole-heartedly! If somebody gave Him 100 rupees, He gave away all the 100 rupees and never kept anything in reserve for Himself. Instead of Sivananda, people used to call Him Givananda, because He was giving all the time. Whatever came to His hand or mind, He just gave away. You know the great statement of Jesus Christ, "Empty thyself and thou shalt be filled". That was exactly what He practised; one day it was emptied and the next day it was filled again. And then service, He used the smallest chance to serve somebody and He said: "Don't wait to be called for service. Don't miss any opportunity, this is a golden chance to serve God. Nobody should approach you for service. You seek chances, then you find service and you do service." This was His idea of serving.

Another very important point he always stressed, was that the ego is the biggest obstacle on our spiritual path. How to get rid of the ego? It is not easy. Even the biggest Mandaleshvars who can talk for hours together on *Prasthanatrayi*, if somebody insults them just a little, they are ready to kill that person. That is the ego, self-assertiveness. Gurudev said, to the extent that you can deplete yourself of your ego, to that extent only you will improve and progress in your spiritual studies. For that you must develop universal love. Only then can you do selfless service. Just because you are bound with some service and don't take any salary, that is not selfless service. For doing selfless service you need a particular frame of mind, you must develop universal love and feel the immanence of God. When you develop these qualities, then you will automatically also develop tolerance. You will be able to adjust to people who are not congenial to you. You can adjust to circumstances which are not congenial to you. But if you don't develop these important qualities, then there will be no progress in your spiritual practice. I don't think any other saint has put so much emphasis on this aspect of human development.

He was a very good musician. He could even sing classical music and used to do Aalap very well. He used to compose His own songs for the Satsang. He made a mixture of Hindi and English

and sang. And one of His songs was “Adapt, adjust, accommodate; bear insult, bear injury. This is the highest Sadhana”. I don’t think any other saint has made this the most important element of Sadhana. Adapt and adjust, instead of grumbling. We must avoid to get upset when somebody talks against us or insults us, but we must also avoid to get elated when somebody praises us. And the more we progress in spiritual life, the better we can do it. Gurudev of course showed it in His own life. Once, during Satsang when a lot of people were present, a man came and openly started to abuse Him, to insult Him and threw the Mala which He had received at Him, but Gurudev was sitting there, absolutely placid, not a muscle moved in His face. Our blood was boiling, but He was serene. Another time, long before I had met Gurudev, a man wanted to kill Him during a meditation session with an axe. Fortunately that day He had come with a headgear, so he hit the headgear and not the head. Before He even could say anything, the disciples caught hold of the man and brought him to the police. But what did Gurudev do? After the meditation session He went to the police and got the man released, made him sit with Him and gave him sweets to eat. That is the way he treated people who came to do Him harm. We read in the Geeta “*Maanaapamaanayos Tulyas Tulyo Mitraaripakshayoh*” (“The same in honour and dishonour, the same to friend and foe”, XIV/25). He was exactly that. All things were equal to Him, and He didn’t see any difference between friend and enemy. People who insulted Him, spoke against Him, He treated them in the same way as everybody else. And He told us: “These are the signs of your progress, when adversity does not affect you. Knowledge alone does not make you a better person. Otherwise every library would be a realised saint, because so much knowledge is there.” It is very important how you accept people, how you study them, how much adversity you can face. For Gurudev there was no problem too big to be solved, and no problem too insignificant for His attention. Whatever happened in His life, for Him it was divine dispensation. And so He was always happy. I have never seen Him moody or serious. “*Santushtah satatam Yogi*”, a person who is always happy is a Yogi, because he understands everything.

So what we learn from Him is that our spiritual progress depends on the following points. You have to accept everybody, because all are worthy of our love and kindness. We must see and know that all are divine. We must cut down our ego and we must work incessantly for the welfare of human kind. These very practical teachings were confined in the great books and known to the great Yogis, but He brought them out onto the street and made them available for the common man in daily life. So we must remember that with his teachings Gurudev gave us much more than the great knowledge of the Upanishads and the Vedas, because He showed us the way to practise this knowledge in our everyday life. And unless we practise what we have learnt, all knowledge is of not much use.

Now let us try to understand the import of Divine Life in Gurudev’s teaching and why He called this organisation Divine Life Society.

What is life? Life by ordinary connotation is a series of experiences which we face as either pleasure or pain, as bitter or sweet, when we are exposed to different people and events. These experiences differ from individual to individual, even under identical circumstances. And Divine Life is a life lived according to the laws of Truth and Dharma. When we live such a life, then all our experiences are neither bitter nor sweet, but all are woven into a fabric of joy and peace and harmony. That is the life we are aiming at, and that is Divine Life.

In the scriptures we are described as Amritasya Putraha, that means children of immortality. And in the Geeta Bhagavan says: "*Ishvarah Sarvabhootaanaam Hrddese Arjuna Tisthati*" ("The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings", XVIII/61). If this is so, we know that we have a divine spark within us, that God dwells within us. But how is it, that we don't feel it, that we are not aware of the divinity within us? It seems that we have some treasure within us, and we are living without the knowledge of it. Why are we not conscious of this divinity? Because it is covered up by so many debris and encrustations due to past Karmas and past Vasanas. There is a big obstacle between our awareness of the deep-rooted divinity within. You know the famous song "*Ghunghat Kaa Pata Kholo Re, Piya Milenge*", ("Lift up the veil which covers your eyes, and you will meet your beloved"). What is the meaning of this song? There is a big curtain between us and God, which is made up of our past Vasanas and Karmas and our present thoughts, and to come face to face with God, we have to lift up this curtain. We have to purify ourselves from all the debris which we have collected around us, and then we can recapture the divinity within us. This is called a self-cleansing process, and it is done through self-evaluation.

If a gardener wants to make a good garden with flowers and trees in a nice arrangement, then he has to first get rid of the weeds in that garden. It is the gardener who knows best what he has to throw out. In our life, if we want to make it a thing of beauty and fragrance, if we want to make it a divine life, then we must ourselves throw out the weeds. For this purpose we have to start with self-evaluation and every day look at the triple mode of self-expression, namely thought, word and deed. Gurudev was very particular that every Sadhaka should keep a spiritual diary. A form was given to every Sadhaka either when he arrived or when he took Deeksha or if he decided to follow Gurudev's teachings. So we had to watch ourselves every day very carefully and fill in the form. At the end of the month we gave or sent it to Gurudev, who would correct it, give guide-lines and instructions and send it back to us. In spite of His very busy life, He always had time to correct the spiritual diary. So the first step we have to take is self-analysis, and Gurudev was very particular about it.

Now, man is a very peculiar creature. He is considered to be superior to all others, because he is blessed with a lot of good qualities. He has will power, he has intelligence and he has the reasoning faculty. Animals go by instinct, but man can reason out. He has the capacity to rise above the lower instincts which are also in him.

If we look at the world of the last three or four decades, we see that there have been marvellous scientific achievements, mind-blowing technological breakthroughs. We have very sophisticated computers, we have internet and cybernet and so many other things. But the question has to be asked whether we are actually happier than our forefathers. I don't have to give the answer, because everybody knows how life was just a few years ago, in our childhood, and we have to say that we are not happier than our forefathers, in spite of all the material comforts. What has happened? To the extent that we have expanded outwardly, we are dying inwardly. There is much more insecurity, emotional stress, disharmony, fear. And it is even worse in the so-called developed countries where there is much more material comfort. Still every student wants to go to the West. And the more we are imitating the West, the more people have to go to psychiatrists, medical specialists, miracle men and even drug dens. In our childhood we never heard about drugs. Today this is the biggest problem facing our young people. With these so-called advances the human being is going down. The hankering after material pleasures makes us less human and alienates us from

divinity. This is the malady. And what is the treatment? The treatment was already described in our scriptures. We don't have to go far for it. And if you have a Guru or a preceptor, he will give you the guidelines. But, He will only give the guidelines. The plodding, the actual effort to accept those teachings and make them a part of your life is your task. The effort has to come from you!

I want to mention the 16th chapter of the Bhagavad Geeta. It starts with

*“Abhayam Sattvasamsuddhir Jnanayoga Vyavasthitih
Danam Damas ca Yajnas ca Svaadhyaayas Tapa Aarjavam”*

(“Fearlessness, purity of heart, steadfastness in knowledge and Yoga, almsgiving, control of the senses, Yajna, study of the scriptures, austerity and straightforwardness.”) and in Verse 21 we read:

*“Trividham Narakakasye ‘dam Dvaaram Naasanam Aatmanah
Kaamah Krodhas Tathaa Lobhas Tasmaad Etat Trayam Tyajet”*

(“Triple is the gate of hell, destructive of the self—lust, anger and greed; therefore one should abandon these three.”)

It is called the *Daivaasurasampad Vibhaagayoga*. In this chapter Lord Krishna sums up all our maladies and beautifully tells us, how to replace our demoniacal nature by the divine nature. We are all a mixture of good and bad, but a careful analysis will tell us, how many Asuric qualities we have to get rid of. By keeping this chapter as a reference compendium, we will be able to a certain degree to make a correct analysis and a correct treatment. A crystal can transmit light, but if it is not pure or it is covered up by dust, then the light rays that pass through the crystal are either marred or deficient in intensity. This mind of ours is like a crystal. If we keep bad thoughts or anything that is not conducive to the principle of Divine Life, we will not be able to transmit the divine light through our mind.

It is with this idea that Gurudev has put three words in His teachings, SERVE, LOVE, GIVE, and this is His most important teaching. In olden days the teaching was transmitted in small words or sentences from the Guru to the disciple, who later passed it on to the next generation. The disciple had to hear, remember and pass on the knowledge which is contained in these Sutras or Aphorisms. Later on the Buddhists and the Jains also took this ancient form of teaching. Very often these Sutras consist just of one or two words or half a sentence, but volumes have been written about them. And I have no hesitation to call the three words SERVE, LOVE, GIVE the Sivananda Sutras.

If we practise these three words in the way Gurudev wants us to practise, we will automatically get purified. Purification is a by-product of these three words. They are very simple words, and very often we repeat them parrot-like. But they have a very profound import. They are actually not separate words, they are aspects of one teaching. What is Serve, what is Love and what is Give? If you want to understand them, you must go very deep.

Swami Chinmayananda said: "Serving and loving and giving, they all go together. Anybody can give, but nobody can love without giving and serving." So love is the central word in Gurudev's teachings. If you want to serve properly, you have to love. There is no service without love. And in the same way, if you want to give, you have to give with love. If you don't have love at the back of your giving, that giving has no value. So Gurudev has put love in the middle to knit serve and give together. Serve with love and give with love. However, in a way this is even done by seasoned criminals. They take from certain people and give and serve with those things their own people. But at the basis of it is a selfish element, and therefore it cannot be considered a spiritual practice. At the basis of every spiritual practice there has to be a definite foundation of ethics and virtues. And for that you have to study very carefully the 16th chapter of the Geeta and practise it. Gradually you will find that the negative Asuric qualities get weeded out, and you will be blessed with more and more positive divine qualities. Then there will be a definite change in your outlook on life and the world. You will understand that the world is a part of the universe, and that there is an omniscient and omnipotent divine presence. If you go on practising with this understanding, compassion will dawn in your heart and then a real high quality love. You will be able to serve, love and give without any selfish motive, and this will lead to self-effacement. Your service will be a total service, a universal service, only when you completely identify yourself with the person you are serving or loving or giving. It is not easy to get this complete identification, it is the most difficult thing to practice.

Let me say something about giving, about charity. When we used to collect money for the development of our hospital, people used to say or write: "I am giving so much money, but my name has to be on a marble plate." This is not charity, this is just projecting themselves as great donors. What is meant by Gurudev's Sutra of Giving is a total identification with the person or the cause. Giving becomes a second nature. That is how He gave. If only you had seen how He gave. He used to take with the right hand and give with the left. No reservation. We have to give like this, transcend our selfish motives. It is this self-transcendence when you serve, love and give, that makes it a spiritual practice or Sadhana. You wipe the tears of someone automatically, there is no high and low, no great and small and no publicity involved. It is for anyone who requires it. For example, if you have a pain in your leg, your hand will automatically go there and rub it, because it is all your own body. In the same way you must see the whole universe. Whatever you do, you are doing it for yourself, not for anybody else. So, if we practise in the way Gurudev wants us to practise, these three teachings will gradually purify our mind. That is why the next word is PURIFY.

But these practices are extremely difficult, and you don't become experts in a day or two. It is like the game of snakes and ladders, which we all have played when we were children. You find a ladder and go up and feel you are winning, but suddenly you find a snake at the next step which will swallow you up and put you back to square one. However, there is a little difference. In the game it is pure chance, but in Sadhana you can avoid it. If you have deliberate great effort and total vigilance, then you can avoid the "snakes" of selfish motives and self-contentment. There has to be a positive, steady, slow effort. If you have a bud and you try to open the petals forcibly, that flower will not have any beauty or fragrance. You have to allow the flower to bloom in its own time. Our blooming in spiritual life has to be like that. We have to be deliberate and allow time, so that we are fit to be offered to the Supreme.

We have very consoling words in the Geeta:

“Na Hi Kalyaanakrt Kascid Durgatim Taata Gacchati”

“The doer of good, O my son, never comes to grief” (VI/40)

and in another place:

“Svalpam Apy Asya Dharmasya Traayate Mahato Bhayaat”

“The practice of even a little of this Dharma protects one from great fear” (II/40)

No effort in the direction of divinity will ever be lost. The journey will be slow, because it is uphill all the way. If you want to progress, you have to have effort and vigilance and self-assessment. As a self-examiner you have to be strict and critical. No grace-marks are allowed in the spiritual, life. You can fool the whole world, but you cannot really fool yourself.

I will give you a few guidelines which we have used. May be they are acceptable to you. Otherwise you can make your own.

1) You must watch your thoughts and emotions. How far are they getting chastened. How far are they good and clean and pure, and how far are they under your control. The more you progress, the more they will be under your control.

2) In our jobs or in the domestic life there is interaction with people, and there are times when we are faced with disappointments, set-backs, adversities. In such cases how far are you disturbed in your mind? Of course, as long as we are human beings, we will be disturbed for a certain time. But the quicker you can get over this, the more you are progressing.

3) As we go through life, there are occasions when people don't understand us. They oppose us, they misunderstand us and abuse us. Someone cannot get on with the boss or the juniors or the colleagues. If these sort of oppositions arise, how much do we lose the balance of our mind? There are people who commit suicide, because somebody else has been promoted... But if you find that your mental structure is not affected by such happenings, then that is a sign of progress.

4) If you can take friends and foes alike—if you can adjust and adapt to persons with even socially unacceptable behaviour, that means you are progressing.

5) Lastly, if everything is going against you and life is not at all what you want it to be, but if you can maintain your placidity and serenity, that means you are progressing.

If you have these or other acid tests to which you submit yourself let us say every month and if you can say a positive Yes to most of these points, then you are progressing. After a prolonged time your mind will become purified, you can concentrate much better and your meditation becomes easier. Why is it difficult to concentrate? Because there are so many distractions in the mind. And why are there distractions? Because there are so many impure thoughts. Swami

Vivekananda said: "If you can concentrate for five minutes, you have reached!" Five minutes only! But how many of us can do it? It is not just closing the eyes and sitting for meditation. The mind wanders, and only when you are established in self-effacement, selflessness, tolerance and love, can the mind be controlled and meditation becomes easier. Then you are on the way to enlightenment.

Actually, SERVE, LOVE, GIVE and PURIFY are the first lessons. I call them the nursery lessons. And they can never be forgotten or left out. They are the first steps on the path, the first rungs of a ladder. These will come with you, the purification process has to be continuous, then only you will lead a divine life. And even after enlightenment you cannot forget SERVE, LOVE, GIVE, PURIFY.

So go step by step and make each step sure and steady. Then your meditation and your seeking enlightenment will be successful. And be careful, be vigilant! Take the lessons of the great saints and Rishis in our Puranas, who have done so much Tapasya, and suddenly they were hurled down because of one unguarded moment. That should not happen. But even if it happens, don't get desperate. Remember Lord Krishna's promise that in this path no effort is lost!

This is Gurudev, His life and His teachings. He passed away 35 years ago, and I am still struggling with my first lesson! I hope you will all be more lucky and more successful to pass the first lesson. Let us pray to Gurudev to give us all His grace and help us in our onward journey.

TRADITION AND PHILOSOPHY

Talk given during Sadhana Week on 14.7.1998

All religions extol the importance of love and compassion. Whatever be their concept of God or Reality, the service to humanity is inevitable and unavoidable and is an ethical discipline. The upkeep of society is based on mutual help and social solidarity in action. The Indian spiritual tradition is based on the Vedantic teachings and has not divorced temporal life from transcendental life. Both are mutually inclusive. There is a great Upanishadic declaration: "*Eko Devah Sarva Bhooteshu Goodah, Sarvavyapi Sarva-bhootaantaratma*" ("The one God who is hidden in all beings pervades all and is the Inner Soul of all beings"). This implies the Omnipresence of God in every being and every thing and the fundamental unity of life. So whatever we do to any being, we are doing to the Omnipresent God. This Truth of the Upanishads is reiterated by Bhagavan Sri Krishna in the Geeta in various chapters. I am not going to quote all the verses, but of some of them I will give one sentence.

"*Sarvabhootasthaatmaanam Sarvabhootaani Cha atmani*" (VI/29). "The Self abiding in all beings and all beings abiding in the Self"

"*Sarvabhoota Sthitam Yo Maam Bhajaty Ekatvam Asthitah*" (VI/31). "Established in oneness, he worships Me abiding in all beings."

“Sarvasya Caa’ham Hridi Samnivistu.” “I am seated in the hearts of all” (XV/15).

*“Mattah Parataram Naa’nyat Kimcid Asti Dhananjaya
Mayi Sarvam Idam Protam Sootre Maniganaa Iva.”*

“There is nothing whatsoever higher than Me, O Dhananjaya. All this is strung on Me, as rows of gems on a string” (VII/7)

That means, there is nothing beyond God in any aspect of the world. In so many places Bhagavan has dinned into Arjuna the fact of His divine presence in every living being. Do we need more assurance to feel that the worship of God is truly the worship of God in man, which is inclusive and intrinsic. In the latter part of the last century the great saint Swami Vivekananda has championed the importance of service in religion. In one of his addresses to the youth of the country he has said: “We have to give our life, our body, our soul and our mind for the welfare of the world.” In another place he has mentioned: “Karma Yoga is Vedanta in action.” And he declared: “Any unselfish work that we do for the world purifies our mind. It is Tapasya, it is a form of Tapasya, if we can do good to the world unselfishly. And this purification will pave the way for us for God-Realisation.”

In the present century Gurudev has been a votary of the same principle of service in religion. And He has given a great impetus for all Sadhaks and aspirants to include service as the most important part of Sadhana. This is His fundamental teaching. He never divorced service from religious practices and insights. Gurudev found never anything but God in the world. When He was asked: “Have you seen God?”, He answered: “I see nothing but God!” The great words in the Geeta:

*“Sarvatah Paanipaadam Tat Sarvato ‘ksisiromukham
Sarvatah Srutimal Loke Sarvam Aavrtya Tishthati”*

“With hands and feet everywhere, with eyes and heads and mouths everywhere, with ears everywhere—He exists, enveloping all.” (XIII/13)

were His deep conviction, his own vision. He never found anything other than God in people. And in every action of the people He found the Supreme Brahman working through their limbs. We have to learn this fundamental teaching from Gurudev. That is what He told us. As the disciples of Gurudev, following His teachings, we have to understand that every action we do in this world, whatever be its nature, should have a spiritual orientation. That is what turns the Karma into Karma Yoga. But it is also true, that every action we do, is worship of the Omnipresent God. In this way we are actually opening up a field of intense interhuman relationships. We have to try to convert every aspect of our activities into spiritual activity. It is not easy, but we have to try, since we have taken Him as our Guru. He has also declared in no uncertain terms, that selfless service is the surest and easiest way to annihilate our ego. And this ego happens to be the most difficult obstacle which we have to surmount, when we take to the spiritual path. The ego is very subtle, we don’t even know that it is the ego that is worrying us, because we all get a sense of false importance and false satisfaction. The ego takes various forms to worry us, and if we want to overcome this ego, the easiest and surest way is to do some selfless service.

When we act with kindness and deep thought towards all human beings, we will find three essential things happening. Firstly, the deep and kind thought for other people will smoothen all the angularities of our own mind. Secondly, to act like this will also crush our ego, because very often we have to sacrifice our own conveniences in the interest of others. Thirdly, we get quite a quantum of self-effacement. And these three factors, the selflessness and kindness, the self-effacement and a crushed ego are the most essential elements in spiritual practice.

Nobody in this world can live without action, without doing anything. Again we can read in the Geeta:

“Na Hi Kascit Ksanam Api Jaatu Tisthaty Akarmakrt”

“None can ever remain really actionless even for a moment” (III/5)

This is a very true statement. But we don't understand it and think, if we take a book or a Mala and forget the world, God will be very pleased. He is not! Because what is God? God is the world itself. If we take the actions of a child, we see that in the early stages all the actions of a child are confined to his emotional and physical needs. As the child grows up into adulthood, the field of work will expand; first in the domestic unit. In the domestic unit the actions include service to the parents, service to husband or wife, the children, the relatives and to the professional commitment. As we grow further—and in spiritual life we grow every moment—our field of activity goes beyond the domestic unit to the community, to the nation and then to the world at large. This gradual expansion of our Dharma Kshetra or field of activity is indispensable for the evolution of man. And we have to expand, we cannot contract. And the expansion has to be gradual, we cannot jump. Gradually we go from ourselves to the home, from the home to the community, from the community to the nation and from the nation to the world. Every step has to be done perfectly well.

This urge for service is therefore an ethical principle which makes us grow beyond the biological and social limitations of life. Society has importance only at the human level. Everybody living in a society has a deep inherent urge for social participation. We cannot avoid it. This social participation expresses itself as social service. If it is continued for a long time, it becomes a loving and selfless service. But we have to be honest with ourselves. As we try to improve and lead a higher life, and if we are sincere at every step, a bigger and bigger dimension is added, and the time comes when we just unfold ourselves in loving service to everyone around us. It is an inevitable factor and it is not in our hands. And then as we grow, we find that every aspect of our life becomes social service. Usually we find that social service is done due to frustration or due to some sad thing that happened in the family. But that is not social service, that is escapism. Real social service comes through discrimination and understanding.

Now when we come to Gurudev's teaching, we see that He emphasised so often that unless we do service, we cannot purify our mind. And unless we purify our mind, we cannot have introspection and meditation. Gurudev's teaching was very simple. He taught in small sentences and statements called aphorisms, which I like to call the Sivananda Sutras. These statements are very profound, and I would like to take just three of them: Serve, Love and Give. We can put these as a three-in-one-formula of Gurudev's teachings. They are three aspects of one teaching. And if you practise this sincerely, you will find that purification of the mind is inevitable. And as I said

before, without a purified mind your meditation will not be successful. You can close your eyes and sit for hours. But if you are sincere and ask yourself, you will know how many times the mind has wandered. There is no point in sitting like this, you are only wasting time. It is much easier to follow the principles stage by stage. (Now I want you to remember that whatever I am telling is what I have understood from Gurudev's teaching. It may not be the same for you, and it may not even be what He meant, for He was a God-man and I was an ordinary human being.)

The word Serve cannot be made effective, unless the two other props of His teaching, Love and Give, are infused into it. If you take only Serve, it has got no meaning. The meaning is only effective, if you infuse Love and Give. Unless your service is suffused with love, it is not service, it is only an action. And if you really love someone, isn't it inevitable that you give something? This doesn't only mean material things. It means a gift of yourself. It means that a part of yourself is given. It is a sharing of yourself. Nobody can do loving service without sharing, sharing whatever you have.

I would like to make some clarification for the word Give. If you had ever seen Gurudev give! His method of giving was something superhuman. I don't think anybody can give the way He gave. He gave without any reservation, freely and abundantly. That brought Him the name Givananda instead of Sivananda! I am not coming to that level, because it is beyond my understanding. But whatever I have understood about the principle of giving in Gurudev's teaching I would like to place before you. Giving, He says, is not the giving of material things like food and clothes or money. That also is included in it. The highest form of giving is the giving of knowledge. And there is the spiritual knowledge and the mundane knowledge. For giving this you have to be a very special person. Not everybody can give spiritual knowledge. You have to be an illumined soul for that, you have to be a Guru. And if you take the mundane knowledge, you have to be an academician or an expert on whatever subject you want to teach. And that is reserved to a small group of the society. What about ordinary people like us, common people? Can we give? Yes! What can we give? Give has a very wide and deep meaning. A sympathetic word which is given to soothe a distressed soul is Giving. A small kind gesture which is done to instil hope into a despondent soul is Giving. If you can do something to relieve the pain or suffering of someone, that also is Giving. Many of us are deprived people, we are not blessed equally by God. God has not been very uniform in giving gifts, and only He knows why. Maybe it is our Karma, and so somebody will have a little more of this and another a little more of that. But what God expects us to do is to share what we have with the deprived. That also is Giving. So everybody will have something to give. And we will find that there are lots of chances to Give. And when we Give, Serving and Loving will also follow—it is a triple formula. We must take an active interest in the people. If we think of ourselves all the time, we have no time to think of others. What gives us joy, we don't want to keep for ourselves. We want to give comfort, joy, service. And this kind of Giving will give you a momentum in your spiritual life.

What Gurudev expects from us, is that all these actions, all the elements of Serve, Love, Give should have a spiritual overtone. In other words, we should have the feeling that God is immanent in all of us, and every action of ours is a worship of Him. We have to do it with the same faith and the same love as we do a Pooja in the Mandir. Then every action can become a rung in the spiritual ladder.

Gurudev was an embodiment of love. His method of Loving also has no parallel. At least I have not seen anything like it. He made no condition for pouring out His love. I would like to use a word which I should not use in connection with a saint—He had an obsession. And that obsession was to give the maximum comfort and maximum happiness to the maximum number of people for all times to come! “*Sarvabhuta Hite Ratah*” (“rejoicing in the welfare of all beings”) It is a phrase in the Geeta (V/25), but He lived it to the very letter. That is why scoundrels and saints were equally welcome at His feet. For Him there were neither good people nor bad people. And this I sensed when I saw Him for the first time. I met Him accidentally. I did not even know His name. In those days Sivananda Ashram was a halting station for pilgrims to Badrinath. There were no hotels, and if people wanted to have a somewhat decent accommodation, they came to Sivananda Ashram. Like that I came with some friends, without knowing anything about Sivananda Ashram. When you are going for a Yatra, you know how many mental preparations you make, and you have already reached in your mind. It was the first time for me, I was young, and I came with all that enthusiasm. And then we were introduced to Gurudev. When He heard that I was a medical person, He singled me out from the group and told me: “You don’t go to Badrinath, you are not going! You stay here and serve the poor and the sick, because there is no lady doctor in the vicinity. And if you serve the Daridra-Narayana here (Daridra-Narayana means the poor people), Badri-Narayana will come down to give you Darshan, you don’t have to go up”. At that time the profundity of the statement did not sink in. I practice it still. Who can talk to Gurudev? I stayed back. I cancelled my trip and did a camp. I still did not understand much. I only understood that for Gurudev the service of the sick was superior to a pilgrimage.

This passion for service was inherent in Gurudev. I recently read the autobiography of Tapovan Maharaj. He and Gurudev were contemporaries. He was a very great saint and scholar. Both of them were staying in Brahmananda Ashram in Muni-Ki-Reti. It was during the very early days of Gurudev in Rishikesh and both of them were doing austerities and lived on Biksha. One day Gurudev came and asked Tapovan Maharaj for 2 annas. Today it would be about 10 to 12 paise. Tapovan Maharaj was as much a pauper as Gurudev. He only had some copper coins. He asked Gurudev: “Why do you want these 2 annas?” Gurudev said: “Some old Sadhu is ill, and since morning I have been going from Ashram to Ashram to get a little bit of milk for him. I failed. Now if I have 2 annas, I’ll go to Rishikesh and bring some milk.” So they put all the coins together to make up 2 annas, and Gurudev walked to Rishikesh and bought some milk for the sick Sadhu. Tapovan Maharaj mentions this specifically and says that Gurudev was an embodiment of love and service and went out of the way to do service.

In those days we did not have a big hospital. It was a small room in the basement of Ananda Kutir with three or four beds. Gurudev was the doctor, and for some time also Swami Chidananda was doing medical work. The Brahmacharis of the Ashram used to do the service. There was no paramedical staff, no nurses. Gurudev was very particular that the Brahmacharis did the service. And they have done it also, including Swami Chidananda and Swami Krishnananda! They had to clean the patients, they had to clean the dirty urinals and the dirty bedpans. Gurudev called it the bedpan-Yoga and gave this dirty work the dignity of Yoga. I will tell you one incident which I have heard from Swami Yagnavalkya; I was not there at that time. One Sadhu was admitted with severe diarrhoea. He had dirtied his clothes and his linen, but the Brahmachari had not done anything to clean it. When Gurudev came and saw this, He told the Brahmachari: “Now you clean up the whole thing and wash his clothes. He cannot move.” And Gurudev went to the office, but He felt that this

boy would not do anything. So after finishing His work in the office, he came out, went to the patient and saw him in the same state. Gurudev didn't speak a word, he cleaned the patient Himself, collected the dirty clothes and went to His Kutir. But you know how news spread! This boy was terrified. He was a young Brahmachari. He came running to Gurudev's Kutir expecting a dressing down. But Gurudev only said: "O jee, you missed a golden chance! What a wonderful chance you have missed! This would have given you an immense help in your Sadhana." That was Gurudev's idea of service. As a spiritual aspirant you don't wait for somebody to ask for service. You go out of the way and look for chances to serve. How much we have deteriorated! Today, even if one asks for service, one does not get it.

He was very insistent that everybody who came to the Ashram did service. All come with great enthusiasm for God-Realisation and only want to do Japa, Swadyaya and meditation. Only these three things they want to do. So Gurudev used to tell them: "O jee, you will sink into a Tamasic state, if you don't do service. Nobody in this world can do 24 hours of Japa and meditation. It is a virtual impossibility."—It is not the type of work that matters. From the sweeper to the king, all are doing service. But what makes it spiritual, is the building up of an infrastructure of selflessness, purity of motive and love and devotion. In addition to these three we have to have humility and the thought of God. We are not serving man, we are serving God! Humility will take us to Karma-Yoga. If we do all this sincerely, then our mind will regain that pristine purity which is expected in an aspirant. Then introspection, meditation, Samadhi can follow. Practising like this with Gurudev in our heart, we don't have to worry, it is His duty to give us emancipation and illumination. Hari OM!

A DIVINE FAMILY

Talk given on 28.7.1956 by Gurudev Sri Swami Sivananda

The glory of Devaki Kutty is the glory of Sri Ramunni Nair and Ulpalakshy. Those who have done virtuous actions in their previous birth only will get brilliant, famous children who do great service to their country. So Ramunni Nair and Ulpalakshy Amma have done great meritorious deeds in their previous births, and as a result of their Tapasya and good actions God has been gracious enough to bestow upon them intelligent, brilliant children. Each one of them excels the others, Devaki Kutty in the medical line, Narayani in the musical line. God has given various talents to various people. Otherwise the world will be like a prison. It will be monotonous. Chinnamma is a M.A. in Social Science and is now specialising for Ph.D., going from house to house and studying about maternity welfare. Another son, Dr. Krishnan, M.B.B.S. is going to London for F.R.C.S. All of them are full of virtues, good conduct, behaviour, divine qualities, Daivisampat. This is a blessed family, noble family, possessing generosity, munificence and other divine qualities.

Devaki Kutty is the crest jewel among women, among lady doctors. At this young age she has passed M.R.C.O.G. in England. Even men go there and come plucked. What must be her ability, her talents, I leave for you to judge. She is a professor in the Medical College, Lucknow, and her services for the last three years have been tremendous, and all the women folk of Rishikesh adore her. They are like Chatak birds waiting for the Swati star: "When will Kutty come?"

Devaki Suta Govinda Vasudeva Jagatpate. Her name is repeated. *Vasudevasutam Devam Kamsachanoora-mardanam, Devaki Paramanandam Krishnam Vande Jagatgurum.* Again her name is repeated.

Sarvamangala Mangalye Sive Sarvarthasadhike, Saranye Tryambake Gauri Narayani Namostute. Narayani's name is repeated.

Daily I am repeating their names. All of them are silent. These virtues make them great, not their talents, simplicity, nobility, magnanimity, spirit of service. I asked some people to give lemon juice. One man says there is no lemon, another man says there is no sugar. I am not able to attend myself. Without any drink, for two or three hours they serve. They work under such conditions. So may Lord bless them with faith, knowledge, devotion and wisdom. This is my fervent prayer.

Narayani will shine in the music field. The mind is entrapped by music. Music is Laya Yoga, Kundalini Yoga. It is a great help for attaining God-Realisation. She will be able to draw bliss and infuse bliss in others through her music. Chinnamma will serve people through her social science. So glory to the whole family. Their mother is very silent. She has never spoken a word. I do not know whether she is present in the Satsang or not, because she speaks not a word. We all wish them long life, prosperity, Vidya, Tushti, Pushti, and we request them to come every year without our invitation. Even now they have come without our invitation. Nobody has gone to Badri. If they go, my work will suffer. The spirit of selfless service is ingrained in Chinnamma, and she is also assistant to Dr. K.C. Roy. Glory to these personages. They will visit this Ashram every year and do service. God will give them wisdom and they will become Jivanmuktas and radiate peace and bliss. They will set an example to others, so they may also develop the virtues—humility, spirit of service, etc. These are not easy things. People want seven servants to remove the boots, put on the coat, etc. When they get some position, they forget the spirit of service. Position is an intoxicant. Power is an intoxicant. A little power or position makes you proud. It is only through God's grace that you can develop humility and that alone will help you to attain Knowledge. This alone will lead you to Nirvikalpa Samadhi and make you free from the pains and tribulations of the three kinds of Tapas. That is the goal of life. Therefore, cultivate these virtues, service and humility. Pride is champagne. All wisdom belongs to the Hiranyagarbha, and it will only flow to such people who possess these virtues. Grace will come only to them. So follow their example. Be humble, magnanimous, gentle. Develop sincerity, generosity, purity, integrity. Our goal is to serve, develop so many virtues which will help us to attain God-Realisation. Development of these virtues is wisdom. When you possess all the divine qualities, compassion, tolerance, *Dhriti Dhairyam*, this constitutes divinity. Enemies are there. We have to cultivate these virtues, then the enemies will go away. The enemies are pride, vanity, jealousy. According to the new theory, the cause of disease is jealousy. Where there is jealousy, there is hatred. Where there is hatred, there is malice. Do not believe in bacillus. Only jealousy particles, vanity particles, these enter into the blood and cause disease. So remove all these evil qualities and become divine. Everyone can become noble and attain divinity if he wills.

There is nothing in this world, though there are flowers and garlands. With all these things, there is scorpion bite, flea bite, mosquito bite, disease, old age, *Janma Mrityu Jara Vyadhi Dukha Doshanudarshanam—birth, death, old age, disease—all kinds of sufferings, mental torments.*

Equanimity of mind, equal vision, balanced mind—this is what you study in Gita. Repeat the Lord's Name and cultivate these virtues. May you all attain the goal of life, which is Self-realisation, Nirvikalpa Samadhi or Asamprajnata Samadhi. You cannot find real happiness in this world. All pleasures are mixed with pain, disease, vices. People want to earn money, amass wealth, through telling lies, cheating others and cut throat competition. They do not introspect, do self-analysis. Introspection, self-analysis—these are the things which will help you to become divine and one with the cosmic consciousness.

Ramunni Nair has not spoken a word. Devaki Kutty has not expressed a single doubt. Because the Antaryami is there who will solve all problems. The answer to all problems is within, not outside. Tap the Source, meditate. All doubts will be solved. She has not spoken any word. God will bless her and they will become great devotees, free from all kinds of difficulties. May God remove all obstacles in their path and give them the vision of Truth, Cosmic Consciousness, always joy, eternal peace, perennial happiness. This is my fervent prayer.

GURUDEV'S LETTERS TO DR. DEVAKI KUTTY MATAJI

*OM Namo Narayanaya
Adorable, Immortal Self
Salutations and adorations*

2.7.53

I am thankful to you for all your kindness. You took so much pain in going over here and did very noble service in relieving the sufferings of women who were ailing in silence. A good record. I humbly pray you will be graciously pleased to do such acts in future every year. Cordial greetings.

Kindly write to me direct in future. I am not a big Swami. I am a simple sevak of humanity, very easily approachable by all.

Become angry with anger itself, because anger does the greatest mischief. There is no enemy worse than anger.

Glad to know you have made great progress in self-restraint. Purify. Meditate. Unfold the Divinity. This is thy foremost duty. Dharma is the gateway of Moksha. A meditative life contributes to the supreme illumination.

May Lord bless you with health, long life, peace, prosperity and bliss eternal. Om Tat Sat.

*Thy Own Self,
With regards, Prem and Om
Sivananda*



*Adorable Immortal Self
Salutations and adorations*

11.9.1953

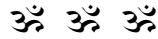
OM Namō Narayanaya! Thy kind letter. As you have got tremendous work, you can do a little Japa and meditation in the early morning as soon as you get up and at night before you retire to bed.

During work you can practise a little Nam Smaran. Even if there is a break, it does not matter. In the early morning practise mild Kumbhak or retention of breath and recite OM mentally when you retain the breath. Do this for five minutes. This will give you abundant energy. Detach. Attach.

*D.I.N. Do it now!
Devotion, dedication, discipline.
Service, sacrifice and sublimation.
Aspiration, renunciation and meditation
Enquiry, discovery, recovery.*

May Lord bless you. Om Tat Sat.

*Thy own Self
With regards, Prem and OM
Sivananda*



Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya.

6.11.55

Thy gifts of Sitapal, Dalmoot and Cashewnuts, I ate them and distributed to the inmates.

The Atman cannot be made an object of the intellect, because it is Infinite Subtle Spirit. It is the source for the intellect. Love sweetens all actions. Love grows by service, by giving.

Respect and pranams to self, revered father, mother, Prof. Chinnamma, Bhagavathi Sangeet Narayani. May Lord bless you. Om Tat Sat.

*Thy own Self
Sivananda*



Adorable Immortal Atman

29.3.1956

Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya

Thy kind letter of 22.3.56

Selfless service, Japa, Kirtan and meditation will surely perfect the instrument, purify the heart and bring the descent of the divine grace. There is no doubt about this. There is no room for lamentation. I shall serve thee. I am conducting prayer etc. for thy peace and uplift.

You are sincere. You are noble. You are magnanimous. You will have success. Be patient. You will attain it in time.

Happiness is to one who is pure, who is endowed with dispassion, discrimination and self-restraint. Purity is the best gift. Wisdom is the greatest treasure. Truthfulness is the highest virtue. Self-realisation is the only means to freedom. It cuts the knots of ignorance, desire and action. Keep bright the flame of spirituality through meditation and Vairagya.

Respect and pranams to self, father, mother, small mother and Narayani. May Lord bless you, family and all. Om Tat Sat.

*Thy Own Atma,
Sivananda*



*Glorious Immortal Atman
Om Namō Narayanaya*

2.11.56

Thy kind letter. Glad to know Sri Savitri and child are progressing well. When Sri Devaki is there, there will be victory, peace and joy. May Sri Dr. Krishnan come out successful in his course in the R. C. of Surgeons, London. May Sri Narayani be victorious in her exam. May small mother become a Ph.D.

All activities are worship of the Lord. All names and forms are forms of the Lord. Through the control of desires Atmic enquiry is induced. This Atmic enquiry causes again renunciation of desires. Removal of Avidya is Moksha. In silence, confidence, meditation and renunciation is your real strength. Reason is finite. It cannot penetrate the infinite. Intuition alone can penetrate the infinite. May you be established in intuition. May Lord remove all obstacles in the path. May you realise the Bhuma through service of mothers and children.

*Respects and pranams to self, mother, father, brother, Sri Narayani and Sri small mother.
Om Tat Sat.*

*Thy Own Atma,
Sivananda*



*Glorious Immortal Atman,
Om Namō Narayanaya.*

4.12.56

Sri Savitri writes, "Throughout, Dr. Kutty was so sweet, so gentle, so kind to me. Nowhere could I get this medical aid which she gave me."

You need not do Japa. You need not meditate. Such loving service alone can give you Moksha and the final beatitude. May you attain the goal, the abode of immortal bliss through Seva Yoga. Om Tat Sat.

*Thy Own Atman
Sivananda*



Glorious Immortal Atman,

10.1.57

I am in due receipt of your tins of cashew nuts and Bombay Halwa. They were very nice. I ate them and distributed to several people.

Vedanta is the bold philosophy that teaches that the individual soul is identical with the supreme soul. Vedanta proclaims unity of consciousness, oneness of existence. Vedanta declares that there is only one Truth or Reality. That is Brahman or Atman. It is secondless. Vedanta teaches: names and forms are appearances. The substratum for all these names and forms is the only living Reality—Satyam. The last word of Vedanta is “Tat Twam Asi”. Thou art That. May you be established in that non-dual consciousness, Dr. Kutty, wherefrom there is no return.

Respects and pranams to self, adorable father, mother, Sri Chinnamma and Narayani. Om Tat Sat.

*Thy Own Atman,
Sivananda*



*Glorious Immortal Atman,
Thy kind letter.*

4.2.57

Sri Leela Vlachow may help the centre in Changaul. She is in correspondence with Sri Pratibha Singh. Your brother will come out victorious in Surgery and Orthopedic too. I am conducting prayer for his success, health, peace, long life, prosperity and illumination, and that of yourself and family.

Be not swayed by Raga-dweshya. Be steadfast. Eliminate the feeling of “I” and “mine”. Thou art blessed. Vairagya is the gateway to the knowledge of Brahman. Cultivate Vairagya. Anger is a cloud. It conceals the light of the Atman. Control anger through Kshama and love. Desire nothing. Fear nothing. You are a Sage now. Without self-restraint there is no divine life. Equal vision is the test of self-realisation. He is really blessed who has equal vision.

Respect and pranams to revered father, mother, self and sisters. May Lord bless you all. Om Tat Sat.

*Thy Own Self
Sivananda.*



*Om Namō Narayanaya
Blessed Immortal Atman,
Salutations and adorations.*

21.6.57

Once again you have demonstrated the glory of selfless service, and the glorious truth that a saint's nature is to serve all and bring relief to the suffering. The Seva Yagna that you conducted here was something unique, grand and divine; those endowed with the eye of intuition will perceive that the Lord is more pleased with the Yagna than all the pompous Yagnas that even great kings performed in days of yore.

Every incision you make, eager to heal, cuts at the root of ignorance, and every stitch you make will unite your heart with the Lord. On the wings of the prayers and gratitude of those whom you have served, you have already begun to soar high in the realm of the Infinite.

*Kindly accept my gratitude and pranams, on behalf of all of them. May Lord bless you all.
Om Tat Sat.*

*Thy Own Atman
With regards, Prem and Om
Sivananda*



*Glorious Immortal Atman
Om Namō Narayanaya.*

15.7.57

I am in due receipt of your kind letter and letter of small mother. The Pada Pooja was done in a perfect manner.

You have realised the true import of silence which is peace, which is your real essential nature. With this power of silence you will be able to discharge your additional duty in a remarkable manner.

You were present during the Guru Poornima celebrations. Worship of Brahman should be conducted with the flowers of Jnana or spiritual wisdom, equality of vision and contentment. This is supreme Aradhana or worship. Fortify thyself by prayer and meditation at the start of each new day. Knowledge of the Self is the greatest treasure. Peace of mind is the rarest jewel. Truthfulness is the best friend. Ahimsa is the noblest of virtue.

May Lord bless you, whole family and all. Om Tat Sat.

*Thy Own Atma,
Sivananda*

*Om Namō Narayanaya,
Thy kind letter.*

16.8.57

Extremely delighted to know you are better now. It is all God's grace. His grace is infinite and amazing. Do not exert much now.

One thing which is sweet and pleasant at one moment, produces the very reverse of that sensation in another. Things when longed for are pleasant, but are bitter if not longed for. Hence desires are the cause of pleasures. Annihilation of desires is Moksha or the final beatitude. The best of all possessions is knowledge; the best of all gains is health; the best of all kinds of happiness is contentment.

You write beautiful, high class superb English. All admire and appreciate this here. May Lord bless you, family and all. Om Tat Sat.

*Thy Own Atman
Sivananda*



*Glorious Immortal Atman,
Om Namō Narayanaya
Thy kind letter,*

5.4.58

Difficulties come to strengthen you. It is a blessing in disguise. Lord's Name will remove all difficulties and give you strength and peace. Be regular in your meditation, prayer and study of Gita.

Glad to know that your brother's marriage will take place in May. May Lord bless the couple with health, long life, peace, prosperity and illumination. May they live like Parvathi and Shankar, Lakshmi and Narayanaya.

The key to success lies in patience, perseverance, discipline and devotion. Wage war against the mind and come out victorious. Arm yourself with the weapons of discrimination, dispassion, renunciation, aspiration and meditation. Walk the way of devotion, discretion, prudence and divine life. You will be blessed. You will come out victorious. Sleep no more. Unfold in silence.

I conducted prayer etc. for your health, long life, peace, prosperity and illumination and that of your whole family. Respects and pranams to self, venerable parents and adorable sister, Sri Narayani and small mother and brothers. May Lord bless you. Om Tat Sat.

*Thy Own Atman,
Sivananda*

GLORY TO THEE!

GLORY TO THEE!

Glory to thee! Evergreen glory to thee!
We adore thee! We greet thee!

O, Thou Devi Devaki Kuty!
O, Thou Goddess in disguise!
O, Thou Mother—the Mercy itself!
 We adore thee!
 We greet thee!

O, Thou the great lover of Jagadguru Lord Krishna!
O, Thou the worshipper of World Teacher Swami Sivananda!
O, Thou the follower of World beloved
Swami Chidananda, Swami Krishnananda, Swami Madhavananda!
 We adore thee!
 We greet thee!

O, Thou the Light of divinity!
O, Thou the Fountain of purity!
O, Thou the Manifestation of magnanimity, equanimity, regularity and punctuality!
 We adore thee!
 We greet thee!

O, Thou the bestower of spiritual wisdom!
O, Thou the reliever of suffering humanity!
O, Thou the giver of physical and mental health!
 We adore thee!
 We greet thee!

O, Thou the “Crest Jewel” among Lady Doctors!
O, Thou the Winner of “Dr. B. C. Roy Award”!
O, Thou the “Pride of Doon” among all the Doctors.
 We adore thee!
 We greet thee!

Thy devotion for Gurudeva is very very deep,
Thy dedication to Divine Life Society is too great,
Thy contribution to Sivananda Ashram is supreme.
 We adore thee!
 We greet thee!

All the members of “Sivananda Matri Satsang”
Pray at the Lotus feet of Sadguru Maharaja,
May you ever continue selfless silent services to the mission of Sivananda Bhagavan!
 We adore thee!

We greet thee!

We wish thee many many more returns of thy Happy Birthday,
Many many more arrivals of the Happier Birthday,
Many many more grand celebrations of the Happiest Birthday!

We adore thee!

We greet thee!

O, Thou the Asset of Sivananda Matri Vrinda!

We adore thee!

We greet thee!

Amrit Mahotsava Congratulations to thee!

May we follow thee!

May we ever follow thee!

*Sivananda Matri Satsang
Sivananda Ashram*

GOD

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

Who is God? What is God? Is there a God? Where is God? How to realise God? Man wants an answer to these eternal questions. Certainly there is God. God exists. He is the only reality. God is your creator, saviour and redeemer. He is all-pervading. He dwells in your heart. He is always near you. He is nearer to you than your jugular vein or nose. He loves you. He can talk to you. You cannot find God by the intellect. But, you can find Him by feeling, meditation, experience and realisation.

Who Is God?

The Petromax does not talk, but it shines and sheds light all round. The jessamine does not speak, but it wafts its fragrance everywhere. The lighthouse sounds no drum, but sends its friendly light to the mariner. The Unseen beats no gong, but Its omnipresence is felt by the dispassionate and discriminating sage.

Behind all names and forms is the one nameless, formless Essence. Behind all governors is the one Supreme Governor of governors. Behind all lights is the one Light of lights. Behind all sounds, there is the soundless Supreme Silence. Behind all teachers is the one Supreme Guru of Gurus.

Behind all these perishable objects is the one imperishable Absolute. Behind all these motions is the one motionless Infinite. Behind time, minutes, and days is the one timeless Eternity. Behind hatred, riots and wars is the one hidden Love.

GOD

God is the totality of all that exists, both animate and inanimate, sentient and insentient. He is free from ills and limitations. He is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. He has no beginning, middle, or end. He is the indweller in all beings. He controls from within.

God is all in all. God is the only reality in this universe. The existence of things is by the light of God.

God is ever living. All depend on Him. He is not depending on any. He is the Truth.

God is the end or goal of all Yoga Sadhanas. He is the centre towards which all things strive. He is the highest purpose or highest good of the world. You have the urge of hunger. There is food to appease the hunger. You have the urge of thirst. There is water to quench the thirst. There is the urge to be always happy. There must be something to satisfy this urge. This something is God, an embodiment of happiness. God, Immortality, Freedom, Perfection, Peace, Bliss, Love are synonymous terms.

What Is God?

What is God? It is hard to tell. But, when I look at the Ganga, I know it is God. When I see the jessamine, I know it is God. When I behold the blue sky, I know it is God. When I hear the chirping of birds, I know it is God. When I taste honey, I know it is God.

The Supreme is indefinable, though scholars give intellectual accounts of It which are not absolutely true.

Every man has his own conception of God. The God of a military man wears a helmet. The God of a China-man has a flat nose and a pipe for smoking opium. The God of a Hindu has marks on his forehead, and wears a rosary and a garland of flowers. The God of a Christian wears a Cross. For some, God has wings. A buffalo will think that God is a very big buffalo.

Such an anthropomorphic conception of God is obviously puerile. The greatest and most important thing in all the world is to get a right concept of God, because your belief about God governs your entire life.

Is There a God?

God is beyond human imagination, but he is a living reality. Brahman is no metaphysical abstraction. It is the fullest and the most real being.

The existence of God cannot be proved by scientific experimentation. The Absolute baffles the mind of even the greatest scholar. It eludes the grasp of even the mightiest intellect. It is experienced as pure consciousness, where intellect dies, scholarship perishes, and the entire being itself is completely lost in It. All is lost, and all is found.

You want laboratory proofs? Very fine, indeed! You wish to limit the illimitable, all-pervading God in your test-tube, blow-pipe, and chemicals. God is the source for your

chemicals. He is the substratum for your atoms, electrons and molecules. Without Him, no atom or electron will move. He is the inner ruler.

It is God who lends power to our senses, perception to our mind, discernment to our intellect, strength to our limbs. It is through His will that we live and die. But man vainly imagines that he is the actor and the enjoyer. Man is a mere nothing before the almighty, governing Power that directs the movement in the universe.

God's will expresses itself everywhere as law. The laws of gravitation, cohesion, relativity, cause and effect, the laws of electricity, chemistry, physics, all the psychic laws, are expressions of God's will.

As we explain everything within nature by the law of cause and effect, so also, nature as a whole must be explained. It must have some cause. This cause must be different from the effect. It must be some supernatural entity, i.e., God.

Nature is not a mere chance collection events, a mere jumble of accidents, but an orderly affair. The planets move regularly in their orbits; seeds grow into trees regularly; the seasons succeed each other in order. Now, nature is Jada, insentient. It cannot order itself. It requires the existence of an intelligent being—God—who is responsible for it. Even Einstein, the scientist, was strongly convinced of the creation of the universe by a Supreme Intelligence.

Though you do not see the stars in the daytime, yet they do exist. Though you cannot see the sun during a cloudy day, yet it does exist. Even so, though you cannot see God with these physical eyes, yet He does exist. If you get the divine eye or the eye of intuition by the practice of meditation, you will behold Him.

God is self-proved. He does not want any proof, because He is the basis for the act or process of proving.

Where Is God?

Where is God? There is nowhere where He is not. Just as one thread penetrates all the flowers in a garland, so also, one Self penetrates all these living beings. He is hidden in all beings and forms, like oil in seed, butter in milk, mind in brain, Prana in the body, foetus in the womb, sun behind the clouds, fire in wood, vapour in the atmosphere, salt in water, scent in flowers, sound in the gramophone records, gold in quartz, microbes in blood.

God dwells in all beings as life and consciousness. God is in the roar of a lion, the song of a bird, and the cry of a babe. Feel His presence everywhere.

See God in the wings of a butterfly, in the letters Alpha and Omega, in the cough of a patient, in the murmur of a brook, in the sound of a bell. Behold the wonder of the Lord's face in every object of this world.

GOD

Every breath that flows in the nose, every beat that throbs in the heart, every artery that pulsates in the body, every thought that arises in the mind, speaks to you that God is near.

Every flower that wafts fragrance, every fruit that attracts you, every gentle breeze that blows, every river that smoothly flows, speaks of God and His mercy.

The vast ocean with its powerful waves, the mighty Himalayas with its glaciers, the bright sun and stars in the wide sky, the lofty tree with its branches, the cool springs in the hills and dales, tell you of His omnipotence.

The music of the sweet singers, the lectures of the powerful orators, the poems of the reputed poets, the inventions of the able scientists, the operations of the dexterous surgeons, the utterances of the holy saints, the thoughts of the Bhagavad Gita, the revelations of the Upanishads, speak of God and His wisdom.

Everything is God. Good is God. Misfortune is God. Greet Him in everything and rest peacefully in bliss.

God pervades the entire universe. He walks in the garbs of a beggar. He moans in pain in the guise of the sick. He wanders in the forest clad in rags. Open your eyes. See Him in all. Serve all. Love all.

Feel the Divine Presence everywhere—in every form, in every thought, in every feeling and in every sentiment in every movement, in every emotion.

God, seen through the senses, is matter. God, seen through the intellect, is mind. God, seen through the spirit, is Atman or the Self.

Thou art indwelt by the Lord. He is the inner ruler, Antaryamin, guarding and controlling your life. He is in you and you are in Him. He is quite close to you. He is not very far, but is nearer to you than you are to yourself. You were thinking in the beginning that He could be found only in Mount Kailas, Ramesvaram, Mecca, Jerusalem, sky or heaven. You had very vague ideas. This body is His moving temple. The sanctum sanctorum is the chamber of your own heart. Close your eyes. Withdraw your Indriyas from the sensual objects. Search Him in thy heart with one-pointed mind, devotion and pure love. You will surely find Him. He is waiting there with outstretched arms to embrace you. If you cannot find Him there, you cannot find Him anywhere else.

How to Realise God?

God is a question of supply and demand. If you really yearn for His Darshan, He will reveal Himself to you in an instant.

You need neither art nor science, neither study nor erudition for God-realisation, but faith, purity and devotion.

Combine all the love you cherish towards all worldly objects—wife, son, wealth, property, relatives, friends—and then apply this combined love towards God. You will realise in this very second.

To serve God and Mammon at the same time is impossible. You cannot enjoy the bliss of the Self and the sensual pleasure in one and the same cup. You cannot have light and darkness at the same time.

The Lord demands your whole heart.

Reduce yourself into zero before God. Only then will God completely take care of and guide you. Only then surrender becomes complete.

Forget your own interests, your own longings, your own desires. You will attain the bliss of the Supreme Self.

Crucify, sacrifice the lower self, if you wish to have union with God.

Empty your egoism. You will be filled with God. Lose your personality. You will find the Divine Life. You will realise God.

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*