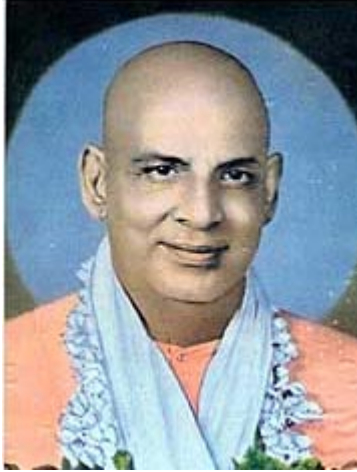


Swami Sivananda & The Divine Life Society



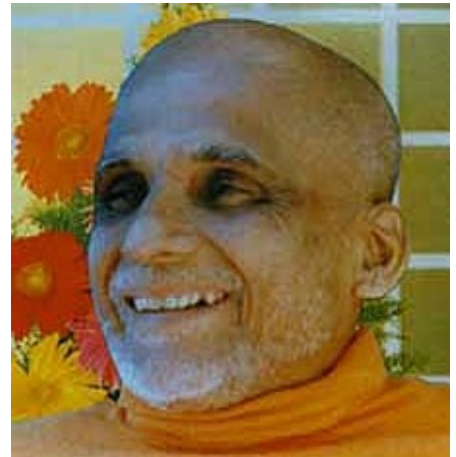
**Sri Swami Sivananda
Founder-President**



**Sri Swami Chidananda
Present President**



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



**Sri Swami Krishnananda
General Secretary**

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HIS HOLINESS SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA SARASWATI MAHARAJ

Hailed as the Prophet of the new age
For his inestimable services in the cause of raising
The Moral and Spiritual standard of modern mankind,
Was born on 8th September 1887 at Pattamadai, South India.
Took to the medical profession.
Published 'AMBROSIA', a medical journal.
Served for over 10 years as doctor in Malaya.
Renounced the world in 1923.
Entered the holy order of Sannyasa in 1924.
After twelve years of intense austerities
Founded the Divine Life Society in 1936.
The All-world Religions 'Federation' in 1945.
The Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy in 1948.
The Divine Life Society has branches and members all over the world, belonging to all religions and nationalities.
Swami Sivananda has written over 300 books on Yoga and Vedanta, Health and Healing.
He toured all India and Ceylon in 1950 and created a spiritual stir And awakening throughout the country.
He convened the World Parliament of Religions in 1953,
Attended by delegates from all over the world.
His inspiring, godly, dedicated life has brought about the resurgence of Bharatavarsha's dharma and Spiritual Ideals,
And made the vibrant
MESSAGE OF INDIA
To reach all parts of the modern world.
Our devotion and homage to Swami Sivananda, The World Preceptor.

This short sketch is preserved above as a token of reverence, infinite gratitude and eternal love to the beloved Master Sivananda, the blessed saint of Ananda Kutir.

Disciples of Sivananda

SERVE LOVE MEDITATE REALIZE

WHAT LIFE HAS TAUGHT ME

Sri Swami Sivananda

It was, I should say, by a flash that I came to the conclusion early in my life that human life is not complete with its observable activities and that there is something above human perception controlling and directing all that is visible. I may boldly say that I began to perceive the realities behind what we call life on earth. The unrest and feverish anxiety that characterize man's ordinary existence here bespeak a higher goal that he has to reach one day or the other.

When man gets entangled in selfishness, greed, lust and hatred, he naturally forgets what is beneath his own skin. Materialism and scepticism reign supreme. He gets irritated by small things and begins to fight. In short, man is miserable. The doctor's profession gave me ample evidence of the sufferings of this world. I found concrete proofs of the great saying: '*Sarvam dukkham vivekinah*' ('All is suffering to a thoughtful person'). I was blessed with a new vision and perspective. I was deeply convinced that there must be a place—a sweet home of pristine glory and purity and divine splendour—where absolute security, perfect peace and happiness can be enjoyed eternally. In conformity with the dictum of the *sruti* (the Vedas), I renounced the world, and felt that I belong to the whole world.

A course of severe self-discipline and penance endowed me with enough strength to move unscathed amidst the vicissitudes of the world-phenomena. And I began to feel the great good it would be to humanity if I could share this new vision with one and all. I called my instrument of work 'The Divine Life Society'.

Side by side, the stirring events since the advent of the twentieth century had their effect upon all keen-minded people. The horrors of past and possible wars, and the consequent suffering, touched the minds of people. It was not difficult to see that the pains of mankind were mostly brought on by its own deeds. To awaken man to his errors and follies and to make him mend his ways, so that he may utilize his life for attaining worthier ends, was felt to be the urgent need of the time. As if in answer to this need, I saw the birth of the Divine Life mission, with its task of rescuing man from the forces of the lower nature and raising him to the consciousness of his true relation to the cosmos. This is the work of rousing the religious consciousness, an awareness of the essential divinity of man.

Not by mere argument or discussion can religion be taught or understood. Not by precepts or canons of teaching alone can you make one religious. It requires a peculiar atonement with one's vast environment, an ability to feel the deepest as well as the vastest, a genuine sympathy with creation. Religion is *living*, not speaking or showing. I hold that whatever be one's religion, whoever be the prophet adored, whichever be the language or the country, whatever be one's age or sex, one can be religious provided the true implication of that hallowed term *tapas*, which essentially means any form of self-control, is made capable of being practiced in daily life to the extent possible for one in the environment and under the circumstances in which one is placed.

I hold that real religion is the religion of the heart. The heart must be purified first. Truth, love and purity are the basis of real religion. Control over the baser nature, conquest of the mind,

cultivation of virtues, service of humanity, goodwill, fellowship and amity constitute the fundamentals of true religion. These ideals are included in the principles of the Divine Life Society. And I try to teach them mostly by example which I consider to be weightier than all precepts.

The modern thinker has neither the requisite time nor the patience to perform rigorous *tapas* and austere religious practices; and many of these are even being relegated to the level of superstition. In order to give the present generation the benefit of real *tapas* in the true religious sense, to reveal to them its real significance and to convince them of its meaning and efficacy, I held up my torch of Divine Life, which is a system of religious life suited to one and all, which can be practiced by the recluse and the office-goer alike, which can become intelligible to the scholar and the rustic in its different stages and phases. This is a religion which is not other than what is essential to give meaning to the daily duties of the human being. The beauty in 'Divine Life' is its simplicity and applicability to the everyday affairs of the ordinary man. It is immaterial whether one goes to the church or the mosque or the temple for offering his prayers, for all prayers are heard by the One.

The average seeker after Truth is often deceived by the caprices of his mind. A person who takes to the spiritual path is bewildered before he reaches the end of his journey, and is naturally tempted to relax his efforts half-way. Many are the pitfalls, but those who plod on steadily are sure to reach the goal of life which is universality of being, knowledge and joy. I have laid great emphasis in all my writings upon the discipline of the turbulent senses, conquest of the mind, purification of the heart, and attainment of inner peace and strength, suited to the different stages in evolution.

I have learnt that it is the foremost duty of man to learn to give, give in charity, give in plenty, give with love, give without any expectation of consequence, because one does not lose anything by giving,—on the other hand the given is given back a thousandfold. Charity is not merely an act of offering certain material goods, for charity is incomplete without charity of disposition, charity of feeling, charity of understanding, knowledge and attitude to others. Charity is self-sacrifice in different levels of one's being. Charity in the highest sense I understand to be equivalent to *jnana-yajna* (dissemination of spiritual knowledge).

Similarly I consider goodness of being and doing constitutes the rock-bottom of one's life. By goodness I mean the capacity to feel with others and live and feel as others do, and be in a position to act so that no one is hurt by the act. Goodness is the face of Godliness. I think that to be good in reality, in the innermost recesses of one's heart, is not easy, though it may appear to be simple. It is one of the hardest of things on earth, if only one would be honest to oneself.

There is no physical world for me. What I see I see as the glorious manifestation of the Almighty. I rejoice when I behold the *Purusha* (Person) with thousands of heads and thousands of eyes and feet, that *sahasrasirsha Purusha* (thousand-headed Person). When I serve persons I see not the persons but Him of whom they are the limbs. I learn to be humble before the Mighty Being whose breath we breathe and whose joy we enjoy. I do not think there is anything more to teach or to learn. Here is the cream of religion, the quintessence of philosophy that which anyone really needs.

The philosophy I hold is neither a dreamy, subjective, world-negating doctrine of illusion, nor a crude world-affirming theory of sense-ridden humanism. It is the fact of the divinity of the

universe, the immortality of the soul of man, the unity of creation with the Absolute, that I feel as the only doctrine worth considering. As the one Brahman appears as the diverse universe in all the planes of its manifestation, the aspirant has to pay his homage to the lower manifestations before he steps into the higher. Sound health, clear understanding, deep knowledge, a powerful will and moral integrity are all necessary parts of the process of the realization of the Ideal of humanity as a whole. To adjust, adapt and accommodate, to see good in everything and bring to effective use all the principles of Nature in the process of evolution towards Self-realization along the path of an integrated adjustment of the human powers and faculties are some of the main factors that go to build up a true philosophy of life. For me philosophy is not merely a love of wisdom but actual possession of it. In all my writings I have prescribed methods for overcoming and mastering the physical, vital, mental and intellectual layers of consciousness in order to be able to proceed with the *sadhana* for self-perfection. The self-perfected ones are the '*Sarva-bhuta-hite ratah*' (works for the welfare of all living entities).

To behold the *Atman* in every being or form, to feel Brahman everywhere, at all times, and in all conditions of life, to see, hear, taste and feel everything as the Atman is my creed. To live in *Brahman*, to melt in *Brahman* and to dissolve in *Brahman* is my creed. By dwelling in such union, to utilize the hands, mind, senses and the body for the service of humanity, for singing the names of the Lord, for elevating the devotees, for giving instructions to sincere aspirants and disseminating knowledge through the world, is my creed, if you call it one. To be a cosmic friend and cosmic benefactor, a friend of the poor, the forlorn, the helpless and the fallen is my creed. It is my sacred creed to serve sick persons, to nurse them with care, sympathy and love, to cheer the depressed, to infuse power and joy in all, to feel oneness with each and everyone, and to treat all with equal vision. In my highest creed, there are neither peasants nor kings, neither beggars nor emperors, neither males nor females, neither teachers nor students. I love to live, move and have my being in this realm indescribable.

The first step is often the most difficult one. But once it is taken the rest becomes easy. There is a need for more of courage and patience on the part of people. They usually shirk, hesitate and are frightened. All this is due to ignorance of one's true duty. A certain amount of education and culture is necessary to have a sufficiently clear grasp of one's position in this world. Our educational system needs an overhauling, for it is now floating on the surface without touching the depths of man. To achieve this, co-operation should come not only from society but also from the Government. Success is difficult without mutual help. The head and heart should go hand in hand, and the ideal and the real should have a close relation. To work with this knowledge is *karma yoga*. The Lord has declared this truth in the Bhagavad Gita. I pray that this supreme ideal be actualized in the daily life of every individual, and there be a veritable heaven on earth. This is not merely a wish, this is a possibility and a fact that cannot be gainsaid. This is to be realized if life is to mean what it really ought to mean.

THE NEED OF THE HOUR

Sri Swami Chidananda

In the religious and social history of this land of ours, one phenomenon has recurred periodically through the past centuries. Time to time the great vision of the ancient seers, the eternal verities of religion and spiritual life, (recorded as they are in the sacred tongue, the classical Sanskrit language) becomes confined within the circle of the upper orthodox class. The scriptures, being inaccessible to the unlearned and the illiterate, become the exclusive monopoly of the Sanskrit-knowing higher class, while the majority of people degenerate gradually into indifference and superstition. A vast section of people who toil day and night for a livelihood have neither the energy to make a serious study and master Sanskrit, nor the time to sit long hours at the feet of a *pundit* to get enlightened. They thus lose touch with sacred literature and the orthodox class comes to acquire a sort of tyrannical hold over the masses on all questions bearing on God, ethics and after-life.

At such times there invariably appears on the scene a person inspired by lofty ideals, who, perceiving the widening gulf that is created between him and the people, at once sets about 'bridging' it in the way best suited to the particular occasion. He applies himself to bringing out the choicest gems of religion in the language of the people, in a manner acceptable to popular taste and to the need of the hour. Getting into their midst the message of beauty and hope in a form they can easily understand, the people turn round and eagerly grasp their heritage again and at once find their lives transformed by it. Thus responding to the rousing message of this man of the people, there takes place a general awakening in society.

Laughed at by the learned, condemned by the orthodox and ridiculed by the sceptic, these few farsighted ones disinterestedly rendered their service to the people. Sri Jnanadev thus gave his peerless Gita and other works to Maharashtra, while Ekanath brought the great Bhagavata to the homes of the people. The brave-hearted Potana, the genius of Sant Tulsidas and Kambar of sacred memory, brought the precious gems of the Ramayana and the Bhagavata to the door of the humblest in Andhra Pradesh, Hindustan and Tamilnadu respectively. They have become household words there and have come to be well known in all the land. Lakshmishakavi and Moropant have done like services to the Kannada and Marathi people with their exquisite Kavyas rendering the sacred Mahabharata in the vernacular. Likewise the lofty thoughts of *vedanta* are now available to all in the Vichara-Sagara of Nischaldas.

Coming to the present era, a similar situation had begun to develop; but this time it was rendered very queer by a singular irony of fate. Doubtless history repeats itself, but Providence is sometimes apt to exhibit a strange humour and thus this time she made it repeat itself with a funny twist in it. What distinguished the present mass from previous history was that, instead of the unlearned masses being deprived of and estranged from God and religion, this time the once orthodox upper class, the once zealous custodians of the scriptures, themselves now fell prey to the advent of new ideas and ideals from the Occident. Sanskrit was relegated overnight to the dust of the antiquary's shelf. Loyalty to religion, tradition and time-honoured social customs came to be regarded as something not quite in fashion for which one had to make an apology. The intelligentsia were the first victims to the baneful educational policy of the East India Company whose avowed

and openly admitted policy it was to 'gradually and eventually render the English tongue into the general language for the nation'.

The systematic adoption of English as the medium of instruction, following Lord Macaulay's Minute of 1835, converted the once exclusive custodians of Sanskrit lore into a new English-knowing educated class that supplied the Company with qualified scribes, interpreters, assistants, etc. Later under the Crown, they became the bench clerks, the camp clerks of the civilians, revenue clerks, accountants, etc. So now that little section which had the key to the land's culture in its keeping had shelved Sanskrit learning, forgotten *the shastras* (scriptures), lost contact with all original tradition and begun to get anglicized by bounds. The treasurers themselves neglected the treasury and the wealth that it contained! How this affected society in general may be imagined!

This time, therefore, the role of reviver and reclamer of scriptural knowledge and of spiritual life devolved upon one who was himself of this new class. And the irony of it all lay in the fact that he had necessarily to do this work in the very language that had brought on the decadence which he was to arrest. For the historical malady was not, in the present case, confined to any particular linguistic province or region like Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh or Tamilnadu, but was epidemic through the length and breadth of Bharatavarsha. This made the problem assume a form distinctively peculiar to India, possessing as she does a dozen different vernaculars with widely divergent scripts. These regional vernaculars were restricted in their scope, and to tackle the problem through any one of them would mean a failure to reach and cover the entire seat of the trouble. And so, even as the burnt shoe-leather served the shoe-bite of the simple villager or as the auto-vaccine that the modern physician prepared from the body of the patient himself, this 'case' called for medication on like lines. Providence consequently chose an educated and somewhat anglicized apostle to resuscitate the Indian genius. The very factor that had been largely responsible in bringing on the malady, now became the medium of doing this work of restoration. Swamiji set himself to broadcast the truths of Religion and Spirituality in English to people who had gradually begun to feel that as a sort of second mother tongue.

Writing in simple and easy English, Swamiji commenced systematically spreading into every nook and corner of the land, the neglected and discarded principles of divine-living, the living of a 'Life in the Spirit' on earth. Ceaselessly and tirelessly Swamiji has striven to hammer into a self-forgetful people the precious ideas and ideals that had been pushed out of their ken by the inroads of an Occidental culture. For, in effect the harm had not stopped with a mere decay of the nation's literature, but there had poured over the land a host of ideas and customs entirely detrimental and antagonistic to the indigenous culture and the spiritual genius of the nation. The whole outlook of the nation was turning commercial and mercenary. Those remote remnants of the orthodox community that remained untouched by the foreign 'infection' retained the old traditions merely as a paying profession, specializing in astrology, astronomy, etc., and in the performance of formal rites and ceremonies, as *purohits* (priests) or *shastris*; else they were *pundits* versed in debate and grammar. Spirituality everywhere came to be at a sad discount.

By making use of every possible method and every available avenue, Swamiji flooded the land with spiritual knowledge. He acquainted thousands with the life-giving facts and details of spiritual life, God, Religion, Morality and Right Conduct (*dharma*). The truths locked up in

devanagari script began to be boldly broadcast to all in a style of English so simple and so direct that even a high-school lad in his teens could understand it without difficulty at the first perusal. Since his launch into this effort he has been bringing the Upanishads, the Tantras, the Yoga Sutras, the Bhagavata, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, Gita and the Yoga-Vasistha to the light of day again. Through his efforts the vital subject of *brahmacharya* (chastity) has regained its legitimate place in the knowledge of the youth and student population of the country. The living of the householders' life upon very idealistic lines was advocated with considerable success through his works. Very many householders are themselves living testimonies to this fact now. The ideal of the highest Goal of life—of God-realization—the only real purpose of human birth, he has constantly highlighted before the nation's eyes. The details of the various kinds of practical Sadhana (spiritual practice) to achieve this end, Swamiji patiently and painstakingly collected, classified and arranged, and gave to the world in his own inimitable direct, forceful and clear style. In this destined role of his as disseminator of spiritual knowledge and awakener of the masses, Swamiji has come to be known by all for his enthusiastic propagation of purely non-sectarian universal ideas of the most tolerant and all-embracing character, comprising the truths common to the major religions of the world. This then has been his life's work, the part given to his share in the nation's destiny by the Benign Powers that ever watchfully guide, control and shape the course of all things on this terrestrial plane. How far he has succeeded in his work is patent to any observer. It is apparent in the almost nation-wide awakening that has gradually taken place among all sections of the public. His dynamic and indefatigable dissemination and propaganda has specially had a strong effect upon the middle and the upper-middle classes that were rapidly becoming unduly westernized. They have been brought back to a proper appraisal of the worth and beauty of their own religious and cultural heritage.

SWAMI SIVANANDA AND THE SPIRITUAL RENAISSANCE

Sri Swami Krishnananda

The Problem Stated

The world we live in is observed to be a solid mass of matter. Even our own bodies are seen to be parts of physical nature governed by mechanistic laws, which alone appears to be all that is real. It has become a commonplace idea today, especially in the universe of science, that life is strictly determined by the law of causality which rules over the entire scheme of the world. We are told that distinctions that are supposed to subsist between such realms of being as matter, life and mind are only superficial and are accounted for by the grades of subtlety in the manifestation and spreading of particles of matter. Even the organism of the human body, which appears to defy the laws of the universal machine that modern science envisages, is explained away as only one of the many forms of the workings of the brute force of matter which is the ultimate stuff of all things. The natural consequence of such a theory as this is the astonishing conclusion that human life, like every other material substance in the world, is completely determined by blind causal laws and the so-called free-will of man is subservient to them, if not a mere chimera. When we protest that man is not merely matter but also mind, it is explained that mind is nothing but a subtle and ethereal

exudation of forces of matter. Man is reduced to an insignificant speck in the gigantic machinery of the cosmos which works ruthlessly with its own laws, unconcerned with the weal and woe of man.

This naturalistic interpretation of life, that is fast threatening to become rampant in this modern scientific and atomic age, seems to be really the philosophy of the common credulous man and even of the intelligent public who have neither the patience and the leisure (nor the equipment of understanding) to fathom the greater depths of human experience. Hand in hand with this theory of crass materialism there is a craze for more comfort and pleasure by lessening effort and movement of every kind, and an inherent feeling that material progress conceived at its zenith should be the ultimate purpose of existence. Due to an irrational faith in the efficacy and correctness of this doctrine, the man of the world seems to have forgotten the corruption of moral values today, the fall in the mental life and the standard of present-day education, and a sense of monotony and restlessness of spirit brought about by such a view of life, in spite of his riches and material possessions.

The fact that man is not merely a humble cogwheel in the deterministic machine of a relentless universe and that the essence of man is a spiritual principle coextensive and co-eternal with the universal Spirit, was easily felt by many as a reaction to the very unsatisfactory and humdrum propaganda carried on by the materialists. The balance swung from the extreme of materialism holding that man is merged in the physical nature, to the other extreme of the idealism which propounded that man is perforce dragged on by the impetus of a cosmic spiritual Substance. The difference between these materialistic and idealistic theories is found finally to be in the conception of the ultimate stuff and constitution of the universe—the one advocating that it is matter, motion and force, and the other affirming that it is pure Mind or Spirit. But both agree in holding that man has no real choice and freedom of his own, he being inextricably involved, merged and lost in the ultimate reality of the universe, be it material, mental or spiritual. Unfortunate man discovered that it was hard for him, under such circumstances, to live a normal life of enjoyment of the aesthetic, religious and moral values—and at the same time feel his feet well planted on mother earth, with her richness and grandeur, promises and mysteries. Yet that life is not all. There is some awe-inspiring and terrible truth continuously pointed out by the phenomena of suffering, pain and death; by the restlessness of the world and the vicissitudes of life, the endless desires of man and the moral aspirations surging from within. The man of the world required a loving and sympathetic, reasonable and satisfying teaching to enable him to live as an individual, fulfilling his daily duties in life, and yet aspiring for that marvellous and magnificent Beyond which ever seems to beckon him through the tantalizing veils of Nature.

With the advent of Western education, people began to move along the ruts of a so-called modernism of thinking, a rationality of approach and a scientific attitude to life, and the sublimity and the wisdom of the lives of their ancient predecessors were slowly lost. There were many who delighted in doubting spiritual laws, in denying the superphysical, and went even to the extent of decrying soul and God. They succumbed to the glamour of applied science and the utility of an industrial revolution. The situation called for a revaluation of all values and for the building of man's inner life upon a stronger foundation. There emerged several powerful and authentic voices in the prominent fields of life's activity—politics, sociology, religion, *yoga* and spirituality—to correct erring minds and give articulation to the requirements of truth, law and morality. Swami Sivananda figured prominently among such leaders who brought about a thorough inner

transformation in modern India, and placed the grand spiritual values on a firmer footing and in a proper setting.

The Mission of the Philosopher-Saint

This lacuna in the entire structure of life was carefully observed by the acute vision of Swami Sivananda, who made it his mission to give to the world a comprehensive philosophical theory, striking a balance between reconciling and blending together the demands of an obstinate empiricism and the principles and teachings of the lofty idealism that the eternal Spirit alone is real; and to design comprehensively a practice of certain synthesized techniques of inner and outer discipline to achieve perfection. While being fully convinced of the doctrine of non-dualism—that nought else than God can have any ultimate value—and having entered personally into the stupendous reality of its experience, Swami Sivananda felt the need to intelligently tackle the situations in which the human mind is involved, without disturbing or upsetting the beliefs of the ignorant, and taking into consideration every aspect of man's life. We cannot teach that life in the sense-sphere is all, that the physical body and the external material world constitute the only reality: for the thoughtful nature raises the pertinent question that mind cannot be equated with matter; that love and joy refuse to be reduced to movements of electrons and protons; that the never-ending cry, from time immemorial, of the mystics and the religious men who professed to know and who proclaimed the existence of an unknown region and an unexplored reality of spiritual values—and of the clear possibility of such a thing as immortality—cannot be set aside as mere distorted voices of morbid spirits or abnormal natures. Nor is pretentious man, being what he is, to be satisfied by the extraordinary teaching that the world is not there at all, that what he enjoys and suffers are mere phantasms, that life is a delirium of consciousness, that precious values which are so eagerly and anxiously treasured with zealous care are but the busy activities of a confused mind. For, the searching senses and the enquiring understanding vehemently complain that they see a world as hard, concrete and real as anything can be; that the body has its pains and pleasures; that life has its duties, burdens, griefs, wonders and patent meanings which cannot be brushed aside by any effort of logic; that the experience is real and cannot be abrogated as worthless by any stretch of imagination; that the visible is real and is valued, as amply testified by everyday experience. We cannot say that God created the world, for God has no desire to prompt Him to create. We cannot say that the world is God's play, for a perfect Being needs no play. We also cannot say that the world has no ultimate basis at all, for the changing phases of physical nature and moral urges of the inner spirit in man assert that God ought to be.

Life—A Sadhana

Swami Sivananda addresses himself to the difficult but important task of taking man as he is—a growing organism of a psycho-physical character—neither wholly restricted naturalistically by the mechanism of the material world nor fully absorbed spiritualistically in the supermundane aim of divine existence. Man is not merely a body, a mind or a spirit, but a curious mixture of all these in a manner not comprehensible to ordinary intelligence. The Katha Upanishad says that the true 'enjoyer' (or the empirical agent of knowledge and action) is a composite structure of the Atman, the mind and the senses, together. Life is not merely a process of swirling masses of matter, groups of molecules, aggregates of atoms or vortices of electrical forces; nor is it an occasion for the study of psychology (or even metaphysics); nor an idealistic soaring into the realms of logical

thought, mental phenomena or mere psychic experience. Man is at once a physical embodiment, a mental phenomenon and a spiritual entity. He has to appease not only the hunger of the body and the thirst of his vital forces, but has to pay equal, if not greater, attention to the demands of his psychic nature, moral tendencies and spiritual aspirations. Life is a synthesis of the forces manifesting in different orders and in a graduated scale of the evolutionary structure of nature. In this sense the whole of one's life is a *sadhana*, an integral endeavour for fullness on the part of mysterious man whose constitution, attention and training ranges at once from the lowest matter to the highest Spirit. As a body he is a creature of natural forces, subjected to the suffering and the mortality attending upon all composite structures in the physical world. He is one with inanimate matter when taken purely as a material structure. But man's tale does not end here. He grows like a plant, feels and reacts like an animal, and in-so-far as the craving for food, sleep and sex is concerned, he is indistinguishable from the inhabitants of the mute kingdom. But man struggles to reach above the realm of the brute, exercises a moral consciousness totally absent in animals, and displays a marvellous understanding power and reasoning capacity in distinguishing between true and false, right and wrong, good and bad, beautiful and ugly. This makes it amply clear that while partaking of the natures of matter, life and mind (observable also in the inanimate world, the vegetable kingdom and the subhuman beings) he is also more than all these; and while including these in his individual make-up he also transcends them in an astonishing degree. The life of man is thus very complex, embracing variegated elements, exhibiting diverse characteristics and manifesting different grades of reality. If life is a *sadhana*—a continuous journey and movement and a story of adjusting oneself to and adapting oneself with the vast universe—it is not enough if we merely look into one side of the picture. We have to consider every aspect of the revelation of reality in man. This is precisely the mission of Swami Sivananda, to whom all life is *yoga*, and whose writings are an elaborate dissertation on integral living.

The Education of Man

The human self is constituted of a consciousness which is not pure existence but a dynamic process. This dynamic process is interfused, as it were, with the nature of the circumstances in which it finds itself in the world—an environment of social elements, political restraints, moral commands, physical needs, vital urges, intellectual situations and the like. In other words, in his activities and in the problems he has to encounter every day, man discovers that his life is related to others' lives and undergoes growth and change as the world appears to change. We have to remember that human life is involved in the time-process and hence bound by temporal laws. The human self is in the world, though not of the world. Thus a study of man is nothing but a reflection on the totality of situations within the range of human knowledge—whether explicit as in the usual everyday experiences and in the themes of the physical and psychological sciences, implied as in philosophy or revealed as in religion. Such a study has to include in its gamut the whole of life's problems, in-so-far as they affect the human self, the aspiring individual. Man thinks, feels and wills, and does not merely exist. Hence his approach to the religious value of God, the ethical value of duty and the logical value of truth, should proceed from his own central reality—as far as he experiences it in his daily life.

Human life is conceived by Swami Sivananda as a school of education for the *jiva* (or the empirical self) caught up in the meshes of ignorance, desire and activity. This education has to be physical, intellectual, emotional, moral, active and spiritual, all at once, in a way beautifully fitted

to the conditions in which one is placed. The actual technique of this education differs in its details in different individuals, in accordance with their age, health, avocation, stage of evolution, social relations, etc., all of which call the attention of the soul in a variegated world. Essentially, any scheme of education should consist of methods for bringing about and effecting (1) the development of personality, (2) a knowledge of the world, (3) an adjustment of self with society, and (4) a realization of the permanent values. By development of personality what is meant is the wholesome building up of the individual, not only with reference to the internal states of body, mind and consciousness, but also in relation to the external world reaching up to it through the different levels of society. In this sense, true education is both a diving inward and a spreading outward. Knowledge of the world is not merely a collection of facts or gathering information regarding the contents of the physical world, but forms a specific insight into its inner workings as well—at least in-so-far as man's inner and outer life is inextricably bound up with them. When this knowledge of one's own individuality and personality—as it is involved in a world of picturesque colours and varying depths—is acquired through intensive training by study, reflection and service of one's preceptor, it becomes easy for one to discover the art of adjusting oneself with society. Truly speaking, this adjustment is not possible for one who has no knowledge of the deeper spiritual nature of humanity.

The aim of the individual as well as of society is the realization of the values—personal, social, political and even universal—all mutually related and determined by a common goal to which all these are directed, consciously or unconsciously. Ignorant man may not be fully aware that the eternal values of life are summed up in the all-comprehensive terms—God, Freedom, Immortality—and that all his daily struggles are nothing but gropings of his mind in the darkness of his ignorance to recognize and participate in these by way of all that he sees, hears or understands. To awaken the human spirit to this tremendous fact is the primary mission of Swami Sivananda, and his voluminous works cater to the hungry souls who are in search of food but cannot find it for want of knowledge.

Characteristics of His Works

The writings of Swami Sivananda cover a vast range of subjects, in accordance with his plan of approaching man from every side and every aspect. These works treat of—in detail—such diverse topics as anatomy and physiology; health, hygiene and sanitation; physical exercise, first-aid and treatment of diseases; the discipline of the physical body through the technical *hatha-yoga* processes of *asanas* (or bodily postures), *pranayama* (or regulation of the vital force and of breathing), *bandhas*, *mudras* and *kriyas*; in fact all intricate methods for the perfection of the body to prepare it to withstand the onslaughts of nature's pairs of opposites such as heat and cold, hunger and thirst; an exhaustive psychological analysis of the composition, working and behaviour of the inner man: the mental, volitional, affective, moral and rational natures which so much influence and decide the values of life as a whole; the duties of man, his relationship to family, community and nation; his position in the world and the universe; his national, international and world relations; the social, ethical and political structure of individuals; the assessment of religious and spiritual values; and a comprehensive and penetrating discussion of the characteristics of the ultimate goal of human life, as well as an intensive treatment of the nature of the way leading to this goal.

In his expositions of these subjects Swami Sivananda appeals not merely to the rational and the scientific man—the intelligentsia of society—but also to the devout, the faithful and the believing, and the common masses ignorant of higher laws; to spiritual aspirants, recluses, sannyasins, householders, businessmen, women and children alike. It will be observed, on a careful study of his writings, that his appeal is more to the heart and the feelings, and his admonitions are mostly of a practical nature adapted for an immediate application in the day-to-day life of man belonging to every class of society.

His works are, strictly speaking, comprehensive gospels on the different *yogas*: e.g. (1) *jnana yoga* (the philosophical technique of the rational and the scientific intellect in unravelling the secrets of nature and living a life of the wisdom, truth and justice of the law of the Absolute); (2) *raja yoga* (the psychic and mystical way of analyzing, dissecting and inhibiting the constituents and modifications of the mind-stuff, thus enabling man to overcome its tyrannies and to rise to a comprehension of his position in a universality of the Spirit or the *Purusha*); (3) *bhakti yoga* (the way of spiritual love and devotion directed to the majestic Sovereign of the universe, the merciful and compassionate Father of all creation, by which emotions such as those fastening man to relationships with his parents, children, masters, friends and partner in life—are sublimated and ennobled by being centred in the universal nature of God, who promises man the hope of salvation when he has surrendered his self completely to him); (4) *karma yoga* (the science and art of spiritual activity, a splendid manner of converting every action and every duty in life—physical, mental, moral or spiritual—into *yoga* by linking it up with a ceaseless consciousness of the omnipresence of the Absolute, of the surrender of personality to God, or of one's standing as an unaffected witness of the movements of the internal and external nature); (5) *hatha yoga* (the disciplining of the physical body, the nervous system and the vital forces with a view to preparing the individual for the practice of the higher *yoga* of inner discipline and meditation); (6) *kundalini yoga* (the bringing into activity of a highly occult force dominant and latent in the individual, by a rousing of which—through a training of the *prana* and the mind—the illimitable resources of nature are spontaneously placed at the disposal of man, and he becomes possessed of a consciousness of his true atonement with the universe); (7) *mantra, yantra and tantra yogas* (the ways of certain purely mystic processes of generating spiritual forces and vibrations within, as also of relating these to the forces without, through the symbology of specific sounds, formulas, diagrams and rituals intended to free man from confinement to the lower nature, and raise him to the regions of the higher nature); (8) *japa yoga* (the spiritual practice of chanting of the name of God or certain significant letters, words, phrases or sentences in order to bring about a condition of harmony and illumination in the inner nature of man); (9) *laya yoga* (the method of the dissolution of the mind in the Spirit by the recession of effects into causes, the merging of the grosser in the subtler, and the raising of one's consciousness and force from the lower to the higher). Swami Sivananda displays a great mastery in the synthesis of these various *yogas* and assures the aspirant-world that success is bound to come when practice is backed up by sincerity, firmness and patience.

His Method of Approach

It is said that a sage of Self-realization is like a pure crystal which has, by itself, no colour, but appears to assume the tint of any object that may be brought near it. He is supposed to behave, speak and act like a child with a child, an adult with an adult, an old man with an old man, a scholar with a scholar and an ignorant one with an ignoramus. The idea behind this spontaneous

self-expression—uninitiated by any particularized motive, intention, effort or will—is a close following of one's true nature with the Divine Will, which is immanent and active in all beings, and which has neither partiality nor prejudice, neither preference nor ill-will in regard to anyone. Swami Sivananda, in his personal life and example as well as in his writings and speeches, reflected spontaneously, as it were, the nature manifested and exhibited by the environment around him, and acted in close keeping with a purely impersonal life. His works are not so much enunciations of principles for the guidance of the intellect and the reason, as practical instructions on the methods of the life spiritual, meant to go straight into the hearts of aspiring individuals (whether or not they have carefully thought out beforehand the conditions and the inner circumstances under which they have been prompted to take to the spiritual way of living).

There is no circumlocution, no statement of superfluities or throwing of unnecessary side-lights in his writings. A clear-cut, well-defined and open path free from all mystifications and ambiguities is laid before the seeker with an intention not merely to give information but to enlighten and guide him at every step of his *sadhana*. His style and expression are remarkably simple, surging from the heart and the feeling of one who has not only had a vision of the perfection and the delight of God, but possesses an insight into the sufferings of man, the depth of his ignorance and his needs—not only physical, mental and moral, but also spiritual. His entire teachings are powerfully charged with the dominant spiritual note that all forms of life in society—whether individual or collective—have ultimately to be based on (and to derive meaning and inspiration from) the recognition of a boundless existence deeper than all that is visible and conceivable.

Fired with a deep anxiety to relieve the world of ignorance and pain, Swami Sivananda faced the situation in the best possible manner open to him, and spared no pains in harnessing all his energy for the noble divine purpose which he set before himself. His works are illustrative of almost every way of contacting man through literature—metaphysics, ethics, religion, mysticism, psychology, parables, stories, catechism, *yoga*, prayer and ritual.

The qualified student to approach his spiritual literature is neither one who is totally ignorant of spiritual values nor one who has attained to the apex of spiritual life. The aspirant endowed with the ethical and the moral qualifications of *yama*, *niyama* and *sadhana-chatushtaya* (the four kinds of spiritual effort: discrimination, dispassion, sixfold virtues and desire for liberation), who has, by his purity of mind, received monitions as to the existence of a higher life and is stirred with the zeal to grasp it and realize it in his own life, but is at the same time troubled by doubts and lack of knowledge in regard to the proper method of approaching it and the spiritual way of conducting himself, should turn to the works of Swami Sivananda.

Most of his writings begin with a vivid and clear portrayal of the nature of suffering in the world, the detection of which is the fundamental prerequisite of a spiritual way of life. Like Sankara, the philosopher, Swami Sivananda boldly affirms the existence of a supreme Absolute, second to which there can be none. Like the Buddha he gives a colourful picture of the character of pain in life and makes a careful diagnosis of the cause of this pain, gives a detailed analysis of the human psyche and delineates the laying out of the path which runs up to the ultimate perfection and peace of man, together with a dignified and glorious description of the characteristics of his final destiny.

The Philosophic Life

Swami Sivananda emphasizes that life is the working out of a philosophy, and philosophy is the unravelling of the mystery of existence, an all-round consideration of the deeper implications of experience and not merely a raising of the mansions of logical systems. Philosophy is more a digging deep into the abyss of life than a flying into the air of abstract speculation. Swami Sivananda recognizes that any philosophy divested of human concerns is doomed in the end to failure and can never appeal to the restless and inquisitive spirit of man. Philosophy, religion and life meant one and the same thing to him. They signify not any unworldly or other-worldly concepts, but move in close association with man's demands for food and love, fame and power, value for life, concern for others, regard for oneself and his ultimate aspiration for immortality in Brahman.

The ringing tone of Swami Sivananda's life and teachings is that of a divine love based on proper understanding, a love in which the obstructing barrier between man and man is broken open and in which one easily discovers a happy way of participating in the life of others in the world. Endless hope—which seems to be the only foundation of all human enterprises—bespeaks the remote possibility, if not the immediate fact, of a union of the personal will with the Universal Law of God. It is this love and this meaning of hope and aspiration that can assure a world-brotherhood, a world-government based on universal sympathy and altruistic considerations. It is this principle of humanitarianism and an acute perception of the necessity of rousing mankind to the presence of an Almighty God that characterize the life and teachings of Swami Sivananda.

The Vedas declare that there is no limit to God's glories and there is no cessation of man's endeavour to comprehend His Nature and the path leading to Him. Swami Sivananda caught the significance of this great truth and so never felt that spiritual teachings can have an end, that one can ever be tired of teaching the spiritual way of life or of listening to spiritual instructions, that there could be a limit to the carefulness with which the *guru* has to look after the welfare of his disciples at every stage. To him every moment is an opportunity for *sadhana*, an occasion to exercise unlimited caution in regard to one's spiritual practices and to be aware of the chance of temptations, thwartings, side-trackings and stagnations of mind and spirit in one's life.

The philosophic life is not strange. It is the normal flow of a well-adjusted and perfected activity in the healthy maturity of seasoned knowledge and profound insight into Truth.

The Secret of World-peace

The inspiring teachings of Swami Sivananda constitute one long song of liberation, the liberation of the individual, the society, the community, the nation and the world—physically, intellectually, morally and spiritually. The central burden of this eternal song of all-round freedom is peace—peace to all, peace everywhere—by learning and imbibing the lesson that Life is One. Every breath that flows from man, every movement of his limbs, every turn of his behaviour, is a direct or indirect effort towards the reconstruction of his personality to suit a better purpose, to bring about an easier and happier condition of life with liberty and peace as its emblems. Man represents a microscopic specimen of what happens in the gigantic cosmos on a colossal scale. The attempt to reach unity, freedom and happiness—which are seen to be vigorously active in man—can also be

seen to be busy in the fulfilment of the purpose of the cosmos. In one's own personal life, in society and in the state, man struggles to manifest a regular system and order, abolishing chaos and confusion. An intense passion for the firm establishment of system and order seems to be innate in the very structure of all beings, especially in those self-conscious ones in whom the development of intelligence has come to the stage of displaying the ability to know the difference between right and wrong, true and false. The universe does the same thing, with this difference—that while man strives with insufficient knowledge, the universe moves freely with an unrestricted expression of this tendency to realize the highest truth, goodness and freedom in its own bosom.

The changes that take place in the parts are felt in the constitution of the whole. As every cell in the human body organizes itself to live in accordance with the law that regulates the whole body, and as every error on the part of a cell brings about a reaction from the entire body with the purpose of setting right the wrong that has entered into its being, so does the cosmic Law correct the errors committed by the individuals who constitute the cosmos. Small errors cause mild reactions and great wrongs lead to tremendous upheavals. Even the so-called unobserved acts in the grosser world produce mighty vibrations in the subtler regions.

The entire teaching and activity of Swami Sivananda centres round an untiring stress on the possibility of individual and world peace on the basis of a knowledge and practice of this rule of Unity in every level of existence, in every man, woman and child. He ceaselessly warned humanity that peace cannot be had by warfare, exploitation, domination and competition, for these bursting waves on the surface are raised by the storms of desire and greed, and that there can be no rest for man until these violent commotions cease through understanding and co-operation. Man's concept of pleasure is nothing but an outcome of his erroneous judgment of a present good, his desire is the result of a wrong idea of a future good, his pain the consequence of a false notion of a present evil and his fear the corollary of a mistaken evaluation of the nature of a future evil. All passions and their several variations are veritable diseases brought on by erroneous thinking. These are to be eradicated, for they are irrational and founded on ignorance. Man needs proper education of his faculties in the direction of the real and the good in the highest sense. For Swami Sivananda, every activity in life can be transformed into a *yoga* of the Divine, provided the requisite knowledge is acquired by study, contemplation and service.

The revered Mahatma Gandhi did a signal service not only in the field of politics but also to religion, philosophy and ethics, when he emphasized the aspect of *Truth is God*. In the assertion commonly made, viz., *God is Truth*, the judgment involved is likely to become questionable, for the predicate 'Truth' is referred to 'God' whose existence is here presupposed or taken for granted. Naturally, those to whom the existence of God has not become an article of faith and whose rational attitude has not been convinced of it will take the assertion 'God is Truth' as not a demonstrated fact but a hypothetical proposition. But in the assertion 'Truth is God', no such sublime inconsequence is involved, for none can deny that there is such a thing as Truth. And this Truth is identified with what we have to understand by God. Truth is the law of the universe. This law is not blind but intelligence itself operating everywhere. Law and Law-giver in this case are one. And likewise, to Swami Sivananda, Truth is not merely truth-speaking but 'That which is'. It is the unchanging, infinite and eternal Substance, which is at once the law and the love governing and guiding man, society, nation and world.

The true significance of this Truth and of this Love is not properly assimilated in ordinary man's life, but is fully realized in the life of the superman who is not only a world-ruler but also a self-ruler. It is not Nietzsche's egoistic elevation of man to power, but the realized sage, a veritable embodiment of the Divine that is the ideal superman, a being who is at one and the same time a man of the world and a representative of the Absolute. True knowledge is a knowledge of things in their essences, in their relation to the universe, in the relation of Truth. This Truth, this Law, when it is supported and protected, supports and protects everyone. *Dhanno rakshati rakshitah*. It is only when we realize that joy is in the fulfilment of the law of God that we become truly free and liberated from all bondage. Dharma is the innermost nature and truth of man and of the universe, for it is the body of the Divine Will. This is real duty, and here is the secret of world-peace. Swami Sivananda lived and preached this deathless truth, this law and order of Nature, for the solidarity of the world and for all mankind to emulate and follow. His divine mission shall be fulfilled when even a modicum of this knowledge shall succeed in throwing light into the dark corners in man's mortal nature.

Unity, The Home of Peace

Here is the essence of the law and the love that unites all the world. This is the rationale behind all the gospels of world-peace and doctrines of universal love and brotherhood. By broadcasting the ancient wisdom of India, the wisdom that discovered the true relation of man to his environment, Swami Sivananda ceaselessly urges humanity to muster forces for bringing about real peace in the world. All his teachings and messages are lessons in the attainment of unity by the integration of personality in the consciousness of the Absolute. The aim of life is the practical realization of the eternal spiritual essence which finds itself in man in a very limited and obscure form.

Every individual tries to stretch beyond himself by desiring, aspiring, longing. Desire of any kind is a disclosure, in one's conscious states, that there is something wanting, something lacking, something inadequate. Give the whole world to man; he will not be satisfied. Why? Because, there is that *something*, beyond the world, lying outside the possession of any earthly individual. Give him the whole of the heavens; he will still be dissatisfied, because there is yet an unfulfilled want. This grievous mishap is the direct result of man's ignorance of his unity with creation. 'For the magnanimous, the whole world is one family,' says the scripture. There can be no peace to man unless he begins to recognize, live and serve his vast surroundings as his own Self, until he does his best at least to approximate his conduct in daily life to this sublime ideal. Peace is only in God, and the peace which we can hope to enjoy in this world depends upon the extent to which we have succeeded in reading and manifesting this infinitude of the Spirit in our social, national and world relations. This achievement is not only a consequence of the knowledge and experience of Truth by man, but also a necessary condition of his attaining any success in his endless struggle for perfection. This is the teaching, the religion, the ethics, the philosophy and the gospel of Swami Sivananda to every son and daughter of this earth of every station in society. This is the hope of humanity.

SWAMI SIVANANDA'S CONCEPT OF DIVINE LIFE

Sri Swami Venkatesananda

Swami Sivananda's 'Divine Life' is a synthesis of the ancient and the modern. It is ancient in its governing principles and modern in its approach and application. Swami Sivananda has brought the philosophy that had for centuries reclined on the armchair into the household and business houses, in the factories and fields of other activities.

Life is divine in its origin, content and meaning. Life, divorced from philosophy, loses its aim and charm. When the horizontal being strives to look up and endeavours to reach an ideal, it becomes a vertical, standing, human being. Man is different from beast only because he can and he ought to live for an ideal. It is man who realized that life has a purpose and a meaning. He who eats in order to be able to eat—he is no better than an animal; he exists but he does not live. Therefore, Swami Sivananda wants us, first of all, to understand and feel that we have a nobler mission than eating, drinking and sleeping—to use his own words.

Our mission in life is to realize that we are, in truth, the Immortal Spirit encased in mortal human sheath. There is a divine spark in everyone. It is the life of our life. It is in its light that our mind and intellect function. Various prophets of the world have given it various names, but rose called by any other name smells as sweet! We live, we think, we feel, we experience our contacts with the objects of the world, and we carry on the various activities only because that divine spark dwells in us. A recognition of this universal truth is the first principle in Swami Sivananda's Divine Life.

We commence our journey with an intellectual understanding of this; but our destination is actual realization or direct and immediate experience of it. Since this Divine Spark is the reality in us and since all our faculties exist and thrive in It, Swami Sivananda exhorts us to strive for integral perfection. Divine Life or spiritual life or *yoga* should not promote any single aspect of our personality at the cost of any other. This inner spiritual culture must simultaneously sublimate our emotions, purify our thoughts, strengthen our will, enlighten our intellect, control our mind and curb our senses. Our thoughts must be sublime, our speech noble and ennobling and our actions selfless and humanitarian. This is the second principle in Swami Sivananda's Divine Life.

It is enough to *do good* in order to promote the welfare of society. Whatever be the personal life or the inner motives of a social benefactor, we honour him if he does good to us. But unless at the same time he strives to *be good*, the weeds of vanity, lust for name and fame, and desires of various types, will seriously hamper the inner culture of the soul. Garlands and glorification might satisfy one's vanity, but they cannot appease his hunger—only food can. The culturing of the soul demands that one's entire inner nature must be *good*. This integration of one's inner life and external conduct is the vital third principle of Swami Sivananda's Divine Life.

Social well-being is not opposed to individual salvation. In fact they are the two sides of the same coin of Divine Life. It is when they who ought ever to have been the benefactors of humanity turned their backs upon society that the society, like a rudderless ship, headed towards the rocks of atheism, materialism and sensualism. Swami Sivananda emphatically declares that the world is not

outside us, but it is within us! One should live in the world and yet be not worldly. This is the fourth principle of Swami Sivananda's Divine Life.

Society is a training ground for the individual soul. Social contacts serve a twofold purpose. We are enabled to cultivate virtues. The suffering in the world around us gives us opportunities to serve others. At the same time, our social contacts also test and evaluate our inner spiritual worth. We are saved from complacency and self-delusion.

The first integration that Swami Sivananda effects is the integration of Man and the World. Man is a part of society. He is a limb of the society. What happens when a limb is torn away from our body? That limb disintegrates; and the body suffers from the loss. Similarly, if you and I cut ourselves away from society, if we shirk our duties in life, there will be a disintegration of our personality and the society too will suffer. Therefore Swami Sivananda exhorts us to 'Serve all. Love all. Give or share with others, what we have. This is an amplification of his motto: *Do good*. By this he achieves an integration of Man and the World.

The second integration is that of the head, the heart and the hands of man. Swami Sivananda discourages a lop-sided development of the personality of the seeker after Truth. The forces of darkness must find no quarters in any part of our being. Work and worship, study and service, holiness and household duties, should all go hand in hand. One's own heart must be converted into God's Abode. It must be pure and God-loving. The Divine Light or the Light of the highest wisdom must illumine the 'head' of man. Then, the darkness of ignorance, in which he sees himself as a distinct and separate entity whose survival depends upon his ability to deprive others of what he needs, will vanish. In the Divine Light he will have a vision. In that new vision he will perceive that all creation has but one Cosmic Soul. The influence that a pure heart and an enlightened intellect will have upon the hands of man is quite apparent. In his heart is love of God; in the light of a new understanding he perceives that God as all-pervading. Therefore, he will love all and serve all; he will share what he has with all. And what is of greater importance, he will not feel proud of all this. The new vision and the new outlook make goodness his compelling nature. This is the vital advantage in this integration of the personality of man. There is no artificiality, hypocrisy or diplomacy. Goodness becomes natural, spontaneous and overwhelming. The vessel is prepared for the next stage.

The third integration is the integration of Man and God. Goodness paves the way to Godliness. Goodness enables man to approach the ideal closer. What he at first understood intellectually becomes 'visible' to the inner eye. He sees that the Divine Spark is the reality in him and in all beings in the world. Selfless service of humanity with intense unselfish love and charity have burnt up the gross evils that veiled the truth in his heart. The latent tendencies of past wrong actions are still there to deal with. They are destroyed by various internal purificatory practices like *pranayama*, repetition of Holy Names of God, study of scriptures and company of holy men. The idea now becomes distinct. The veil becomes extremely thin and almost transparent now. In two steps of meditation and realization man reaches the goal. Concentrating the rays of the mind, he turns them within himself and focusses them on the Divine Spark within. The veil is now completely burnt and the Truth is realized. This is an ineffable, direct and immediate experience. Man realizes that he is, and has ever been, God Himself in reality.

This is the goal. He who has reached the goal is the greatest benefactor of humanity, because he stands as an inspiration for all mankind and as a beacon-light to guide the ship of society to the safe harbour of goodness. Swami Sivananda's Divine Life ensures the salvation of man and the prosperity of entire mankind.

PURPOSE OF LIFE

Sri Swami Sivananda

The life of man is an indication of what is beyond him and what determines the course of his thoughts, feelings and actions. The wider life is invisible, and the visible is a shadow cast by the invisible which is the real. The shadow gives an idea of the substance, and one can pursue the path to the true substance by the perception of the shadow. Human existence, by the fact of its limitations, wants and various forms of restlessness, discontent and sorrow, points to a higher desired end, incomprehensible though the nature of this end be.

As life on this earth is characterized by incessant change, and nothing here seems to have the character of reality, nothing here can satisfy man completely. The Bhagavad Gita has referred to this world as *anityam, asukham, dukkhalayam, ashashvatam*—‘impermanent, unhappy, the abode of sorrow, transient’. The sages of yore declared with immediate realization that ‘Truth is One’ and that the goal of human life is the realization and the experience of this Truth.

The universe is inconstant, and it is only a field of experience provided to the individuals so that they may evolve towards the experience of the Highest Truth. It is the glory of the people of Bharatavarsha (India) that to them the visible universe is not real and the invisible Eternal alone is real. They have no faith in what they perceive with the senses. They have faith only in that which is the ground of all experience, beyond the senses, beyond even the individual mind.

Earnest seekers used to seek shelter under great sages who purified the holy region of the Himalayas with their mighty presence, and lived the austere life of Yogis in order to attain freedom from the trammels of earth-bound life and rest in the beatitude of the Absolute, Brahman. This they considered the true life, and thus the way of fulfilling the law of the Eternal.

The great law-giver Manu, after describing the various tenets of *dharma*, finally asserts: “Of all these *dharmas*, the Knowledge of the Self is the highest; it is verily the foremost of all sciences; for, by it, one attains immortality.” The pursuit of *dharma, artha* and *kama* has its meaning in the attainment of *moksha* which is the greatest of all the *purusharthas* (ends of human life). *Dharma* is the ethical and moral value of life; *artha* is its material value; and *kama* is its vital value; but *moksha* is the infinite value of existence which covers all the others and is itself far greater than all these. Others exist as aids or preparations for *moksha*. Without *moksha* they have no value and convey no meaning. Their value is conditioned by the law of the Infinite, which is the same as *moksha*.

The Vedas and the Upanishads are the expiration of the Divine Being, and they give an exhaustive commentary on spiritual life. They are expositions of the significance and the import of

human life and of the method of the transmutation of the mortal appearance into the Immortal Essence. The instance of the great Nachiketas and the story of his adventurous search for Truth narrated in the thrilling Katha Upanishad serve as exemplars to all men capable of thought and reflection.

Nothing of the world of sensibility can be of real value—this is what Nachiketas taught through his memorable act of renunciation. Not even the longest life and the immense wealth offered to him could tempt him. He persevered in his quest for the Highest, and in the end achieved the Highest. Nothing short of it could satisfy him. Such are the true heroes. A real hero is not he who stands against bullets or risks his life in hazardous attempts, fights battles, dives into oceans and climbs high cliffs, but he who subdues his senses and overcomes his mind, recognizes the supreme unity of life and casts aside dualities and desires. To achieve this is the duty of man; this is the immortal message of the sages of the Upanishads.

The tangle of sense-experience in which man is caught is most vexing, and hard it is to free oneself from it. Man is deluded by the notion of the reality of the so-called external relations of things, and thus he comes to grief. The Mahabharata says that the contact of beings in this universe is like the contact of logs of wood in a flowing river, temporary. Yet the attachment to sense-percepts is so strong that phantoms are mistaken for facts, the impure is mistaken for the pure, the painful for the pleasant, and the not-self for the Self.

The message of the ancient sages is that the life one lives in the sense-world is deceptive, for it hides the Existence underlying all things and makes one feel that the particular presentation of forms before the senses alone is real. “Children run after external pleasures and fall into the net of wide-spread death. The heroes, however, knowing the Immortal, seek not the Eternal among things unstable here,” says the Upanishad. The call of the ancient sages to man is: “O son of the Immortal! Know yourself as the Infinite; become the All. This is the supreme blessing. This is the supreme bliss.” This is the undying message to man.

The sages have again and again stressed: “If one knows It (i.e. the Immortal Being) here, then there is the true end of all aspirations; if one does not know It here, great is the loss for him.” (Kena Upanishad). And sage Yajnavalkya says that all great deeds done in this world, without the knowledge of the One Imperishable Being, are not worth anything. Humanitarian services, fasts and charity, one’s political, national, social and individual life, should all be based on the feeling of universal brotherhood which is the eternal expression of the Reality of universal Selfhood.

Humanity can hope for peace when this condition, discovered and laid down by the *rishis*, (viz. abiding by the law of the Divine) is fulfilled. Peace can be had only to the extent that the system of the Divine is adhered to in life. And this peace is inversely proportional to the love of body, individuality and its relations in the world, in which humanity is generally steeped. An ‘awakening’ of a higher consciousness is necessary so that disorder and discontent may be abolished.

Education of humanity in the right direction is the precondition of world peace. Materialism, atheism, scepticism and agnosticism which are rampant in these days, and which have robbed man of his reverence for the Supreme Absolute, are mainly responsible for the increasing

selfishness, craving, confusion, violence and agitation of mind that are seething in the world. Man should learn that behind the appearance of materiality, discreteness, externality, doubt and impermanence, there is the reality of spirituality, unity and infinity.

Without the recognition of this reality, life loses life and becomes an emptiness, devoid of meaning and purpose—dead, as it were. To live in the Divine is to die to the narrowness of the sense world; and to be confined to the latter is to ‘destroy oneself’ (in the words of the Ishavasya Upanishad). The present trend of life has to be overhauled and reorientation in it brought about in the light of morality, ethics and spirituality. The change that is required is not merely in the outward form but in the very perspective and the inner constitution of the system of living.

This can be done when man’s ideals are based on the truths of the spirituality of Oneness, lifted above blind beliefs, differences and materiality. When this is achieved, man would have fulfilled his great duty here. For the man scorched in the waterless desert of worldliness the only hope is in the cool waters of the Ganges of wisdom, flowing from the Himalayan heights of the sages of the Upanishads. Drink from this perennial fount, and refresh yourself.

PATH TO PERFECTION

Sri Swami Krishnananda

The attempt to achieve perfection begins with the consciousness and application of the immediate reality that is presented to the senses. That which is definitely known to be existent in the normal human state of consciousness is the body situated in a world of plurality. The maintenance of the body in harmony and of the proper relation of the body with the external world is the first empirical concern of man. It should be the duty of a seeker of perfection to be careful to see that the body is not out of its balance in any way, at any time. The health of the body is of great importance in one’s endeavour to utilize one’s power in the quest of truth. External purity and observance of the laws of hygiene are not to be neglected if the body is to be maintained as one’s friend and helper. *Saucha* is the basic rule of sound health. This must include the system of partaking of diet of a suitable quality, in a suitable quantity, at a suitable place and suitable time. Mental health and physical health are generally inter-dependent.

The practice of the moral law and ethical conduct will pave the way to the maintenance of a sound mind in a sound body. Passions and disturbing emotions disbalance the system and ruin the health of a person. A mental disturbance means the irrhythmic distribution of the vital energy and the disturbance of the nerves. This leads to the illness of the body. A good aspiration towards a non-selfish end is the prerequisite of a good programme of life. The early stages of one’s life should be spent in the pursuit of knowledge, service of the teacher, self-control and austerity. At this stage one should not concern oneself with the duty and the business of the world, which are likely to draw one’s attention away from the primary duties which one is expected to fulfil at this time. The moral law which includes the canons of truthfulness, love and continence should become the guiding factors in the expression of one’s thought, word and deed. Contentment, joy and devotion to the ideal of one’s life bring about the health of the mind as well as of the body. One’s ideal of life should

be that which never perishes in time and is never contradicted by anything else. To know what this ideal is, one requires the aid of an able teacher.

When one undergoes the process of education, no other factor in life should interrupt or interfere with this process. The process of education should be such that it includes in a balanced way all the sides and layers of the human nature,—physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual. Physical health, intellectual understanding, moral integrity and spiritual wisdom are what lead to the ultimate perfection. The different intellectual sciences which are taught in the universities of today are a feeble apology for the integral education that is necessary for the attainment of perfection. No education which neglects certain important aspects of human life can be complete and worth its name. A well-adjusted and balanced study of the essential human nature should constitute real education. After one is well-educated, one must direct one's consciousness and intelligence to the analysis of experience and knowledge of truth. Understanding, willing and feeling are the three faculties in man which have to be taken as the means to the practice of the method of approach to the truth. Some make use of all these faculties in a certain proportion in their march to perfection. Others take to an exclusive method which transforms the other methods into itself, or keep them away as subservient elements.

The method of feeling is faith. Faith in God is the standard way, for some, of reaching perfection. Love of God and service of God through His manifestation as the universe is the principal path. Faith does not question and reason, but accepts the testimony of the teachers and the scriptures in believing that the omnipresent God is the one Reality of the universe. This acceptance of the cosmic presence of a spiritual Being as the supreme Lord of the universe implies an attitude of reverence and love on the part of the devotee towards such a Being. The human emotions are not destroyed here but are turned towards God and thus sublimated. God is loved as a father, a mother, a son, a friend, a husband or a master. The world becomes a pointer to God, and worldly love an indication of the presence of God-love. The world is the body of God. Nothing is to be ultimately rejected. Everything is to be loved as a step to God-realization.

The path of the will is the austere method of determination and decision in regard to the way and the goal. The will bases itself either on faith or on understanding. Will based on faith is different from will based on understanding, and the two wills constitute two different paths to perfection. The will that is based on faith concentrates itself on the Supreme Being which is accepted as an act of faith. As God is everywhere and the mind of man is characteristic of a behaviour which is contrary to the fullness of God, the mind should be checked and its modifications completely transformed in a higher Being. Contrary modifications are opposed with their contradictories or replaced by others of a more beneficial nature, or the modifications of the mind are fixed on God and given a transcendental touch of the philosopher's stone of the infinitude of experience. Matter is separated from Spirit through contemplation on the essential distinction between the two and on the independence and absoluteness of the Spirit. The power of the will is such that it either completely excludes from consciousness all forms pretending to exist outside the Infinite or absorbs them into the consciousness of the Infinite. Thus the will is a way to perfection.

The path of the understanding is the rational method of investigation of experience. Here the understanding and the will become one and the will becomes another name for the movement of the force of the understanding. The experience of one's finitude implies the existence of the Infinite.

The nature of the Infinite is opposed to that of the individual. God is accepted not merely because the scriptures have made mention of Him or because the teachers believe in Him, but because one's own experience and understanding become self-contradictory in their expressions when the Intelligent Infinite is not accepted, and also because the infinite consciousness comes to be the logical deduction of the inmost experience of the finite individual. The longing for the Infinite and the Perfect is ingrained in the deepest recesses of everyone. The sense of the presence of the Infinite becomes the indicator of, and the guide to, the achievement of perfection.

Contemplation on the idea of the Infinite is the way. The objects of the universe are the phases of consciousness. The existence of the individual is on the same level of reality as that of the other individuals. The subject and the object are related to each other as complements, and one is not superior or inferior to the other in the degree of the manifestation of Reality. Contemplation should therefore take the form of an assertion of the conscious Reality of the universe as a whole. Here the universe ceases to be a material presentation but discloses its true nature of consciousness. The knower and the known sink into a Reality larger than what they reveal at present. The individual becomes the specimen of what is systematically going on in the cosmos, and the one purpose of contemplation and meditation is to attune the individual's processes to the cosmic process.

This attainment does not consist in any action of the body, but in an attitude of the mind. It is the intense affirmation in consciousness of the supreme validity of the indivisibility of the truth of the universe. This conscious affirmation of absoluteness should be continued until its actual realization. The practice should be continuous and should be attended with an intense devotion to the ideal, based on clear perception and understanding. The deep and prolonged meditation on the Absolute, in this way, leads to perfection.

The necessary implications of the processes of meditation described above are absence of hatred, cultivation of universal love, freedom from attachment, peace of mind, self-control, turning away from desires, fortitude and a deep sense of service,—all based on correct understanding and introspection. The nature of the way is determined by the nature of the destination to be reached. The end very much influences the nature of the means. The end is the evolution of the means; the means is a relative representation of the end. The characteristics of the end are reflected in those of the means, and by this standard one can judge the genuineness and correctness of the means. The end is the consummation of the process or the means, and the means is an indication of the characteristics of the end. The Infinite is reflected in every individual, and hence no action on the part of the individual can afford to be completely isolated from the universal process going on within the Infinite. The path to perfection is the recognition, by degrees, of the presence of the Infinite in every moment of the individualized processes of the universe.

ALL ABOUT DIVINE LIFE

Sri Swami Sivananda

What Is Divine Life?

- Divine Life is the perfect life led according to the laws of Truth.
- Divine Life is life immortal, in which the ideal state of perfection and the expansion of the self in infinity and eternity is attained.
- Divine Life is life in tune with the infinite.
- It represents the synthesis of the fundamentals of all religions.
- It represents the principles of *dharma*.
- It has no creed of its own, but it represents the essence of all creeds.
- It is a means to attain the true ideal of all beings, viz., God-realization.
- It lays the greatest emphasis on each individual perfecting himself.
- It teaches you how to control your mind by concentrating all your attention on the inner Atman.
- Divine Life means a good life together with self-discipline and an inner awareness of the Atman.
- Entertain divine thoughts; do virtuous actions. This is the gateway to Divine Life.
- Right conduct, self-conquest, compassion, benevolence, pursuit of truth, service of humanity, meditation and self-enquiry: this is good living; this is Divine Life.
- Divine Life aims at harmony, peace and concord.
- Live in peace and harmony with your fellow beings. Radiate goodness of heart all around. This is Divine Life.

Divine Life Cures All Ills

- Through the path of Divine Life alone the world can be cured of its ills.
- Artificial living in bungalows with motor cars and servants, with a big bank balance but without Divine Life, is not prosperity.
- Reform yourself through Divine Life; the society will reform itself.
- Come, then; take a resolve today that you will live every moment of your life for the realization of God.
- If everyone of you makes up your mind to lead the Divine Life from today, from this very moment, what doubt is there that the entire society, of which you are a unit, will not become blessed?
- The dawn of a new life awaits you! The time has come! Strive for Divine Life. You will be blessed.
- A life of self-discipline is a spiritual preparation for the selfless service of humanity.
- Light the torch of Divine Life. Hold the torch aloft. Let humanity see the spiritual path aright.
- On this very day, make your resolve to become strong and powerful—physically, mentally and spiritually.

Utilize Well This Life

- Life is a valuable asset; utilize it for attaining God-realization.
- Life without a worthy ideal is like a rudderless boat.
- Life without aspiration is like a vegetable existence.
- Human birth is a blessing. It is very difficult to get a human birth. Do virtuous deeds. Evolve and expand. Meditate and realize God.
- A little meditation in the early morning hours and a well regulated life will give a balance and rhythm to your life and an inner spiritual strength and courage.
- The raft of the Knowledge of the *Atman* will take you safely over the stormy waves of this great ocean of *samsara* (birth and death).
- Shake off lethargy and faint-heartedness. Exert. Show manly fortitude. Success will be yours.
- Yield not to despondence. Be lion-hearted. Strive. You will prosper gloriously in every attempt.
- Learn the lessons of life. Learn to live rationally and righteously. Seek the way of Light. Be in tune with the Infinite.
- Fight bravely the battle of life. Arm yourself with the shield of discrimination and the sword of dispassion.
- All is but one stupendous whole. Know this spiritual oneness of existence by living a life of purity, inquiry, devotion and meditation.
- Do not run away from evil. Rise above evil. Face it. Overcome it. Eradicate it. Bring in the Divine Light.
- Let your life be dedicated to selfless service and spiritual endeavours. Let it be a source of inspiration to others.
- Never allow defeat to overcome you. Be always courageous. Defeat is illusory; victory is real.
- Find out your way back to God. Get out of this dark maze of *samsara* with the help of the torch of discrimination.
- This world is a bridge. Pass over it and reach the abode of life eternal; do not build over it.
- Live not in yesterday, live not in tomorrow, but live, work, serve, love, purify and meditate today.
- Right Conduct
- Out of good life comes God-life. Goodness is the threshold to godliness.
- Learn to live well, to live the life divine.
- Do not postpone a good deed. Do it now. Think not that there is time enough in the future. What guarantee is there that you will live tomorrow?
- Cease to do evil: learn to do good.
- Understand life. Live in harmony. Seek good company.
- Make the mind free from the domination of fear and hatred.
- Resort not to unrighteousness, whatever momentary benefit it may bring. You will have to pay heavily later.
- Simple living is living in contentment with the minimum necessities of life.
- Hear the teachings of saints and sages. Practice them. Elevate yourself above the ups and downs of the mundane humdrum life.

- Be frank and candid. Speak out your heart. Do not try to bottle up your emotions, but be careful and judicious in expressing them. You will have peace of mind.
- Return good for evil, but do not encourage evil. Be self-dependent.
- Give respect and sympathy to others. You will receive respect and sympathy from others.
- Obey implicitly what your preceptor says; work selflessly, speak truthfully, love unselfishly, think rightly.
- Return love for hatred. If you are not able to do that, be indifferent, but never meet hatred with hatred.
- Cherish love in your heart; cherish goodwill, toleration and sympathy for all mankind. Let your life be not one of lip-service. Let it be a living expression of love, sacrifice, wisdom and courage.
- Do not twist words, facts and topics. Do not try to guise the truth. If the truth be unpleasant be silent, but do not resort to, or support, untruth.
- Make your life a worthy expression of the spirit of goodness.
- Purify your mind through good thoughts, good words and good deeds.

Essence of Divine Life

- To speak the truth at all events, to speak sweetly with love, to practice non-violence and celibacy, to behold the Lord in all beings, is Divine Life.
- Love, truth and purity form the foundation of the edifice of Divine Life.
- Character and devotion are the bricks and mortar with which you have to construct the walls of the Temple of Divine Life.
- The Temple of Divine Life has four pillars, viz., meditation, purity, love and righteousness.
- Through the means of service, love and meditation, Divine Life is lived.
- The secret of Divine Life lies in the spirit of service and sacrifice.
- No philosophy or religion in the world can teach anything better than: ‘Serve, love, give, purify, be good, do good, meditate and realize.’
- Purify your heart. Purity is the very essence of religion.
- Mortifying the body is not Divine Life.
- Physical nudity and matted locks have nothing to do with Divine Life.
- Divine Life is not a rejection of life and its activities, but a transformation of it into the Divine.
- The path of duty is the way to glory and eternal happiness.
- The path of duty is the path of righteousness, and the path of righteousness is the only path of everlasting peace and happiness.
- Aspire ceaselessly to live in the Divine. Strive ceaselessly to realize the Truth.
- Work untiringly for the good of others.
- To have faith and devotion, to serve the preceptor and the saints, to practice meditation and to attain Self-knowledge, is indeed a supreme blessing.
- Without self-restraint there is no Divine Life.
- Do not mix much with people, but be friendly to all.
- Children of Immortality! Arise, awake, and lead the Divine Life of truth, purity, love and goodness.
- Be merciful to all. Be kind to all. Love all. Renounce sensual pleasures. Meditate on the Divine. This is Divine Life.

- The world is a composite whole. Do not entertain the spirit of separateness. In your heart and mind, be one with all.
- The individual soul has to merge in the Cosmic Soul. The human life has to transform itself into Divine Life. This is the goal of life.
- Find out your Centre. Dwell always in this Centre. This Centre is the *Atman* or your innermost Self.
- Realize your real nature. Realize your *Atma-svarupa* (the essential nature of the Self). A lion should not bleat like a lamb.
- Do not be pessimistic. Do not be negative in your approach. Be always optimistic and positive.
- Your only duty is God-realization. All other duties should only serve as a means to this final goal.
- Awake from the slumber of ignorance. Be dispassionate. Learn to discriminate. Meditate. Sleep no more. Behold the dawn of wisdom in your heart.
- Lift the veil of human imperfections. Behold your real nature.

Inroads to Divine Life

- Seek first the spiritual kingdom within you.
- Realize fully the message of unity of life and the divine purpose behind it.
- Stick to the fundamental principles of a noble life. Reorientate them to suit the changing times and conditions.
- Never compromise on your fundamental principles.
- Unfold all the latent potentialities of your soul through leading the Divine Life.
- Escape from the world is not a solution, but freedom from worldliness is what is desired.
- Live in agreement with nature. Use your discriminative faculty. You will be happy, healthy and wise.
- Swerve not from the path, whatever be the distractions and unfavourable circumstances. Be rooted in the ideal. The struggle may be difficult in the beginning, but later you will reap a heavy harvest.
- Allow not wealth to harden your heart. It should be utilized for the good of others.
- Be a servant of the poor, be a lover of the poor, be a devotee of the poor, be a brother of the poor, be a helper of the poor, be a healer of the poor. Your life will be blessed.
- The greedy, the proud and the covetous have no peace. The contented and the humble enjoy the blessing of peace.
- Give: charity creates the feeling of oneness.
- Give a little of cold water to the thirsty, give a few grains of food to the hungry, speak a few kind words to the afflicted. The Lord will bless you.
- Seek to live with all in love and kindness, for who knows where or in what guise the Lord Himself will come to you.
- Be a friend to the animals; serve the animals. The Lord dwells in all creatures.

Feel the Divine Presence

- If you can always remember that God is watching all your thoughts and actions, then you will not entertain evil thoughts or do evil actions.

- Whatever you eat or drink, or whatever you do, first offer to the Lord.
 - Co-operate with the divine forces, and work for the promotion of peace and harmony.
 - Be not dogmatic and fanatic; be catholic, broadminded, tolerant and all-inclusive.
 - If the brute in you triumphs, love will have no scope to flourish.
 - Trust in the love and wisdom of God. You will be free from fear and worry.
 - A man of discrimination is always careful, vigilant and circumspect. He always watches his thoughts carefully.
 - Repentance is asking for the forgiveness of the Lord with real tears of grief, and imposing some discipline on oneself in the form of *tapas*.
 - By feeling the Lord's presence everywhere, you can become fearless, and enjoy infinite peace and bliss.
 - Rise above all sects, cults and creeds. Sectarianism is the antithesis to spiritual life.
 - The sure way to Perfect Life is pointed out in the Gita. The message of the Gita is the *Yoga* of Synthesis, with special emphasis on any one of the particular aspects of *yoga* chosen according to the temperament of the aspirant.
 - Disseminate the message of equality, unity and cosmic love.
 - Dissemination of spiritual knowledge is the noblest form of service to humanity.
 - Spiritual enlightenment can only come from those who have attained such enlightenment within themselves. The blind cannot lead the blind. Only one who has seen the Light can show the Light to others.
 - Only he is called great who is merciful and endowed with self-restraint, righteousness and wisdom; who radiates joy and peace; who sheds divine light and lifts up the people from the quagmire of *samsara*.
 - The perfect man is a beautiful combination of 'the head, the heart and the hand.'
 - As the rivers flow into the ocean, so may you flow on to the Absolute, the ocean of bliss immortal, where there is no diversity, no disharmony and no imperfection.
 - Two syllables lead to death; three syllables lead to immortality. *Mama* (mine) leads to death; *na-mama* (not mine) leads to immortality.
 - Desire nothing. Fear nothing.
 - Sparks of the Divine Flame! Go back to the Divine Flame! Be one with the Divine Flame.
 - Meditate on this formula: 'Nothing exists; nothing belongs to me. I am neither body, nor mind. Immortal Self I am.'
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CARDINAL DOCTRINES OF THE MAIN RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD

Know the Self and be free.	-Hinduism
The Kingdom of Heaven is within you.	-Christianity
There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is the prophet of Allah.	-Islam
For the whole world this is the law: all is impermanent.	-Buddhism
Non-injury is verily the only religion.	-Jainism
Purity of thought, word and deed is the essence of religion.	-Zoroastrianism
I am that I am.	-Judaism
He who has overcome himself is mighty.	-Taoism
Blame yourself as you would blame others. Excuse others as you would excuse yourself.	-Confucianism
There is but one God and His name is truth; wonderful is the <i>guru</i> .	-Sikhism
I am that Real.	-Sufism
See no evil. Hear no evil. Speak no evil.	-Shintoism
All religions are one. They teach a divine life. Love all. Serve all. Practice <i>ahimsa, satya, brahmacharya</i> . Be selfless. Seek the Immortal.	-Divine Life

Heart of Religion

God is love. The only true religion is the religion of love or the religion of the heart. Feel for others as you feel for yourself. This universal religion will bring world-peace and happiness.

SEEK FIND ENTER REST IN GOD

THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY—WHAT IT IS AND HOW IT WORKS

Basic Presuppositions

The spiritual institution is a place of training for suitably equipped temperaments and mature minds towards the acquisition of the higher knowledge of human life. This specialised knowledge is not like one of the sciences or the arts taught in modern colleges or universities, among which a student can prefer anyone to the exclusion of others, but it is the central art and science which enables one to recognize the true meaning of life in general. Spiritual life is not one of the ways of living or even one of the stages of life, but that general background of motive and understanding which vitalises all stages and gives life and meaning to every way of thinking and mode of activity. One cannot live wisely and successfully in the world without adopting the spiritual perspective of the Universe. Spirituality is not worship of the deity in a temple, performance of rituals, following any code of behaviour or conduct, or even the practice of any cult, creed or religion. It is not even faith in God merely, for it rises above even this concept. Spirituality is that comprehensive understanding and envisagement of values, by which the Universe is taken in its totality—not in bits or parts—by which its unity is recognized. Not merely this; the aim of spiritual life is the recognition and realization of this totality of the Universe as a single omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent Self, or *Atman*. Obviously, this is a solution to all human ills, and all problems in creation.

The spiritual philosophy makes one the best of any kind,—a farmer becomes the best farmer, a gardener the best gardener, a driver the best driver, a clerk the best clerk, an official the best official, a teacher the best teacher, and so on. The noblest element in a person is brought out by the technique of spiritual living. It is, thus, not a question of option left to people or a theme to be discussed as to whether it is necessary or unnecessary, for it is the only meaning of all existence. The Institutions that teach this science and art of life are the spiritual organizations of the world and their existence is naturally a ‘must’ for the benefit and the peace, plenty and prosperity of mankind.

The Divine Life Society is a shining example of the creative aspect of the Divinity within man. It is a remarkable achievement of the Founder, His Holiness Sri Swami Sivananda, who from the year 1936, has built up the wonderful mansion of ‘Divine Life’ brick by brick, on the firm foundations of purity, integrity, nobility and magnanimity. The ideals of the Society are lofty, most practicable and within the reach of every human being, irrespective of position, caste, colour, country and creed. The Institution caters to the cultural needs of all ranks of people, to whatever class they may belong. Each one can tap whatever suits him the best according to his stature and intellectual or spiritual attainments. The holy river Ganga flows by the side of the Ashram, coming down from the icy regions of the Himalayas, carrying with her the message of seers and sages of the past and the present, thus in a way keeping intact the connection between the ancient and the modern and nourishing the body and the mind of the wearied soul in its earthly sojourn. There is also available a Jnana Ganga (river of knowledge) emanating from the prolific pen of the Great Master Sri Swami Sivananda and his direct disciples, whom the Master has chiselled and moulded into his own pattern with the laudable idea of enabling them to continue and further the cause of his lofty mission.

The lofty ideal of ‘Divine Life’ has its humble beginning in the building of a true human being, even as the fine superstructure has its small start in the foundation. Just as the strength of a building depends on its foundation which remains silent and invisible, so is the achievement of the Divine dependent on the strenuous preparation of man, to annihilate the animal in him, to develop the human nature and to allow it to blossom into Godliness. Thus there is no Divine Life without one being, or trying to become, human first, and one cannot claim to be a human being merely because he walks on two legs and talks with his tongue. It is our attitude, our behaviour and our dealings with others that go to decide whether we are humans, sub-humans or superhumans. What is our attitude to our fellow-beings, to ourselves and to the Creator? This will decide what we are. Hence the noble Mission of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj was to bring about the needed transformation in man, to gradually eradicate the animal in him and to unfold the Divinity within to its perfection. This transformation is needed by everyone, irrespective of caste, creed, colour, country, sex, position high or low, and the Society therefore attracts seeking souls from all walks of life and from every country.

The Divine Life Society carries out its object of a world-wide revival of spirituality through publication of books, pamphlets and magazines dealing scientifically with all the aspects of Yoga and Vedanta, universal religion and philosophy, and ancient medicine; holding and arranging cultural and spiritual conferences and discourses; establishing training centres for the practice of Yoga and the revival of true culture; and taking such other steps from time to time as may be necessary for bringing about a quick moral and spiritual regeneration in the world.

This institution serves as a place of preservation of the ancient traditions and cultural practices that has come down as a time-honoured heritage. It has been built up to serve as a model of many-sided, altruistic activity, an ideal to copy, intended to bring about a complete unfoldment of the human personality, and to reveal the essential blending together of all sides of human nature. The Society also functions as an ideal place of spiritual retreat for the educated citizens of the world, wherein he can renew himself and recreate and refresh his being, physically, mentally, morally and spiritually.

Location

Sivananda Ashram, the Headquarters of The Divine Life Society, is housed at Shivanandanagar, on the right bank of the Ganga, at a distance of 3 kilometres from Rishikesh Town, (Distt. Tehri-Garhwal, U.P., India) and is served by 3-wheeler Autos and taxis. Rishikesh is about 24 kilometres from the renowned pilgrim centre, Haridwar, and is linked by rail and road. Regular buses and taxis are available throughout the day, at any time. Haridwar is situated on the banks of the river Ganga at a distance of 263 kilometres to the north of Delhi (Capital of India), and is served by rail and road. Haridwar Railway Station is on Delhi-Dehra Dun line.

Here labour a band of Sannyasins (renunciates) and Sadhaks (spiritual practitioners), whose life are entirely dedicated to the service of humanity, to learn and put into practice the Yoga of Synthesis and to function actively as dynamic centres of spirituality. The Society has as its aim the awakening of humanity to the true and lofty purpose of life, enlightening them on the various means and methods of attaining the Goal of life, and inspiring them and urging them to strive for its attainment.

Visitors To The Ashram

The Sivananda Ashram,—the Headquarters of the international organization, the Divine Life Society,—is situated in sylvan surroundings, with multihued hills all around and the beautiful and holy Ganga flowing majestically by its side. The setting is so alluring and capturing that all physical and mental ailments are forgotten for a moment, and there appears to be a standing invitation by the hills and dales and the sacred Ganga for periodical visits by people from all countries and from all strata of society for recoument and conditioning of both body and mind. Added to this is the healing balm of the generous reception accorded by the Ashram to the visitors from all parts of the world, and to the travellers proceeding to the sacred Himalayan shrines, viz., Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamunotri, who intend to make a brief halt at the foot of the Himalayas, which takes one to sublime heights of exhilaration.

Even though the Ashram welcomes anyone at any time, yet, unfortunately the very pragmatic problem of space and accommodation compels its management to state frankly that visitors must come for shorter/longer stay only after writing and obtaining a written permission in reply from:

Swami Krishnananda,
The General Secretary,
The Divine Life Society,
P.O. Shivanandanagar,
Pin Code 249 192,
District Tehri-Garhwal, U.P.,
India.
Tel: (91)-135-430040
Fax: (91)-135-433101

Membership

Anyone devoted to the ideals of truth, non-violence and purity can become a member of the Divine Life Society which is a non-sectarian Institution, embodying in its wide perspective the common fundamental principles of all the religions of the world, and of spiritual life in general. The Society accords equal place of honour to all faiths and religious traditions, and its members recognize no distinction or disruptive sentiment on account of each other's different traditional background, or religious affiliation, all which the principles and the philosophy and teachings of the Society do integrate. Through the pages of the various books and journals of the Society, what is endeavoured is to reveal the secret of spiritual action, namely that it lies in the Knowledge of the true Self and in the effacement and transcendence of the ego; and to present Sri Swami Sivananda's profound teachings that each soul is potentially divine and that everyone's goal is to strive to manifest this divinity within by controlling the internal and external nature by 'being good and doing good'. Anyone with the above ideals is welcome to become a member of the Divine Life Society.

Activities

The Divine Life Society has been a pioneer in advocating and popularizing health, culture and physical fitness through daily practice of *yoga asanas and surya-,namaskara* among the students and youth of India. This health-building work it has been doing through the length and breadth of India, from Rishikesh to Kanyakumari, and from Assam to the Punjab, since the past about forty years. The Founder Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj had commenced this valuable *yoga* work even before. His world-wide *yoga* practice movement was one of the earliest movements in this direction.

The Organization and spiritual work of this Society being entirely non-sectarian, non-denominational and fully tolerant in its nature, it has been a cementing factor amongst the people of this country. The *Ashram* has drawn its residents from all provinces in India. Its Branch Centres are to be found throughout the country and their spiritual work fosters tolerance and encourages national unity.

The Institution propagates unity of religions and goodwill among the communities. Almost all its annual Conferences, at State level as well as All-India level, feature one or two sessions as All-Religions-Meet or *Sarva-Dharma-Sammelana*. Thus, its work is intended to function as a constructive force promoting goodwill and harmony and peaceful relationship in India's society.

This Society's spiritual teachers in foreign countries have been welcomed everywhere as the country's cultural and spiritual ambassadors of goodwill, who have endeared themselves to countless people by their sincerity and their service in the field of *yoga*.

The vast goodwill thus earned for India and its spiritual science (*adhyatma-vidya*) is an invisible and yet a tangible asset whose value cannot be easily estimated. This good work is spreading progressively all over the world.

Even long before any of our present-day teachers had started to go abroad, Swami Sivananda's spiritual teachings and yoga literature had made such a powerful impact in other countries during this recent era that it had raised the name and the prestige of our nation and its culture to very great heights in the eyes of the educated peoples of numerous foreign countries the world over. His books on *yoga* were very eagerly translated into French, German, Latvian, Estonian, Italian, Danish and Spanish languages, with the earnest objective of bringing about the widest possible spread of our country's most precious spiritual heritage. The dignity and eagerness of the country's cultural heritage has obviously risen high in the eyes of the peoples of other nations by this Institution's work.

A perusal of the spiritual teachings and a careful examination of the work of the Institution can make it evident that it has been propagating practices and indirectly working for targets for which the Government itself is now working and striving through various means and methods. Aims and goals such as national health and physical fitness, integrity of character, dutifulness and discipline, avoidance of wastage, limitation of family size, simplicity and thrift have been directly propagated and taught to people by this Institution from the time of its most revered Founder, who was known throughout India as one of the foremost spiritual leaders of his time and an illustrious well-wisher of the country, its people and its culture.

About a hundred or more deserving students of Uttar Pradesh, most of them from the very poor and backward District of Tehri-Garhwal, are receiving regular educational aid from the Institution for their school and college studies. In addition to their fees, the Institution helps them for their text-books as well as for their school uniforms and clothes. Besides this, the *Ashram* sometimes gives aid to poor and deserving schools nearby to help them out of their monetary problems and difficulties.

On the health and medical side, the Society, besides its regular year-round free medical service rendered to the public through the *Ashram's* Hospital, has conducted (a) twenty Eye Camps for free surgical and medical treatment of the public; (b) twenty Annual Women and Children's Medical Treatment Camps; (c) three First Aid Training Courses; and (d) a few Child and Maternity Welfare (prenatal) Camps and food and nutrition education exhibitions. Such medical relief and service activities are carried on by a number of its Branches in different parts of India.

The Divine Life Society has reclaimed from the streets a large number of leper beggars and is providing for their maintenance in their own settlements. These leprosy patients have thus stopped begging on the streets since some years past and improved their general health. Medical care is provided to them. Also periodical repairs to their hutments and supply of clothes are made to them. In addition to this humanitarian Social Welfare project, the Society also bears a major part of

the financial burden of running another leprosy colony of more than 120 leprosy patients since the past many years. The Institution has been a regular and unfailing participator in a number of national schemes by contributing appreciably towards Small Savings Fund, National Savings Certificates, Defence Bonds and collection drives undertaken by the Government. It also contributes its share in times of natural calamities like famines, epidemics, floods, etc.

As a centre of revival, propagating and perpetuating the country's invaluable cultural heritage, the Institution's yeoman service is very well known throughout this nation over the past three decades.

The Headquarters *Ashram* has ever tried to be a haven of refuge for persons in distress, disappointment, grief, dejection, friendlessness and despair. The grieving and the sorrowful, the agitated and the confused come here for peace and solace. Such people rest and recover in this place and return in a better condition to face their problems and situations. No distressed person is ever turned away without assistance. No hungry person is ever refused a meal at the *Ashram's* kitchen. No shelterless person is ever turned away without night's shelter here. Through the years men and women, old and young, high and low, all come to this Institution on the banks of the Ganga by the highway to the Himalayan shrines, seeking to fulfil some inner want, some indefinable need. In the name of the Almighty, the Institution strives to fulfil in some measure the inner need of countless persons. The value and importance to their lives of what they find and receive here is only known to them and can be assessed only by them.

The Divine Life Society has been not only helping and supporting the imparting of education by normal schooling but also imparting education by correspondence. The Society is conducting classes on *yoga*, *Vedanta* and Indian Culture in general, including classes in Sanskrit language, music, physical culture etc., regularly, throughout the year. Postal correspondence work is also done on spiritual and cultural subjects, as well as themes of humanitarian service. Further, at periodical intervals, trained instructors from our Society are invited by the National Academy of Administration in Mussoorie and the Officers Training School, Nainital, to give training in *yoga* for the benefit of the officer trainees of the Academy. Thus, I.A.S. Probationers attending the foundational course as well as senior officers attending Advance Management Development and Planning course conducted at the National Academy of Administration have undergone training under the able Instructors deputed by the Society. Similar such training courses are conducted in different parts of the country in places like factories, industrial townships, universities like the Pantnagar University, the Delhi University, the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, etc. The Divine Life Society's Library contains a very good collection of valuable books on Indian culture, philosophy and religion not only in English and other Indian languages but also in foreign languages. The Library is available for free use by all and a number of students and scholars are regularly visiting the Library and making use of the facilities.

The aim of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy of this Society is not merely an academic equipment of students, but a providing of the requisite training to enable them in their endeavour to blossom into truly humane, serviceful, integrated personalities, so that they succeed, at least in an appreciable measure, in living a life of goodness and wholeness personally, and of dedication, unselfish cooperation and constructive work socially. It needs no special mention that this achievement in one's own person and in society is obviously rooted in the extent to which one's

practical life is attuned to the Ultimate Reality of the Universe. Philosophical discipline, thus, is the pre-condition to leading a perfectly sociable, ethical and progressive life of an onward expansion towards the realization of the Supreme Goal of existence. The teachers of the Academy will strive to hold aloft this objective set before the students, and are not just instructors in the well-known intellectual sciences. The basic spiritual foundation of all life is the principal motive governing the curriculum of the Academy, and students with this elevated spirit of quest seek admission.

Every year the Society also conducts intensive training camps in which people from all walks of life from every region, irrespective of caste, colour or creed, take part. During this period, intensive training *on yogasanas, pranayama* and meditation is given to the participants. During the morning and evening sessions, instructive and illuminating discourses on the theory and practice of leading a spiritual life with a view to develop the integrated personality of man even while attending to the normal duties in one's respective walks in life are given. The printing and publication section is only intended for carrying out the educational programme in building character and all-round development of the personality so as to bring out the nobler qualities inherent in all human beings. A substantial output of the publication section is distributed free to those who are interested in undergoing physical as well as mental discipline and extending the frontiers of their knowledge.

By way of medical relief, the Society is running (1) an Allopathic Section, (2) an Ayurvedic Section, and (3) a Leprosy Relief Section, and also arranging free medical relief camps in and around Rishikesh, the Headquarters of the Society. The Allopathic Section is equipped with a clinical laboratory, X-ray machine and the Physiotherapy Section has facilities for ultra-short wave diathermy, infrared and ultraviolet therapy. The hospital has 20 beds and more than 30,000 patients are treated on an average every year. Treatment in all departments is free to all, irrespective of caste or religion. In the Ayurvedic Section, medicines are prepared strictly according to the injunctions contained in the science of Ayurveda and such medicines are distributed free at the dispensary to patients who seek treatment.

It should not be difficult to appreciate that all charitable activities and service to humanity, particularly service to the poor and the sick, flow from the conviction in a Transcendent Presence which holds humanity together as a single fraternity. In India, as in other parts of the world, all true charitable activities are carried on with a spiritual zeal which oversteps the boundaries of classes, creeds and cults. The Divine Life Society is religious if by religion we are to understand the grounding of one's life in the structure of a Cosmic Reality. But, no one, definitely, we hope, would be prepared to abrogate the need for such a religion, if religion is the name we prefer to give to it. It is, rather, the Science of Life, on whose basis this Society has always been working ever since its inception. It attempts to make man human to enable him to live at peace with himself and the Society at large. It lays emphasis on the brotherhood of man to regulate his conduct with his fellow beings and to promote a sense of unity among things. The Divine Life Society is essentially a Charitable Institution and its main object is education, spread of knowledge, promotion of cultural progress, medical relief and relief of the poor. The fact that the workers engaged in carrying out the objectives of the Society have faith in a Super-Power that guides the destinies of men and believe that the ultimate goal of human endeavour should be to realize and experience oneness with that Power, would only adumbrate the integral approach of the Society as a whole.

Religion, to the Divine Life Society, does not mean any particular faith, creed or cult, or any 'ism' in the sense it is usually construed with relevance to the organized, the traditional or the accepted religions of the world. To this Institution, and to all its followers, religion means that consciousness or that conduct which manifests in practical life as well as personal demeanour the laws that are supposed to operate behind the working system of the universe. Thus, religion becomes a scientific principle, a philosophical necessity and a spiritual ideal which regulates human life in every field of its activity,—personal, social, national or international. Thus, again, religion becomes an inviolable law of the world as a whole, by which individuals are united into a fraternity or brotherhood in the light of a total culture of humanity which may be said to be directed towards the achievement of the purpose of human life as such, without any distinction characteristic of the ordinary religions. This feature exemplifies the 'universal nature' of the activities and the aims and objects of the Society.

Principal Departments Of The Divine Life Society

The Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy trains seekers in the knowledge of India's Culture and in the practice of *yoga* as a general discipline for personal integration as well as human welfare. *The Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy Press* prints the cultural and spiritual books as well as the journals and other literature of the Society. *The Sivananda Publication League* caters to the public demand for this valuable literature. *The Free Literature Section* distributes freely books and other literature to deserving seekers and aspirants the world over. *The Sivananda Ayurvedic Pharmaceutical Works* manufactures genuine *Ayurvedic* medicines from pure Himalayan herbs. *The Charitable Hospital* renders free medical service to the public and conducts periodical medical relief camps freely. *The Annapurna Annakshetra*, which is the common kitchen of the Ashram, feeds about 250 permanent residents as well as the daily visiting *sadhakas* and guests and pilgrims in varying numbers. *The Guest House* looks to the needs of the many visitors and guests (visiting *sadhakas*) who come to the *Ashram* for spiritual guidance and *yoga* training. *The Temples* of worship hold prayers for the peace of the world, conduct regular worship and continue the recitation of the Divine Name throughout the 24 hours of the day, for the welfare of mankind. *The Library* contains some of the most precious books in philosophy, *yoga* and culture. *The Correspondence Section* provides proper replies to countless queries that come from seekers all over the world in various walks of life. The daily *satsanga* held in the *Ashram* is a perennial source of inspiration to the souls that seek communion with inner peace. *Yoga* courses held in other parts of India, outside the Headquarters, in other Institutions and Organizations, are, again, channels of the much-needed inspiration to students, officials and people in general, which work the Society carries on through its *Yoga* Instructors who travel for this purpose. The Divine Life Conferences held in different places in India have become effective means of mustering in the moral and cultural forces of people and bringing them together for the purpose of achieving individual and social solidarity. The Cultural Tours conducted by the senior *swamis* of the *Ashram* have become a by-word to anxious seekers in India as well as in other countries, who are benefited immensely by the teachings, lectures and personal guidance provided by the *swamis* travelling for this purpose. The Personal Guidance which the senior *swamis* at the Headquarters render in a paternal way to hundreds of people coming to the *Ashram* from the various countries in the world has been ever giving a healing touch to the tension-ridden personalities in society.

The Daily Meditation sessions are a practical mobilization of mental and soul-force for a reconstruction of the human personality towards the various noble purposes in life. The Annual Sadhana Weeks are Spiritual Camps held in the *Ashram*, to which hundreds flock in eagerness for cultural and spiritual rejuvenation of their minds and hearts. The Educational Activities of the Society consist in helping poor students, about a hundred in number, right from the primary standard to the post-graduate level, by providing them with the requisite facilities in their studies, as a free gesture of the Ashram's goodwill towards the welfare of people. The Leprosy Relief Work of the Society is so well-known that it has always been regarded as part and parcel of the love extended by the Society to some 200 or more leper-patients who are rehabilitated and taken care of in a suitable manner. The Social Service Wing attends to such services as medical aid to the poor and needy, contribution towards different relief works in the country, and such other gestures of charity as would relieve the sufferings of people, in some measure, from poverty, disease and ignorance.

These services and activities of the *Ashram* are so conceived and conducted that they form a vehicle for the expression of the spiritual aspirations of seekers and become a venue for manifesting in practical life the broad-based inclusive ideal of the Oneness of God, the brotherhood of creation and the immortality of the soul.

The fundamental aims and objects of The Divine Life Society, as a whole, are purely spiritual and cultural, entirely non-sectarian, universally applicable and perfectly tolerant. The Society offers a peaceful haven wherein is provided ample opportunity and actual help for the restoration of peace to the troubled, conflict-ridden and psychologically traumatised personality of the modern man.

20 IMPORTANT SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTIONS

Sri Swami Sivananda

These twenty instructions contain the very essence of all Yoga Sadhana, Karma, Bhakti, Jnana and Yoga will all come to one who follows them whole-heartedly. They are the unailing keys to quick and effective development and culture of the physical, mental, moral and spiritual self of man.

1. BRAHMAMUHURTA

Get up at 4 a.m. daily. This is Brahmamuhurta which is extremely favourable for Sadhana. Do all your morning spiritual Sadhana during this period from 4 a.m. to 6:30 or 7 a.m. Such Sadhana gives quick and maximum progress.

2. ASANA

Sit on Padmasana (lotus pose), Siddhasana (adept's pose) or Sukhasana (any pose you like) for your Japa and meditation for half an hour, facing east or north. Increase the period gradually to three hours. Practice Sirshasana (headstand) and Sarvangasana (shoulderstand) for maintenance of

health and Brahmacharya. Take light physical exercises as walking, etc., regularly. Do twenty rounds of easy, comfortable Pranayama (breathing exercises). Do not strain yourself while doing Pranayama.

3. JAPA

You can repeat any Mantra (sacred syllable), such as pure Om or Om Namō Narayanaya, Sri Ram, Sita Ram, Sri Ram Jaya Ram Jaya Jaya Ram, Om Namah Sivaya, Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya, Om Saravanabhavaya Namah, Hari Om, or Gayatri (a sacred Vedic Mantra), according to your taste or inclination, from 108 times to 21,600 times daily. Devotees of Christ may repeat the name Jesus or Hail Mary, Mother of Jesus. Parsis, Sikhs and Muslims may select a name or Mantra from the Zend Avesta, Granth Sahib or Koran respectively.

4. DIETETIC DISCIPLINE

Take Sattvic food. Give up chillies, tamarind, garlic, onion, sour articles, oil, mustard, asafoetida. Observe moderation in diet (Mitahara). Do not overload the stomach. Give up those things which the mind likes best for a fortnight once or twice in a year. Eat simple simple food. Milk and fruits help concentration. Take food as medicine to keep the life going. Eating for enjoyment is a sin. Give up salt and sugar for a week or a fortnight. You must be able to live on rice, dhal and bread without any pickle. Do not ask for extra salt for dhal, and sugar for tea, coffee and milk. People taking non-vegetarian diet should try their best to gradually give up flesh-eating as completely as possible. They will be immensely benefited.

5. MEDITATION

Have a separate meditation room under lock and key. If this is not possible then a corner of the room should be set apart with a small cloth screen or curtain drawn across. Keep the room spotlessly clean.

6. SVADHYAYA

Study systematically the Gita, Ramayana, Bhagavatam, Vishnu-Sahasranama, Lalita-Sahasranama, Adityahridaya, Upanishads, Yoga Vasishta, Bible, Imitation of Christ, Zend Avesta, Quran, the Tripitakas, the Granth Sahib and other religious books from half an hour to one hour daily, and have Suddha Vichara (pure thoughts).

7. ELEVATE THE MIND

Get by heart some prayer—Slokas (prayer verses), Stotras (hymns) and repeat them as soon as you sit in the Asana before starting Japa or meditation. This will elevate the mind quickly.

8. BRAHMACHARYA

Preserve the vital force (Veerya (seminal energy)) very, very carefully. Veerya is God in motion or manifestation (Vibhuti). Veerya is all power. Veerya is all money. Veerya is the essence

of life, thought and intelligence. This instruction is not for bachelors only. Householders also must follow it as far as possible. They must be extremely moderate in their marital connections with their spouse. This is very important.

9. CHARITY

Do charity regularly, every month, or even daily according to your means. Never fail in this item. If necessary forego some personal wants but keep up this charity regularly.

10. HAVE SATSANG

Give up bad company, smoking, meat and alcoholic liquors entirely. Have constant Satsang (association with holy people). Do not develop any evil habits. Deliberately exert to develop positive virtuous qualities.

11. FAST

Fast on Ekadasi (11th day of the Hindu lunar fortnight) or live on milk and fruits only. Christians must fast on alternate Sundays, Muslims on alternate Fridays, and Parsis on a suitable day every fortnight.

12. JAPA MALA

Have a Japa Mala (rosary) around your neck or in your pocket or underneath your pillow at night. This will remind you of God. Twirl the beads during your leisure. You should repeat the Name at all times, whatever task you may be engaged in.

13. OBSERVE MOUNA

Observe Mouna (vow of silence) for a couple of hours daily. Do not make gestures and inarticulate noises during the period of silence.

14. DISCIPLINE OF SPEECH

Speak the truth at all cost. Speak a little. Speak sweetly. Always utter encouraging words. Never condemn, criticize or discourage. Do not raise your voice and shout at little children or subordinates.

15. BE CONTENT

Reduce your wants. If you have four shirts, reduce the number to three or two. Lead a happy, contented life. Avoid unnecessary worry. Be mentally detached. Have plain living and high thinking. Think of those who do not possess even one-tenth of what you have. Share with others.

16. PRACTICE LOVE

Never hurt anybody. Ahimsa Paramo Dharmah (Non-injury is the highest virtue). Control anger by love, Kshama (forgiveness) and Daya (compassion). Serve the sick and the poor with love and affection. This is service of God.

17. BE SELF RELIANT

Do not depend upon servants. Self-reliance is the highest of all virtues.

18. HAVE SELF-ANALYSIS

Think of the mistakes you have committed during the course of the day, just before retiring to bed (self-analysis). Keep a daily spiritual diary and self-correction register as Benjamin Franklin did. Maintain a daily routine and resolve-form. Do not brood over past mistakes.

19. DO YOUR DUTY

Remember that death is awaiting you at every moment. Never fail to fulfil your duties. Have pure conduct (Sadachara).

20. REMEMBER GOD

Think of God as soon as you wake up and just before you go to sleep, and at all other times whether engaged in any work or not. Repeat His Name always. Surrender yourself completely to God (Saranagati). This is the essence of all spiritual Sadhana. It will lead you to liberation. All these spiritual canons must be rigidly observed. You must not give any leniency to the mind.

SADHANA TATTVA

Or

The Science Of Seven Cultures

For Quick Evolution of the Human Being

Sri Swami Sivananda

INTRODUCTION

(a) An ounce of practice is better than tons of theory. Practice Yoga, Religion and Philosophy in daily life and attain Self-realization.

(b) These thirty-two instructions give the essence of the Eternal Religion (Sanatana Dharma) in its purest form. They are suitable for modern busy householders with fixed hours of work. Modify them to suit your convenience and increase the period gradually.

(c) In the beginning take only a few practicable resolves which form a small but definite advance over your present habits and character. In case of ill-health, pressure of work or unavoidable engagements replace your active Sadhana (spiritual practice) by frequent remembrance of God.

HEALTH CULTURE

1. Eat moderately. Take light and simple food. Offer it to God before you eat. Have a balanced diet.

2. Avoid spicy and hot foods, like chilies, garlic, onions, tamarind, etc., as far as possible. Give up tea, coffee, smoking, betels, meat and wine entirely.

3. Fast on Ekadasi days or once in a fortnight. Take milk, fruits or roots only.

4. Practice Yoga Asana (Hatha Yoga exercises) or physical exercises for 15 to 30 minutes every day. Take a long walk or play some vigorous games daily.

ENERGY CULTURE

5. Observe silence (Mouna) for 2 hours daily and 4 to 8 hours on Sundays.

6. Observe celibacy according to your age and circumstances. Restrict the indulgence to once a month. Decrease it gradually to once a year. Finally take a vow of abstinence for whole life.

ETHICAL CULTURE

7. Speak the TRUTH. Speak little. Speak kindly. Speak sweetly.

8. Do not injure anyone in thought, word or deed. Be kind to all.

9. Be sincere, straightforward and open-hearted in your talks and dealings.

10. Be honest. Earn by the sweat of your brow. Do not accept any money, things or favour unless earned lawfully. Develop nobility and integrity.

11. Control fits of anger by serenity, patience, love, mercy and tolerance. Forget and forgive. Adapt yourself to men and events.

WILL CULTURE

12. Live without sugar for a week or month. Give up salt on Sundays.

13. Give up cards, novels, cinemas and clubs. Fly from evil company. Avoid discussions with materialists. Do not mix with persons who have no faith in God or who criticize your Sadhana (spiritual practices).

14. Curtail your wants. Reduce your possessions. Have plain living and high thinking.

HEART CULTURE

15. Doing good to others is the highest religion. Do some selfless service for a few hours every week, without egoism or expectation of reward. Do your worldly duties in the same spirit. Work is worship. Dedicate it to God.

16. Give 2 to 10 percent of your income in charity every month. Share what you have with others. Let the world be your family. Remove selfishness.

17. Be humble and prostrate yourself to all beings mentally. Feel the Divine Presence everywhere. Give up vanity, pride and hypocrisy.

18. Have unwavering faith in God, the Bhagavad-Gita and your Guru. Make a total self-surrender to God and pray: "Thy Will be done; I want nothing." Submit to the Divine Will in all events and happenings with equanimity.

19. See God in all beings and love them as your own Self. Do not hate anyone.

20. Remember God at all times or, at least, on rising from bed, during a pause in work and before going to bed. Keep a Mala (rosary) in your pocket.

PSYCHIC CULTURE

21. Study one chapter or ten to twenty-five verses of the Gita or your scriptures with meaning, daily. Learn the original language of your scripture, at least sufficient to understand it in original.

22. Memorize important and inspiring portions of your sacred scripture according to your capacity. Memorize also any inspiring quotations from other spiritual books. Keep a pocket version your scripture with you at all times.

23. Read the Ramayana, the Bible, the Quran, the Bhagavata, the Upanishads, the Yogavasishtha or other religious books daily without fail. Study more during holidays.

24. Attend religious meetings and seek Satsanga (company) with saints at every opportunity. If not, create opportunities. Listen to spiritual discourses from learned and holy people. If possible, organize such functions on Sundays or holidays.

25. Visit a temple or place of worship daily. Preferably before you leave and upon your return from work, even if only for 5 or 10 minutes.

26. Spend holidays and leave-periods, when possible, in the company of saints or practice Sadhana at holy places in seclusion.

SPIRITUAL CULTURE

27. Go to bed early. Get up at four o'clock. Answer calls of nature, clean your mouth and take a bath.

28. Recite some prayers and Kirtan Dhvanis (devotional songs). Practice Pranayama (breathing exercises), Japa (repetition of the Divine Name of God) and meditation in the early morning. Sit on Padma, Siddha, or Sukha Asana throughout, without movement, by gradual practice. While you meditate, forget the outside world totally. Gradually increase the period of meditation.

29. Perform the daily prayers of your religion. Do not fail to fulfil your obligatory duties.

30. Write your favourite Mantra or Name of God in a notebook for ten to thirty minutes, daily.

31. Sing the Names of God (Kirtan) and pray for half to one hour at night with family and friends.

32. Make annual resolves on the above lines. Regularity, tenacity and fixity are essential. Record your Sadhana in a spiritual diary daily. Review it every month and correct your failures.

TWENTY HINTS ON MEDITATION

Sri Swami Sivananda

1. Have a separate meditation room under lock and key. Never allow anybody to enter the room. Burn incense there. Wash your feet and then enter the room.
2. Retire to a quiet place or room where you do not fear interruption, so that your mind may feel secure and at rest. Of course, the ideal condition cannot always be obtained, in which case you should do the best you can. You should be alone, yourself, in communion with God or Brahman.
3. Get up at 4 a.m. (*Brahmamuhurta*) and meditate from 4 a.m. to 6 a.m. Have another sitting at night from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.
4. Keep a picture of your *Ishta* in the room, and also some religious books, the Gita, the Upanishads, the Yoga Vasistha, the Bhagavata, etc. Spread your *asana* in front of the picture of your *Ishta*.
5. Sit in *padma*, *siddha*, *sukha*, or *swastika asana*. Keep the head, neck and trunk in a straight line. Do not bend either forward or backward.
6. Close your eyes and concentrate gently in the *trikuti*, the space between the two eyebrows. Lock the fingers.
7. Never wrestle with the mind. Do not use any violent effort in concentration. Relax all the muscles and the nerves. Relax the brain. Gently think of your *Ishta* (personal God). Slowly repeat your *gurumantra with bhava* (feeling) and meaning. Still the bubbling mind. Silence the thoughts.

8. Make no violent effort to control the mind, but rather allow it to run along for a while, and exhaust its efforts. It will take advantage of the opportunity and will jump around like an unchained monkey at first, until it gradually slows down and looks to you for orders. It may take some time to tame the mind, but each time you try, it will come around you in a shorter time.
9. **Saguna and Nirguna Dhyana:** To meditate on a Name and a Form of the Lord is *saguna-dhyana*. This is concrete meditation. Meditate on any form of God you like, and repeat His Name mentally. This is *saguna-dhyana*. Or repeat OM mentally and meditate on abstract ideas like Infinity, Eternity, Purity, Consciousness, Truth, Bliss, etc., identifying these with your Self. This is *nirguna-dhyana*. Stick to one method. In the initial stages, *saguna-dhyana* alone is suitable for the vast majority of persons.
10. Again and again withdraw the mind from worldly objects when it runs away from the *lakshya*, and fix it there. This sort of combat will go on for some months.
11. When you meditate on Lord Krishna in the beginning, keep His picture in front of you. Look at it with steady gazing without winking the eyelids. See His feet first, then the yellow silken robe, then the ornaments around his neck, then his face, earrings, crown on the head set with diamonds, then his armlets, bracelets, then his conch, disc, mace and lotus. Then come again to the feet. Now start again the same process. Do this again and again for half an hour. When you feel tired, look steadily at the face only. Do this practice for three months.
12. Then close your eyes and mentally visualise the picture and rotate the mind in different parts, as you did before.
13. You can associate the attributes of God, as omnipotence, omniscience, purity, perfection, etc. during the course of your meditation.
14. If evil thoughts enter your mind, do not use your will-force in driving them. You will only lose your energy. You will only tax your will; you will fatigue yourself. The greater the efforts you make, the more the evil thoughts will return with redoubled force. They will return more quickly, also. The thoughts will become more powerful. Be indifferent. Keep quiet. They will pass away soon. Or, substitute good counter-thoughts (*pratipaksha-bhavana* method). Or think of the picture of God and the *mantra*, again and again, forcibly. Or, pray.
15. Never let a day pass without meditation. Be regular and systematic. Take *sattvic* food. Fruits and milk will help mental focussing. Give up meat, fish, eggs, smoking, liquors, etc.
16. Dash cold water on the face to drive off drowsiness. Stand up for 15 minutes. Tie the tuft of hair on the head with a piece of string, to a nail above. As soon as you begin to doze, the string will pull you up. It will wake you up. It will serve the part of a mother. Or, lean upon an improvised swing for 10 minutes and move yourself to and fro. Do 10 or 20 mild *kumbhakas* (*pranayama*). Do *sirshasana* and *mayurasana*. Take only milk and fruits at night. By these methods you can combat sleep.
17. Be careful in the selection of your companions. Give up going to talkies. Talk a little. Observe *mouna* for two hours daily. Do not mix with undesirable persons. Read good, inspiring, religious books. (This is substitute for good company, if you do not get positive good company). Have *satsanga*. These are all auxiliaries to meditation.
18. Do not shake the body. Keep it as firm as a rock. Breathe slowly. Do not scratch the body every now and then. Have the right mental attitude as taught by your *guru*.
19. When the mind is tired, do not concentrate. Give it a little rest.
20. When an idea exclusively occupies the mind, it is transformed into an actual physical or mental state. Therefore, if you keep the mind fully occupied with the thought of God alone, you will get

into *nirvikalpa-samadhi* (Superconscious state where there is no mind) very quickly. Therefore exert in right earnest.

GUIDE TO SADHAKS

Sri Swami Sivananda

1. Reduce your wants to the utmost minimum.
2. Adapt yourself to circumstances.
3. Never be attached to anything or anybody.
4. Share what you have with others.
5. Be ever ready to serve. Lose no opportunity. Serve with *Atma bhava*.
6. Entertain *akarta* (non-doer) and *sakshi bhava* (feeling that you are a witness).
7. Speak measured and sweet words.
8. Have a burning thirst for God-realization.
9. Renounce all your belongings and surrender yourself unto God.
10. Spiritual path is a sharp-edged razor path. A *guru* is absolutely necessary.
11. Have great patience and perseverance.
12. Never leave the *abhyasa* (practice) even for a day.
13. The *guru* will only guide you. You should yourself tread the path.
14. Life is short. Time of death is uncertain. Apply yourself seriously to *yoga sadhana*.
15. Maintain daily spiritual diary and record correctly your progress and failures. Stick to resolves.
16. Do not complain that there is no time for *sadhana*. Reduce sleep and tall talk. Stick to *Brahma-muhurta*.
17. Let the thought of God (Reality) keep away the thought of the world.
18. Forget the feeling that you are so and so—a male or a female—by vigorous *Brahma chintana* (constant thinking of Brahman).
19. Never postpone a thing for tomorrow if it is possible for you to do it today.
20. Do not boast or make a show of your abilities. Be simple and humble.
21. Be cheerful always. Give up worries.
22. Be indifferent to things that do not concern you.
23. Fly away from company and discussion.
24. Be alone for a few hours daily.
25. Give up greediness, jealousy and hoarding.
26. Control your emotions by discrimination and *vairagya*.
27. Maintain equilibrium of mind always.
28. Think twice before you speak and thrice before you act.
29. Give up back-biting, criticizing and fault-finding. Beware of reactions.
30. Find out your own faults and weaknesses. See only good in others. Praise the virtues of others.
31. Forgive and forget the harm done by others. Do good to those who hate you.
32. Shun lust, anger, egoism, *moha* (infatuation) and *lobha* (greed), like a venomous cobra.
33. Be prepared to suffer any amount of pain.
34. Have a set of maxims always with you to induce *vairagya* (dispassion).
35. Treat sensual enjoyment as poison, vomited food, *vishta* or urine. They cannot give you satisfaction.

36. Preserve your *virya* (seminal energy) carefully. Sleep always separately.
37. Revere ladies as Mother Divine. Root out the sex idea. Prostrate before all.
38. See God in every face, in everything.
39. Take to *sankirtan*, *satsanga* and prayer when the mind is overpowered by lower instincts.
40. Face obstacles coolly and boldly.
41. Care not for criticism when you are in the right path. Yield not to flattery.
42. Respect rogues and scoundrels. Serve them.
43. Admit your faults plainly.
44. Take care of your health. Do not neglect daily *asanas* and exercises.
45. Be active and nimble always.
46. Develop your heart by giving. Be extraordinarily charitable. Give more than one's expectations.
47. Desires multiply misery. Develop contentment.
48. Control the senses one by one.
49. Develop *Brahmakara vritti* by repeated thinking.
50. Have a check over all your thoughts. Keep them pure and sublime.
51. Do not lose temper when anybody insults, taunts or rebukes you. It is a mere play of words and a variety of sounds.
52. Rest your mind in God and live in truth.
53. Be up and doing in the path of perfection.
54. Have a definite aim in your life and proceed cautiously.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

Sri Swami Sivananda

O Adorable Lord of Mercy and Love !
Salutations and prostrations unto Thee.
Thou art Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient.
Thou art 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 temptation 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.

SONG OF 18 “ITIES”

Sri Swami Sivananda

Serenity, regularity, absence of vanity,
Sincerity, simplicity, veracity,
Equanimity, fixity, non-irritability,
Adaptability, humility, tenacity,
Integrity, nobility, magnanimity,
Charity, generosity, purity.
Practice daily these eighteen ‘ities’,
You will soon attain immortality.
Brahman is the only real entity,
Mr. So and so is a false non-entity.
You will abide in eternity and infinity;
You will behold unity in diversity;
You cannot attain this in the university.
You can attain this in the Forest University.

RESOLVES FOR QUICK SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

Sri Swami Sivananda

1. Maintain a daily spiritual diary, and at the end of every month send a copy of it to your spiritual guide who will give you further lessons for your progress.
2. Keep a daily Mantra note-book and regularly write a page or two of your Ishta Mantra or Guru Mantra in ink.
3. Chalk out a daily routine for daily practice and stick to it at any cost. Distractions and obstacles are many. Be ever careful and vigilant.
4. Make a few resolves for practice during the New year as shown below. Any of the resolves may be crossed out, added to or altered, to suit the individual temperament, convenience or stage of development.
5. Do not abruptly change the mode of living. You can grow and evolve quickly in the spiritual path, and develop your will power and control the mind and the senses by sticking to the resolves. Do not try the impossible at first. Take your resolves very cautiously and ascend step by step on the ladder of Yoga.
6. If you fail in any of the resolves through lack of self-control, unknowingly or by force of circumstances, you should perform some extra Malas of Japa or give up one meal to remind yourself of the resolve and to impress the mind of the importance of these resolves (self-punishment).

RESOLVES FOR QUICK SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

7. The resolves form should be prepared in duplicate and one copy duly signed should be sent to your Guru so that you may not be tempted to relax your efforts or ignore the resolves of break any other under the slightest pretext or lame excuse.

8. Request all your spiritually inclined friends to maintain such resolves, daily spiritual diary and Mantra note-book. Thus you can elevate many from the quagmire of Samsara (worldliness).

IMPORTANT RESOLVES

1. I will perform Asanas and Pranayamas for _____ minutes daily.
2. I will take milk and fruits only in lieu of night meals once a week/fortnight/month.
3. I will observe a fast on Ekadasi days or once a fortnight/month.
4. I will give up _____ (one of my cherished objects of enjoyment) once every _____ days/month or for _____ days/months.
5. I will not indulge in any of the following more than once every _____ days/weeks or for _____ months. (A) Smoking, (B) Cards, (C) Cinemas, (D) Novels.
6. I will observe Mouna (complete silence) for _____ minutes/hours daily and _____ minutes/hours on Sundays/holidays, and utilize the time in concentration, meditation, Japa, and introspection.
7. I will observe Brahmacharya (celibacy) for weeks/months at a time.
8. I will not utter angry, harsh or vulgar words towards any one during this year.
9. I will speak the truth at all costs during this year.
10. I will not entertain hatred or evil thoughts towards any one.
11. I will give away _____cents per dollar of my income in charity.
12. I will perform selfless service (Nishkamy Karma Yoga) for _____ hours daily/weekly.
13. I will do _____Malas of Japa daily (Mala of 108 beads).
14. I will write my Ishta Mantra/Guru Mantra in a note-book daily for _____minutes or _____pages.
15. I will study _____ Slokas of Gita daily with commentary.

16. I will maintain a daily spiritual diary and send a copy of it every month to my Guruji for getting further lessons.

17. I will get up at _____ a.m. daily and spend _____ hours in Japa, concentration, meditation, prayer, etc.

18. I will conduct Sankirtan with family members and friends daily for _____ minutes/hours at night.

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Date: _____

THE SPIRITUAL DIARY

(WEEKLY)

The Spiritual Diary is a whip for goading the mind towards righteousness and God. If you regularly maintain this diary you will get solace, peace of mind and make quick progress in the spiritual path. Maintain a daily diary and realise the marvellous results.

SPIRITUAL DIARY

Questions	Date						
1. When did you get up from bed?							
2. How many hours did you sleep?							
3. How many Malas of Japa?							
4. How long in Kirtan?							
5. How many Pranayamas?							
6. How long did you perform Asanas?							
7. How long did you meditate in one Asana?							
8. How many Gita Slokas did you read or get by heart?							
9. How long in the company of the wise (Satsanga)?							
10. How many hours did you observe Mouna?							
11. How long in disinterested selfless service?							
12. How much did you give in charity?							
13. How many Mantras you wrote?							
14. How long did you practice physical exercise?							
15. How many lies did you tell and with what self-punishment?							
16. How many times and how long of anger and with what self-punishment?							
17. How many hours you spent in useless company?							
18. How many times you failed in Brahmacharya?							
19. How long in study of religious books?							
20. How many times you failed in the control of evil habits and with what self-punishment?							
21. How long you concentrated on your Ishta Devata (Saguna or Nirguna Dhyana)?							
22. How many days did you observe fast and vigil?							
23. Were you regular in your meditation?							
24. What virtue are you developing?							
25. What evil quality are you trying to eradicate?							
26. What Indriya is troubling you most?							
27. When did you go to bed?							