



RAM

SIGNIFICANCE OF DEVI WORSHIP

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

Immortal selves! Peace be to you all! Prostration to the Mother of the universe! The Navaratri celebrations and worship of Devi have purified the whole atmosphere. Let me relate to you the importance and the significance of the worship of Devi. Devi in her aspects of the creative, the preservative and the destructive powers of the universe, is the Chidrupini Shakti, the eternal energy of God who is Satchidananda. Devi worship or Durga Puja is the adoration of the Divine Mother of all things, who bears the seed of the universe in her imperishable womb, the Mahad-Brahma. Devi is the consciousness power or the Chaitanya Shakti, the glory of the supreme Sovereign of the universe made manifest to the manifested Jivas in the world of creation. As the creator, the preservator and the destroyer of the universe are but one God appearing in three forms, so the power which is inseparable from God appears in its threefold aspect. Even as a person here is known from his characters and powers, God is revealed in his Shakti which is the sum total of all knowledge, will and action, visible and felt as well as invisible and beyond comprehension. The whole universe is Shakti. It is all power or energy. The universe is the manifestation of the richness and the glory of its immortal creator who hails beyond the dust of the earth and the luminaries of heaven. He, the Divine Master, works everywhere with his twofold Shakti, Vidya and Avidya.

THE INNER WAR

In the nine days Lila of the Supreme Goddess, is illustrated the process of the overcoming of the dark and blind powers of the lower nature

by the splendid and intelligent powers of the higher nature. This great war marks the life of both the objective and the subjective sides of the created universe. Vidya-shakti always gains an upper hand and everywhere there is a transcendence of the limitations and imperfections characteristic of Jivahood and Asurahood by the divine Jnana-shakti which pierces through every quarter and cranny in its work of vanquishing unconsciousness or ignorance together with its train of effects, desire and selfish action. In the *Devi Mahatmya* or the *Saptashati*, Devi is described as the mass of the effulgent energy of the gods, headed by Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. This Shakti is released when the Devas begin to complain to these higher powers. The sense energies presided over by intelligences, which are symbolised by the Devas together with their ruler Indra, the mind, when they are oppressed by the demonical forces of passion, anger, malice, etc., of a destructive nature, begin to feel acutely their humiliation in the forms of the pains of life and resort to the higher nature for help. At once, the Divine Principle within, reveals itself in its tremendous dignity of the power of consciousness and in its unifying absoluteness of truth and puts an end to the tempestuous life of animalism and all that is undivine or that which belongs to the realm of Avidya. Vijayadashami is the crowning day of the success of Vidya-shakti over the negative nature of nescience.

DEVI IS INSEPARABLE FROM DEVA

Seekers of perfection in Truth! Even as you reach a destination only along a path leading to it and intimately related to it, the realisation of God is possible only through the several degrees of

empirical reality which acts as steps in the ladder of spiritual experience. The universe of the several planes of consciousness with their different values and grades of truth is the Shakti of God. In the *Ishavasya Upanishad* you read that the worship of Asambhuti and Sambhuti leads to the gradual attainment of ultimate perfection. God cannot be conceived of as divorced from his Supreme Power which appears as and governs this universe, even as you cannot have fire and heat distinguished. You know a substance through its quality. You realise God through his Shakti, who is Devi, Maha-Maya, Prakriti, the progenitress of all.

THE METHOD OF WORSHIP

You can worship Devi either through Vaidika or Tantrika methods. She is worshipped even without rituals, through Para Puja or pure meditation alone. Indeed this is the highest kind of worship, where the Divine Mother is considered as his or her own by the spiritual child. The grace of the Devi is the experience of the participation of the Higher Nature by the devotee on account of his conformity to the laws of manifestation in its orders of divine Shaktis or the forms of the One Divine Shakti. No order of reality can be stepped into unless one fulfils the demands of the one lower to it. The Devi Upasaka, thus knowing that Devi is Parabrahma Shakti itself, not creating a barrier, between God and His Shakti, even as one does not consider the sun and his luminosity as separate, reaches the state of Brahman, through the grace of Devi. It means the Sadhana Marga which an aspirant follows where he has to proceed from the earthly consciousness to the higher states step by step though the transcendence of the manifested orders of phenomenal experience, without unwisely thinking that he can jump over the extremely elevated terrace independent of climbing along steps below.

SACRIFICE OF LOWER NATURE

In this way, Durga Puja has a great spiritual meaning. Therefore, worship the Mother of the

Universe, the Shakti of Brahman, in her Supreme Form or in her manifested form according to your capacity. I need not stress over the obvious fact that you should strictly practise Ahimsa, Satya and Brahmacharya, if you are to realise Devi, the glorious Divine Power of the Supreme Reality. I stress upon the moral side and the ethical side of Sadhana, because no valuable achievement is possible without it. Without it, high-flying idealisms will bring nothing; they will be a waste like oblations thrown on ashes. Worship of God or Goddess, if it is to result in spiritual illumination, the observance of Yama and Niyama is absolutely necessary. These form the twofold equipment to overcome brute nature and hoist the banner of spiritual victory. Offer to goddess Durga the animal, the Pashu, of your inner evil trait of passion, of anger, of greed. Do not kill animals of the external world in the name of Balidana to the goddess. She wants your animal-man within. No Himsa should be committed on the excuse that it is for the Devi. You have no right or justification to hurt any living creature for whatever reason. Ahimsa should be free from all exemptions whether pertaining to class, place, time or circumstances. Ahimsa is a universal vow to be practised absolutely. No worship, no prayer, no act whatsoever in life can justify injury or harm done to living beings. Even self-protection cannot justify murder. You have to stick to the rule of universal love to the best of your ability, to the utmost extent possible. The offering of the self, the surrender of the ego to the Divinity is the supreme sacrifice. Nothing is superior to it. Nothing can be equal to it. This is the most exalted form of Divine worship. Worship the Almighty with Atma-bhava, with Sarvatma-bhava. This is the greatest and most glorious thing that can ever be done by any one at any time. May you all imbibe the knowledge of real worship of the Divine Being.

May the Devi Durga shower Her blessings upon you all! OM.

PAIN—A BLESSING IN DISGUISE

(Sri Swami Chidananda)

Nature provides for gradual replacement of ignorance by knowledge through experience, and mostly, the most effective experience that goads you to make an effort to get rid of ignorance and to attain knowledge, is painful experience. Through pain life tries to graduate you from ignorance to knowledge. In the days of ignorance before knowledge came, the habit of breaking of a law, ignorance of the natural laws have become so confirmed that even after knowledge has come the breaking continues. Because, you are now helpless. Unless some higher will comes and imposes itself upon you, you will find your inability to shake off the habit. Lack of will-power and the sense-overcoming judgment—these are all the causes which ultimately culminate in pain. But no matter what causes the pain, the pain comes as a much-needed phenomenon, effective to make you realise that you have to make a change. There is need for your own welfare. So valuable is the pain. Pain is an eye-opener. It is not a blessing in disguise but it is an undisguised blessing if you can see it properly. Pain is a plain blessing and undisguised blessing. So remember this very carefully.

No matter how sophisticatedly, how glitteringly things are dressed, a dirty thing is a dirty thing. A 40-dollar dinner also, no matter how glittering, is in its outer environment and outer decorations; yet if it is made up of items that are no good to your health, no good to your mind and no good to your higher unfoldment, it is dust only. How foolish is the person going on subjecting himself to so much violence. We don't have to walk out in New York at midnight to be subjected to violence by some prowlers; in broad daylight

with our own safety of our homes, offices and clubs, social parties and functions, we subject our bodies to so much of violence, boosting it up, kicking it up by drink and excitement and then afterwards trying to sedate it, dope it, trying to make it go down, trying to get sleep by tranquillisers, taking coffee to give it a kick, then some other thing to make it go down and then yet another thing to make it function and so befuddling your mind, brain and intellect. So these are all commentaries on life and living on health and disease. The reason for pain and the cause of pain ultimately are caused by ourselves, may be due to ignorance, may be due to willfulness, or may be due to unwillingness to forego a sense-experience. Whatever it is, ultimately our experiences are created by us. God created us but we create our experiences and you must realise this fact. The sooner you realise and the clearer you realise, the better it is for you. Remember this and act up to it. There are many people who go through life half alive because of disabilities in the body created by themselves. So retain in your memory and remember well all that has been said. Health is real wealth. Next to character this is the most precious commodity in this plane. Remember the old wise adage, "When wealth is lost nothing is lost, when health is lost something is lost and when character is lost everything is lost."

Gurudev Swami Sivananda used to say: "One doctor, prescription; two doctors, consultation; three doctors, cremation." It is like saying too many cooks spoil the broth; too many doctors spoil the patient. They feed upon your childish mentality. Doctoring has lost its sublimity, nobility and idealism. Once it belonged to a group who wanted to relieve their fellowmen of suffering

from disease. Do they now dedicate themselves to this mission of the relief of suffering? It has become not even a profession. It has become a business. Doctor is primarily interested in dollars, not in your welfare. Relief of suffering has gone away. Hippocrates was a great man. He had a certain principle and asked that the students should take an oath before going into the profession. Now it has become a 'hypocritical oath'. They know very little about health. All they know is about chemicals and disease. They do not know much about health and they have no knowledge about the real nature of disease. What actual disease is the disease as they list. It is a process for restoration of health set into motion by the natural forces of your own body. Body is a creation of God. So the wisdom that is inherent in nature also is within the body. The natural power is there and when a certain undesirable condition has taken place in the body, this natural force aided by the wisdom behind this power, sets up an operation to prevent this condition from deteriorating further and to restore it back into the right condition. That process manifests in the body in certain ways. That means the curative processes are being carried on and this manifestation is taken to be a disease. They take this manifestation of the curative process, the natural healing process, to be an affliction and they label it as such. They call it diphtheria or headache and they start attacking it. That means, they are destroying or arresting a benign process, a process that has been set a foot in your body to restore you to health; but they attack it and bring it to a stop. So what happens? Your ill health becomes frozen as it were. It is maintained. It cannot get away. So, if you know what modern medicine does, you will give it a wide breath, because it arrests processes set up by nature to restore you to normal health condition. So disease is not an affliction. It is the outer manifestation of an inner process that is going on and this inner process has been put into motion by nature, and it is

in order to deal with a certain condition that has already been created in the body, which has taken you away from your normal condition of health. The process to restore you to normal condition should be encouraged. It should be helped. It should not be attacked. You should try to encourage it. Then real health will come. A fever, a cough, a cold—these are all processes set up by the body to get rid of something. The body is not able to tolerate it. It doesn't want it.

A wise person will help it by fasting, so that this process is hastened. Because, in fasting what do you do? You release more of the natural force to this curative process. Otherwise a great deal of the natural force, the normal force in the body is consumed in the routine—'drudge work' of digesting your food, assimilating your food, eliminating your food, and a tremendous lot of energy is taken in these processes. So when you fast, you give rest to all the machinery. So the entire body mechanism has a holiday, like Sunday for the factory, when all machines are silent. In this way there is a holiday for the whole body. So the vital force is now free. It is available for any constructive or positive work. It is now released wherever it is required. So, if there is a process of elimination going on, fasting aids the process. This active process is going on in all these areas where accumulation has taken place. Where there are deposits, they are being broken down and carried away; it is painful, no doubt, because there is something stirring, something going on there and it registers pain. So by fasting, by taking some eliminating things like hot lemon water, you aid nature in carrying on this house-cleaning work. This is the way and not by taking dristan, aspro, etc. All these things have to be understood. They have to be kept in mind. This is the real science, the science of life. So remember this and see how it applies to you. Ponder this. Keep it, read it and remember it. It is a graphic description of what takes place in the wrong ways of living and all that. Hari Om Tat Sat.

THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH

(Sri Swami Krishnananda)

(Continued from the Previous Issue)

III

It looks, many a time, that we have to pass away from this world in despair with everything. If we read the history of the minds of human beings, if there is any such thing as a history of psychology of human nature as such, we will be surprised to observe that it is impossible to pin-point even one individual who has left this world with genuine satisfaction, save those few who are the salt of the earth. There has always been a gap, an unfinished something with which the person had to quit. Everyone goes with something left incomplete. It will never be finished. This is the seamy side of things, the unhappy facet of life, which seems to be the outer picture of this world painted before us.

But we have also a peculiar solacing and satisfying inner core, which always eludes our grasp. There is something in us, in each one of us, which escapes our notice every moment. We can never visualise it with all our effort, and yet there is that mysterious and tremendous something which keeps us somehow hoping for the possibility of success in the end. This peculiar something in us, which keeps us positively hoping for the practicability of our enterprises in life, and expecting a victory at last—that is the glory of our personality.

Man has remained a wretched suffering individual in this world, it is true, but he is also a glorious something, a majestic and incomprehensible mystery, a combination of two contraries, as it were, which is just the miracle of man. Every human being is a miracle by himself. It is not possible for us to know ourselves wholly. If it had

been possible, we would not be in search of things and running about here and there. There is a peculiar eluding difficulty on account of which we are in search of things and yet are not able to get anything; with all the search, we seem to be receiving nothing in the end. Yet, we cannot withhold this quest. This is another peculiarity. On the one hand, it appears that we are going to get nothing, because we have got nothing up to this time, after so many years of suffering. If, for the last twenty-five, thirty or forty years of search and effort we seem to have achieved nothing, what is the guarantee that we are going to gain anything satisfying in another ten years? Perhaps they will also pass in the same way as the last twenty-five or thirty years have gone. “Impermanent and joyless, verily, is this world (*anityam, asukham*).”

This is a very depressing picture before us, indeed. But that it is not to be the all, is a voice that we hear from within ourselves; otherwise, we would not be here, listening to people speaking in a weird language, in search of longed-for things, in forests, in hills and dales, in monasteries, in temples, in libraries, etc. We have something in us, definitely, different from what we see with our eyes. This is our mystery, our glory, our reality and our solace. This mystery in us keeps us happy, somehow, in spite of all the unhappiness in life. On the one side, we are terribly unhappy; on the other hand, there is an undercurrent of a possibility of permanent success and happiness beckoning us from a remote distance. This intriguing picture, which is the shape that we see of life be-

fore us, is the object that is investigated into and studied in philosophy. If the subject had been so simple as an apple dropping from above, there would have been no need for researches, studies and investigations. It is an intermixture of contrary elements and enigmatic factors and, therefore, an intense training is necessary, in a technical manner, in order to fathom the depths of these mysteries.

Well, we have another mystery simultaneously with it. Are we having in us the capacity, are we endowed with the equipments necessary to make these investigations? Or, are we just hopeless specimens with an utter impossibility behind this very quest? The magnitude of the problem seems to be so large, and our individuality appears to be so puny, that oftentimes it may look that it is a fruitless task.

There was a great philosopher who produced a revolutionising system of thinking, who placed before himself three questions, in which he summed up every question of life:

First Q. **What can we know?** What is it that we are in a position to know at all, under the circumstances in which we are placed?

Second Q. Under the circumstances given, **what ought we to do?**

Third Q. Given the answers to the first two questions, **what may we hope for, finally?** What is going to be our fate, our destiny, our future?

These questions include every question that we can ask in this world. What can we know? What ought we to do? What may we hope for? Three great volumes were written by this philosopher, in answer to these three questions. Have we the endowment to investigate the problem of existence? Then, what are the methods that we have to adopt? This would be the technical or technological aspect of the practice.

So, just as before starting the construction of a huge edifice, a temple, a chapel, or a palace, one

has a plan laid out before oneself,—one does not start suddenly accumulating material in some place,—there is, first of all, a consideration and study of the nature of the ground, the earth, what sort of earth it is, what its inclination is, and so on, the area that has to be covered, the depth that has to be dug, the material that is required, the personnel that may be requisite for the purpose, the time that it will take to complete the work, etc., so is the method of philosophical study constituted of many relevant themes of study. All this discussion implies at the same time, behind all these processes, the aim of the enterprise, viz, why does one build the edifice at all. That is at the back of one's mind throughout this process of the activity called building construction. Likewise, we have behind our minds an aim, whether we are tourists, travelling from place to place in the world, or we are students, or whatever we are. We do things because we have an aim or purpose; we are in search of it and work for its fulfilment.

I met one student from the West, and he told me that these questions are never asked in the West, "We never contemplate as to what is our 'aim'. We get on every day. We have got some daily routines and we run up with these routines, duties, functions, vocations. But what is the 'aim', finally? We do not ask such questions. They never arise in the minds of people." I said, "They may not arise, consciously, but they are there as the ingredients of the basic root of your personality. Otherwise, the conscious level will not operate in a systematic manner." What is system, what is logic, what is scientific approach, if not the congruence of our conscious activity with some deeper aims? When there is an incongruence between our conscious activities and our inner aims, we are supposed to be unscientific, illogical and unsystematic. When there is harmony between the aim and the actual approach, we call that process science, logic and system.

Thus, we have to lay the foundation of our searches and we are not to be too over-enthusiastic about it all without being confident that we have taken each step at the proper stage, very firmly, with clarity and completeness. As it was mentioned, our studies will be gradually tapering off from philosophy to psychology, from psychology to practice. We will not enter into the practical questions in the very beginning itself, just as we do not enter a house before it is built. We have to build it first, then we go in and lie down on our lounge.

One should not be too very eager to start breathing exercise or concentration, etc., without first laying the foundation of these well-known practices. They are very simple things, if their essentials are understood. We have heard so much about breathing and meditation and *asanas*, etc., that they may look odd things for a common person and very difficult at that; all because of the fact that their foundations have not been laid properly. We just rush into *asanas* or meditations or study of some lofty literature or go to seclusion, without preparing ourselves in an adequate manner for the purpose. If we are unprepared, we go

back unsatisfied.

We have to go slow; there is no harm in going slow, provided that we are sure that we have succeeded in taking at least one step. Even if it be only one step that we have taken in this life, it does not matter, if we have taken it effectively and we are not going to retrace that step. There is no use jumping a hundred steps ahead and then having the chance of coming back by a push of retrogression on account of the unprepared adventure on our part. So let us move slowly and carefully, remembering each step in the mind with a firmness of confidence.

We began by saying that the foundation of thought is the clarity that we entertain about the nature of the reality which we are in search of. We are speaking of reality because we are naturally not interested in unreality. This is something commonplace, very easy to understand. But, while we have an immediate and easy answer to the question, "What is that which we call the Real?" we will find that our answers are erroneous when we go deep into the nature of that which we see with our eyes. *(To be Continued)*

Apply this acid test! Does your heart melt at the suffering of others? Has charity and generosity become your very nature? Your money belongs to the Lord. You have no business to keep more than you need. How can you accumulate wealth, when your God in the form of the poor man is starving? How can you take food four times and tiffin when the beggar-Narayan is starving outside the door? These are the tests of spiritual progress. Do you run to the poor man walking along the street and offer him food? Do you rush to the aid of the sick man lying on the roadside: 'My Lord! In what way I serve Thee?' Then you are really advancing in the spiritual path. You will soon develop cosmic love which is the threshold to *moksha*. If you really want God, then all these things must be done. You should have mercy. You should feel that you are only a trustee of the money. You are like the gatekeeper. God has given you money; you should share it with others. Purchase blankets in winter and distribute to the poor people lying on the roadside. What a joy you feel! The man who has not shared what he has with others has a poor heart, indeed, though he may be a millionaire. Even that man who has nothing to eat is the richest man in the world if he has a large heart, if he shares what he has with others.

—Swami Sivananda

THE MYSTIQUE OF CHANTS

(Sri Swami Shivapremananda)

(Continued from the previous issue)

Man, of course, did not know what his soul was but he knew a little about his mind and he was well aware of his body, his physical instincts. Yet he felt the presence of something subtle in him through his longing for peace, fulfilment in human love which eluded him most of the time, and in his need to be fulfilled spiritually. This he did not know how to do. However, since he knew his body well, he transferred his physical instincts and ideas of life to his soul and wanted its continuity under ideal circumstances in order to satisfy them, and such a place he called heaven.

The fear of death was, thus, a consequence of attachment to one's physical existence. The fear of the unknown was, thus, actually a fear of losing the known, for one cannot really be afraid of something one does not know, just as a child would not realise that fire burns until after getting singed. This special kind of fear of extinction, or uncertainty of the continuity of one's existence, played a dominant role in religions, gave birth to ideas about heaven and was, thus, interwoven in hymns and chants. Since no one could save man from death in the world he knew, his only recourse was to ask an all-powerful spiritual deity to bestow upon him eternal life. In the *Katha Upanishad*, life in heaven itself was considered inadequate and the ultimate destiny of man was in his merger in Brahman the infinite spirit.

This fear of death did not arise, of course, as long as life continued normally. However, the explicit fact behind chants and prayers was that, in a desperate situation, when no tangible help could be found or was not adequate, the human heart

cried out for help and sought to relate itself to a source of power for support, peace and consolation. The spirit of man rose from the limited vehicle, his body and mind, and reached out to the limitless sky and tried to revive itself by relating to the universal spirit.

This is the mystique of chants, in fact, of all prayers.

Gods and goddesses are attributes of life itself, through which one seeks to relate to the infinite. The Upanishads call it the impersonal, transcendental Brahman, a term representing monism, whereas the same purpose of relating to one's spiritual source by the adoration of the best qualities of life is served by the Judeo-Christian concept of a personal God, which the Hindus call Ishwara, a term denoting monotheism, which is but an attempt to fuse all gods and goddesses together and sublimating their shortcomings, such as divine wrath and an inclination to praise and power, through the ideas of an all-encompassing love and forgiveness, the God of relentless justice becoming the God of mercy.

In fact, the concepts of God are shapes of spiritual aspirations of the individual and the group, superimposed on the infinite spirit. The purpose of chants is just that: the movement of one's heart in relating to the infinite, to one's spiritual source, in various shapes of ideals and longings.

There is an old prayer attributed to Sage Appaya Dikshita of India, who was a great Vedantin. He asks God to forgive him for the three errors he commits in his daily devotions:

“To give Thee a name and a concept, Thou who art above any name and beyond the mind. To worship Thee in a temple or a place of pilgrimage, Thou who art everywhere. To praise and sing Thy glories, Thou who art beyond praise and is in no need of glorification. Yet, I do so, O Lord, because I am a human being and can only think with my mind. I need a holy place because I am too gross to feel Thy holiness in mundane surroundings. I need to humble myself by singing Thy praise and also for being worthy of Thee.”

Chants are of a religious nature,—*re-ligare*, to rebind—not only in their contents but also there is a considerable significance in their cadences, intonations and rhythm in relating and integrating individual consciousness with higher levels of consciousness through which is felt an inner peace and sublimation of emotions. They even give a sense of the collective unconscious, such as in feeling one’s roots in the primordial vibrations of the universe.

Nature itself represents the primordial unconscious, such as in the principle of cohesion in the molecular structure of an element. In the rustling of leaves, in the distant, rolling thunder, in the murmuring of a stream, in the dusk slowly sinking into night and the dawn emerging out of darkness, in so many facets of nature, there is a relatedness to unknown or little known human emotions. By humming a tune, listening to music, singing, playing a musical instrument, through devotional chants, one is expressing such a relationship.

The universe pulsates with energy, and the human consciousness is its highest form so far known, even though there is so much more to know about it. Divine consciousness, transcendental, infinite consciousness, the universal mind, are all conjectures of the basic human longing to widen the horizons of one’s perception, the longing to burst out of the limitations of instincts and memories, and to experience a relatedness with the cosmic life principle.

Since sound is energy and energy is movement and movement is in relationship, both with the tangible and the intangible, the purpose of chants is to fulfil this basic longing. It is specially true when they represent soaring harmony in sound forms. The chants manipulate on emotions, exercise and move them, meander and lift them, attenuate and diffuse them.

In the primitive forms of chants the rhythm aspect is more prominent. Being repetitive and alliterative, rhythmic and exuberant, they release pent up emotions and bring about a hypnotic effect. There are people who go into trance by listening to or doing such chants. By themselves their spiritual value is doubtful.

Chants also serve another purpose, that of group identity, providing a collective security, just as denominational religious chants do. However, their spiritual aim is not to confine people into groups or divide them but to give a sense of unity and interrelatedness of life, of joys and sorrows, light and shadow, microcosm and macrocosm, man and God. (Concluded)

The philosopher-aspirant who is possessed of a flaming passion for integrating himself in Existence does not have the dull patience to linger on with the slow process of progressive self-transcendence through the channels of the different degrees of reality.

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Jivanmukti is the highest spiritual experience by the individual when the mortal body is still hanging on due to the remainder of a little of Sattvika-Ahamkara or Prarabdha.

—Swami Krishnananda

AN INTEGRAL APPROACH

(Sri Swami Atmaswarupananda)

It is generally accepted that there are four principal yogas, which are represented by the words Serve, Love, Meditate, Realise, in The Divine Life Society crest. However, there are, of course, any number of other *yogas*—*japa yoga*, *kriya yoga*, *tantra yoga*—the list is almost endless. And, indeed, from another point of view, we might say that there are as many yogas as there are seekers. It is as if the God, who doesn't make any two snowflakes exactly the same, also has an infinite variety of yogas.

However, whether we think there are four yogas or forty yogas or an infinite number, most sages say that they reduce themselves to either a yoga of the head or a yoga of the heart—a yoga based primarily upon the intellect or a yoga based primarily upon the emotions. And there can be, at times, arguments between followers of the two approaches, each one claiming that theirs is superior.

Those that follow the intellect, although they are sometimes called dry Vedantins by those who follow the heart, actually can have very deep insights into the truth, intuitive realisations of what they have been studying and pondering with the intellect. On the other hand, those that take the devotional approach, the emotional approach, the approach of surrender, will often have revealed to them very deep Vedantic truths.

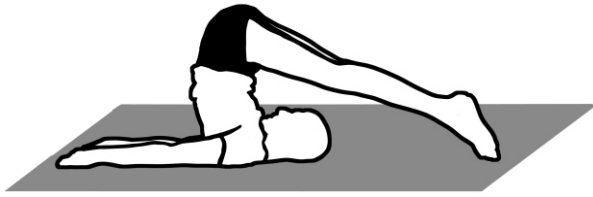
Sometimes one is called the lower vehicle, the other the higher vehicle. And while many who believe in the intellect would call it the higher vehicle, from another point of view a devotee would say, "Your yoga of the head is based upon your

conviction that you think you are an individual no matter what your studies tell you. You are doing it from an ego-centred point of view. The ego is trying to grasp the truth. But as a devotee, I am trying to get the ego out of the way. I am worshipping God, surrendering to God, putting God first, seeing things from God's point of view; therefore, I have the higher path.

Gurudev didn't call any yoga the higher path. He believed in integral yoga. He never even said that one is more basic than the other. He preached them both at the same time. He seemed to think that both approaches were legitimate and needed—right from the beginning till the end.

We require the understanding of the intellect, the insights of the intellect, to be able to judge what is revealed to us through our surrender approach. When we surrender and let go, we're functioning from a place we do not know, but that doesn't necessarily mean that the guidance we get is absolutely pure. Indeed, it may be more based upon the wisdom we have accumulated over many births. On the other hand, if we keep on depending upon what our intellect reveals to us, even through deep insights, and don't have the spirit of surrender, of letting go, then we are continuing to preserve the ego, which has been our whole problem from the beginning.

Thus the recognition of the wisdom of Gurudev's teaching that for most of us an integral approach is the best way. It is a judicious balance between the yogas of the head and the yogas of the heart—understanding the spiritual life and the truth, and a letting go and surrender to That which we can never grasp with the intellect.

HALASANA*(Plough posture)**(Sri Swami Chidananda)***TECHNIQUE**

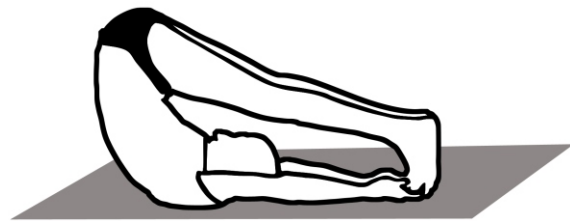
Lie flat on your back with the arms at your sides and the palms resting on the ground. Keep your legs together, so that the big toe and the heel of one leg touch those of the other. Raise the legs slowly till they make a right angle with the trunk without bending the legs at the knees. Keeping the hands on the ground, raise the hip and the lumbar part of the back also and bring down the legs to the floor beyond the head. Press the chin against the chest and breathe slowly through the nose. Let your palms, wrists and hands be kept flat on the floor. Lift your knees and stretch the toes as much as possible. Remain in this posture for a few seconds in the beginning with slow, deep breathing. Then, slowly raise the legs and bring them gradually, by degrees to the original posture of lying flat

on the back. Gradually, increase the duration from one to three minutes, according to your capacity and convenience.

Variation: After lifting your knees and stretching the toes as much as possible, you may take the hands and catch hold of the toes.

BENEFITS

Various diseases and complications of the back, spine and shoulders and pains in the stomach and elbows are removed. The spine is rendered flexible and sturdy. The abdominal muscles



get rejuvenated. Better blood circulation is effected into those parts of the abdominal organs, the spinal column, the back and the neck. This Asana reduces excess of fat from the abdomen, thighs and hips.

AN ANNOUNCEMENT

The sixth Punyatithi of Brahmaleen H.H. Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj will be held at the Headquarters on 17th November, 2007, according to the Spiritual Calendar. All are requested to attend the programme.

—The Divine Life Society

Sivananda's Gospel of Divine Life

OVERCOME ALL OBSTACLES

REVEL NOT IN DARKNESS

A few blind youngsters came from Dehra Dun. They had learned to read Braille.

The Master sprang a surprise on them, "Do you wish to regain your eyesight?"

"No, Swamiji," came the instantaneous reply. "We live in a world of our own now, and we are content to lead the life of blind men."

Many who were present in the office laughed.

"You laugh!" exclaimed the Master. "You think that these blind boys are ignorant and deluded. Their attitude only reflects the attitude of the common man throughout the world. Nobody in the world really wants to acquire knowledge of the Self. Nobody wants the blindness of their ignorance removed. None wishes to get out of the darkness of ignorance and enter a new, illimitable region of light.

"You go on living as blind men. You have got quite used to it. Even the thought of a change for a better life frightens you. You don't want the inner sight. You go on thinking that you are a Jiva or a man, and dread to throw off this delusion and attain knowledge of the Self. You want to go on retaining your egoistic individuality.

"I appreciate these young men. They have spoken out their hearts. But many people in the world do not do even that. They go on praying, 'O Lord! give me Darshan, give me Liberation.' But they do not mean what they say. They do not really want Liberation. They do not wish to lose their individuality at all. They prefer revelling in the darkness of ignorance, and merely pay lip-sympathy to spiritual aspiration. If you are

sincere, if you pray from the bottom of your heart, if you aspire with your heart and soul, Liberation can be attained this very minute. The surrender and aspiration have to come from you. Then the Divine Grace will crown your efforts with success."

GOD'S PROTECTION

Countess Mayo asked the Master, "What would you do if some people came to attack you, Swamiji? Would you draw a circle around you, which would protect you from them?"

The Master said, "I will keep quiet. I have surrendered myself to the Lord. Let Him do what He likes." Countess Mayo appreciated this attitude.

Then the Master said, "Three years ago a thief stole silver vessels worth Rs. 4,000 from the Viswanath temple. He was not found. Many Ashrams keep guards with rifles for protection. But I refuse to appoint any such guard. God has given me this Ashram to do some good work, and He will take care of it if He wants to."

AVOID THE TOURING HABIT

An inmate-Swami who worked in the magazine section went on tour, and another Swami took charge of the work. This Swami also had gone out on tour previously. The frequent change of hands was affecting the office work.

Looking at this Swami the Master said, "Why do you go out of the Ashram often? What do you gain by staying in this Ashram for two or three months, and then at another place for a similar period? You should remain here permanently and become a pillar of the Ashram."

SPIRITUAL DISPUTES

While Swami Iswarananda was discoursing on the Upanishads during Satsanga, the Master said to Swami Sadananda, who was sitting beside him, "People fight over mere theories. The dualists say that they are right. The non-dualists maintain that they are right, and that even after reaching Brahma Loka one will have to take birth in this world again. What is the use of such disputes? Do something practical and useful. Repeat the Name of Krishna or Narayana. Do some Japa, Kirtan and service. When God-realisation comes we will know which is correct, dualism or non-dualism. What is the use of fighting about them now? This is my view. Am I not right?"

THE MASTER'S WIT

A party from South India attended Satsanga. After it was over, the Master enquired of them, "Who among you is prepared to remain in the Ashram permanently? Who among you has real discrimination and dispassion?"

Nobody dared to give a reply. At last, seeing an elderly woman among them, the Master told her, "You remain here. Let the others go."

She consented to the proposal.

At once the Master said, "Then come here. Those who belong to the Ashram will have separate accommodation. The others can sleep in a different room. Come along, come here!"

The woman did not come forward, and just gave an evasive reply, "If God favours, the day will come when I also shall join the Ashram."

All enjoyed the Master's deliberate wit!

A CAREFREE WASP

The Master had just finished his lunch when a lovely wasp gently strolled over his plate, took a little Prasad and flew away. Lucky insect!

The Master looked at it affectionately and said, "Look at this wasp. It merely alighted on the plate, took a little bit of food and flew away. Has it to think about earning money, purchasing groceries, cooking or eating? Does it ever concern itself or worry about running the Divine Life Society or the Ashram? It knows nothing about accounts or annual reports, and yet it is as happy as any person!"

DO NOT BE MISERLY

After Satsanga the Master gave the following advice to a party from South India, "Do plenty of charity to the poor and destitute. Do not close the doors and eat!"

Someone among them replied, "We take food daily only after feeding a person."

"That is good," remarked the Master, and further exhorted, "give your servants the same kind of coffee which you yourself take. Do not add water to the remains of the coffee powder which you used for your coffee, and then give that to your servants as some miserly people do."

The Master then took leave of them, requesting them to go to bed after doing Japa of Sri Ram.

VARIETY OF MISERS

Sri Pattamma, a great devotee of the Master, came for his Darshan. The Master enquired of Sri Govindaswamy, who had close connection with Sri Pattamma's family before he came to the Ashram, "Have you attended on her properly?"

"Yes, Swamiji."

"What have you given her?"

"I have not given her anything, but I have talked to her."

"You have only given her smiles and laughter. It is called 'laughing donation'. Many people come here. They just speak some sweet words to me, laugh and go away. They give me only

‘laughing donation’!”

All were in mirth on account of this humour.

The Master added some more. “Do you know the varieties of misers?” he asked Swami Sadananda, and himself answered, “Wonderful misers, confirmed misers, registered misers!”

TRUE SAINTLINESS

“Let it drink!” came the prompt and spontaneous command of the Master, as someone was trying to frighten away a monkey that was drinking the water kept for the use of the office staff.

The person who ran with a stone halted, let the monkey drink its fill, and then quietly brought another bucket of water from the Ganga.

“You cannot judge a man’s heart from the big charity that he does, and the huge hospital that he builds. Watch for little incidents such as these. When you have brought water for a good purpose, and a monkey happens to spoil it, how do you react during the first split-second? What is the first thought that arises in your mind? What is the very impulse? That determines whether you are a real saint or not.”

THE HIDDEN ENEMY

Sri X. told the Master that she would be observing silence and would perform worship for some days.

“That is unnecessary here. Talk a little. Try and avoid unnecessary discussions and idle gossip. That will do. All essential talking must be

done. There is no loss in it,” said the Master and, after a brief pause added, “Control anger. Avoid irritability.”

Everyone was puzzled as to why he said this.

Sri X. replied, “Swamiji, I have no worry on that score. I do not have these defects.”

“Oh! Wonderful! Then you need not do Sadhana!” he said laughingly. “It has to be seen only when you are provoked. Most of us are peaceful and patient when we are not provoked, but when we are, then the real inner nature manifests itself. You may call yourself a fool, but when another person says so, it would be a different matter. And if he says it when people are present, there would be a very violent quarrel.

“Supposing during a public meeting where thousands of people are present, someone says that you are a fool. You cannot imagine the state of your mind. It can be tested only when the ego is touched. Until then everything is perfect. All Sadhana is intended to root out this hidden enemy. This is the special purpose of Karma Yoga.”

SWEET WORDS WILL PAY

A certain visitor wanted a photo of the Master, but there was none available in the office of the size he required. The Master said to him, “Go to Saradananda and ask for it. He will be busy. So first prostrate to him and speak some sweet words, then convey to him your requirement. This is my method!”

The visitor agreed to act accordingly.

Sacrifices are twofold, *Kamyā* and *Nishkamya*. The former takes you to higher world. The *Jivas* fall to the earth when the fruits of *Karma* are exhausted by enjoyment in the higher worlds, and the latter, when done with devotion and self-control, takes the man through *Devayana* to the region of *Brahmaloka* and eventually he attains *Mukti* along with *Brahma*. This is known as *Krama Mukti*.

—*Swami Sivananda*

Children's Page

GOD! BLESS ME WITH THE WEALTH OF THE CAPACITY TO SERVE

(Sri Swami Ramarajyam)

Once Italy was engaged in a war with another country.

A young man, sitting on the top of a hill, was watching the battle-scene through his binoculars. Some soldiers were lying dead; others were on the point of death. Jackals and vultures were preying on the dead bodies. Wounded soldiers were being carried like garbage to the relief camps behind the battlefield.

On seeing the miserable condition of these soldiers, the young man was very much grieved. As a matter of fact, he had not gone there to watch this scene. He had gone to Paris to meet Emperor Napoleon. When he came to know that the Emperor had gone to the war front to render help to Italy, he also proceeded to the front to meet him there.

The hill, where the young man had gone, was very near the battlefield. When he witnessed the fight, he forgot that he had come there to meet Napoleon. His thoughts turned as to how the wounded soldiers could be helped. Meanwhile, he came to know that five hundred wounded soldiers were lying in the nearby church. Throwing away his binoculars, he left for the church to nurse them.

After a few days, the war was over. He was obsessed with the thought as to how the wounded soldiers can be looked after in the best possible manner. His contemplation bore fruit. He formed

a group of people who were interested in serving others. Not only this, he also contacted people from different countries and got his organisation recognised as an international institution. Presently, during the wartime in any country, members of this organisation jump at the opportunity of looking after the wounded soldiers in the battlefield. They are considered neutral. They wear special uniforms with a specific insignia imprinted on it. In the battlefield, these volunteer members are not attacked. People from both the warring sides join this group of volunteers to take care of the wounded, irrespective of their nationalities.

That young man was Jeane Henry Dunant. He was born in a middle class family of Geneva and the society he formed is known as the 'Red Cross Society.' Every year May 8, the day Henry was born, is celebrated as 'Red Cross Day.'

Dear children, others' sufferings are your own. If you are concerned for the alleviation of other people's sufferings and are really eager to rid them of those sufferings, that means that you are good boys. At home or outside, whenever you find someone sick or in pain, do remember Jeane Henry and think like him—how to take care of him in the best possible manner.

Everyday, and especially on May 8, you should implore God, "You may or may not bless me with worldly wealth, but do bless me with the wealth of the capacity to serve the miserable, the weak and the suffering."

**MESSAGE FOR SWAMI SIVANANDA MEMORIAL LECTURE
ARRANGED BY BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN AND
THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY ON SATURDAY, 8TH SEPTEMBER 2007**

Revered Immortal Atman!

Om Namo Narayanaya!

Om Namo Bhagavate Sivanandaya!

It is a great honour to me to be asked to send a Message for these two august functions namely, Swami Sivananda Memorial Lecture and Celebration of the 120th Punya Jayanti of the Saint and Sage H.H. Sri Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, the Founder-President of The Divine Life Society near Rishikesh, who was born in the year 1887.

I am very glad Dr. Karan Singh, M.P. Eminent Scholar and President Indian Council for Cultural Relations has kindly consented to deliver Swami Sivananda Memorial Lecture. He is not only an eminent scholar but he is also a giver of everything that are precious and valuable that he inherited from his connection with Kashmir. As for example the huge figure of THE DANCING NATARAJA electrically moved in a circle upon its base that turns round slowly in all the ten directions (either in a period of 12 hours or 24 hours I do not exactly remember at this distant time) that he has gifted to Revered H.H. Sri Swami Satchidanandaji Maharaj of the Lotus Temple fame in America. I believe Dr. Karan Singh himself was present in America when the dancing Nataraja was inaugurated.

The title of his lecture namely, "Vedanta Today" is very apt and suitable in our present times, both in India as well as all the countries in the world. Because, we have already entered the fourth of the four Yugas namely, Krita, Treta, Dwapara and Kali. We say during our *Trikala-sandhya* while declaring the time of the Sandhya we use the words, "*Kali prathama*

charane" or "*prathama pade*" which means the first quarter of the fourth Yuga or Kali Yuga has already begun. Therefore, people are always selfish. They want the best for themselves no matter what others will have. This human selfishness in all the countries in the world is a sign of the influence of Kali. To counter this selfishness and contradict this trend to human society VEDANTA is the supreme remedy.

Vedanta proclaims that there are no two things, all is One. "*Sarvam khalvidam brahma. Neha nanasti kinchana*". Once again, "*Brahma satyam jagat mithya, jivo brahmaiva na paraha*." This declares all human beings upon this planet earth are in a state of spiritual oneness even though their physical bodies may be different. In this oneness the physical body is not of such importance because it will one day perish or die and will be either consigned to the flames of the crematorium or will be buried at least six feet below the surface of the earth.

"VEDANTA TODAY" declares the doctrine of oneness. It says, "I am not different from you, you are not different from me." This oneness has its root in India. Thus the concept, "*Atmavat sarva bhuteshu veekshante buddhimat janaaha*." There is still the saying, "*Paropkarartham idam shareeram*" which means this body has been given by God to do good to others. The famous author of Tulasi Ramayana says, in Hindi advices us, "*Paropkara sam punya nahin bhayee*", which means there is no greater virtue than doing good to others. Vedantic oneness will turn a selfish world into an unselfish world. Doing good to others will become the order of the day. All hatred and dislike, fights and quarrels, war between two countries will cease to exist from the face of the

world. If Vedanta is applied today to any sphere of man's activity all hatred and negative qualities will vanish from human relationship, individual as well as global. India will work hard to make this concept understood by all the countries in this human world.

With respects and regards I would urge the speaker Revered Dr. Karan Singhji to apply this Vedanta of oneness first and foremost in India because it is split up into so many parts due to their different languages and also various political parties.

Holy Master Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj always stressed upon oneness of humanity even though they may be of different religions. He has written a book, "Religions of the World." He always concluded His Satsangs or spiritual meetings both morning and evening with the chanting of "Peace! Peace! Peace!" (*Shanti! Shanti!*

Shanti!). He was a man of Peace and never uttered a word of dislike or disapproval of any person or any thing. He would say, "God will set right all things." He used to say, "Everyone does what he is capable of; therefore there is no question of disapproving. By all means you can help the person and improve his performance." Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj a Vedantin himself was always positive and never negative in any matter.

The above is what "VEDANTA TODAY" will do to all humanity and the world at large.

This is my Message that the organisers of the 8th September had asked me to send to Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in Delhi.

Yours Sincerely at the
Divine Feet of God
Swami Chidananda

THE CAUSE OF RESTLESSNESS

We are restless because we are caught up in this finite world. The world is conditioned in time, space and causation. There is eternal and perfect peace in the Atman only. Give up delusion. Give up all wrong notions. Give up false identification. Turn the gaze within. All your fears will vanish. Fear of dismissal from employment; fear of losing your property; fear of bank failures—all fears and anxieties will go. You need never worry. You will understand only Maya is deluding you. Maya perverts the intellect. Then arise Ahamkara, Raga-dvesha, etc. You can cut at the root of this Avidya by enquiry into; Who am I? In the waking state the body functions and you identify yourself with the body. In dream state, the senses are at rest; the mind alone functions—therefore, you realise that you are not the body. In deep sleep state even this disappears and you enjoy a sound sleep, you are covered by Moola Ajnana. Therefore, you are not the mind also. By this sort of enquiry, you will arrive at the Atma-svaroop.

You do so many things for earning a few rupees. But you do not find one or two hours every morning for acquiring this supreme wealth of Atma-jnana! This wealth no dacoit can rob. It is imperishable, inexhaustible wealth. You need no more look forward to petty promotions and increments of ten rupees: acquire Atma-jnana.

Kill all desires. Desires make you beggars. Kill egoism. You will become the King of kings. Even at the point of the bayonet you will recognise and realise that you are the All-pervading, immortal self, diseaseless, all-blissful Supreme Peace.

—Swami Sivananda

NEWS AND REPORTS

NEWS FROM THE HEADQUARTERS

SEVA THROUGH SIVANANDA HOME

The humble service through Sivananda Home, situated in Tapovan near Laxman Jhula, a Medical Centre with a home facility for chronic sick people, who have been abandoned from their home and relatives, due to physical or mental illness, was continued by the Divine Life Society Headquarters.

Not seldom a physical ailment is accelerated by a mental derangement, especially when a person is not having any means for medical treatment and nothing else is left but just to go on bearing and enduring, till the limit of one's pain-tolerance is reached and exceeded. This, for example, happened to one of the inward patients, who was found lying down in a drainage, covered with his own excreta, wounds infested with maggots, and insects crawling all over the entirely blackened body.

Even so, a female patient, diagnosed with Pulmonary Tuberculosis, and weighing only 26 kgs at time of admission, is improving gradually under treatment and dietary supplements. Other patients were discharged after their medical treatment.

The Almighty Lord, enshrined in the doctor, the medicine and the patient, only knows the pain and feelings in the heart of these children of His, and has not lost anyone out of His Blessings and Grace: the Light which is always shining at the end of the tunnel, even in the darkest and deepest feelings of loneliness and despair, an outstretched Hand beckoning and waiting to embrace.

"...The first morning rays of the sun spread over the Ashram. The birds were chirping since a long time. Rao Swamiji was not seen in the Ashram. Everybody from the Ashram started to frantically search for him. Suddenly, they found a dog lying down in front of the Ashram Office. There were multiple wounds over his body. They were infested with maggots. But somebody had put an ointment and had carefully bandaged and dressed it. Rao Swamiji was sleeping next to the sick dog....Being an embodiment of COMPASSION, Swamiji Maharaj gave two months of his precious life in attending and serving this sick dog."

(Extract from the book: "Amrita Putra")

"Feed the hungry. Clothe the naked. Serve the sick. This is Divine Life." —Swami Sivananda

Do not be petty when you go before the Emperor of countless universes, countless lunar and solar and stellar systems. Do not ask for some petty thing. Do not ask for some temporary diversion, some desire-fulfilment, and some little finite thing. "If at all, let me have Yourself, I seek nothing but Thee and Thee alone." That is why it is said that when you have Him, you have everything, for He is the Soul of the universe.

—Swami Chidananda

**VALEDICTORY FUNCTION OF THE THIRD ORIENTATION COURSE
FOR THE D.L.S. BRANCH REPRESENTATIVES**

The Valedictory function of the Third Orientation Course for representatives of D.L.S. Branches was held on Thursday, the 30th August, 2007 in Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy's Lecture Hall. Following the invocatory prayer, Prof. Ved Prakash Groverji, Registrar of the Academy, welcomed all those present. H.H. Sri Swami Yogaswarupanandaji Maharaj, Vice-President and H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj, General Secretary graced the function. Then some of the students expressed their impressions about the Course. Thereafter, the students were awarded certificates and Jnana Prasad.

In his blessings talk H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj said that as we get fragrance from burning incense, in the same manner when we sit in front of great masters, we get lot of peace and inspiration. Swamiji pointed out that the mind is like a monkey and has a restless nature, due to which Sadhakas face broadly three obstacles—Mala (impurities), Vikshepa (Tossing of the mind) and Avarana (veil). These obstacles can be removed through cultivation of virtues. Therefore, they should cultivate five fundamental virtues—Ahimsa (non-violence), Satyam (truthfulness), Brahmacharya (purity), Aparigraha (not to covet anybody's property or goods, etc., and non-accumulation of goods) and Asteya

(non-stealing). Swamiji advised them to work hard and earn honestly. They should meditate daily and thank the Lord for giving them a wonderful day as soon as they get up. Swamiji concluded his talk by saying that remembrance of God is life and forgetfulness is death, and invoked the blessings of worshipful Gurudev upon them.

H.H. Sri Swami Yogaswarupanandaji Maharaj advised the students to lead the divine life and inspire others also to do the same when they go back to their respective places. They should cultivate the virtues of friendly attitude and love towards all and have strong determination. Swamiji narrated the story of a poor wood-cutter who had the conviction that whenever God would like to give, He will give in plenty. Swamiji told them to be honest, sincere and have full faith in God and repeat His Name. Gurudev's teachings also emphasise love of God. Swamiji explained what is Sadhana and divine life and told them to negate the animal in them. Thus they will have success in all walks of life. In the end, Swamiji blessed them and advised them to share with others whatever they have gained during their stay in the Ashram.

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

REPORT OF THE INAUGURAL FUNCTION OF THE 57TH BASIC YOGA-VEDANTA COURSE

The 57th Basic Yoga-Vedanta Course of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy was inaugurated on Monday, the 3rd September, 2007 in which 41 students from 15 states joined. After the invocatory prayer, all those present were welcomed by the Registrar and the students were intro-

duced. H.H. Sri Swami Yogaswarupanandaji Maharaj, Vice-President and H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj, General Secretary, The Divine Life Society Headquarters graced the function. H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj lighted the Deepa in token of the commencement

of the Course.

H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj welcomed the students and told them that rationality is the hallmark of man's personality. All the mental and sensory processes ultimately leave but Consciousness only remains. Swamiji pointed out that life is a perpetual struggle between the higher and the lower natures of man. Human beings have the animal, human and divine nature in them. All such questions—'Who am I? From where have I come and where will I go, etc.,' are the indications of higher nature. It is a natural law that 'as we sow, so shall we reap.' Concluding his talk, Swamiji advised them to have one-pointed mind, be attentive and jot down what the teachers tell them and they should go back after the course is over, as transformed beings.

H.H. Swami Yogaswarupanandaji Maharaj said that it is by the grace of God that the students have come here and joined the two months Basic Yoga-Vedanta Course. During their stay they

should be like a honey-bee and collect honey in the form of knowledge. They should always entertain positive thoughts. In this way, many of their wrong notions will go. Swamiji pointed out that doubt is the cause of all suffering and fear. The three Gunas—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas—are also dominating over us. Yoga enables us to understand these and tells us the method as to how to remove these. Yoga is the destroyer of all pain. Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj wrote a book, 'Mind—Its Mysteries and Control' to enable us to go beyond the mind. Human beings think too much—that is why they do not look relaxed even after getting up from sleep. The students will be taught here how to relax. Concluding his talk, Swamiji advised them to take limited diet and relax. They should try to repeat God's Name as much as possible and try to realise the Goal of life, i.e. God-realisation in this birth.

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

SRI KRISHNA JANMASHTAMI

The Advent of Lord Krishna, the Avatara of Lord Vishnu was celebrated at the Headquarters in a fervour of delight on 4th September this year. Prabhat Pheri immediately after the early morning prayer-meditation session and continuous chanting of Dvadashakshari Mantra from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. before Lord Murali Manohar enshrined in the Vishwanath Mandir, formed part of the day's programme. From 13th August to 1st September 2007, there was a systematic Moola Parayana of Srimad Bhagavatam.

The worship of the Lord, which can be considered the heart of the celebration, commenced at about 8 p.m. with Abhisheka to the Lord to the chant of Purusha Suktam, Narayana Suktam and Vishnu Suktam. All the devotees participated individually in the Abhisheka. Simultaneously, singing of Bhajans and Kirtans was also going on.

The Lord's image was splendidly decorated with Tulsi garlands and flowers. Floral Archana was done with Sahasra-namavali.

The Lord's manifestation which is described in the 10th Skanda of Srimad Bhagavatam was read. With Arati and Prasad distribution the celebration concluded.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS OF H.H. SRI SWAMI SIVANANDAJI MAHARAJ

The holy 120th Birthday of Sadgurudev H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj was celebrated at the D.L.S. Headquarters Ashram on 8th September 2007.

The day's programme commenced with early morning prayers, Shanti Path (peace chanting) and meditation. After this Revered Sri Swami Advaitanandaji Maharaj, one of the Trustees of the Ashram and Revered Sri Swami Atmaswarupanandaji Maharaj spoke on Gurudev. This was followed by a morning procession (Prabhat Pheri). In the sacred Vishwanath Mandir Yajnasala, a special Havan for world peace was performed.

In the forenoon special Pooja was offered to the sacred Samadhi of Sadgurudev. Soon after there was a grand Paduka Pooja offered collectively by all the assembled Sannyasins of the Ashram, devotees, guests and visitors.

After the Paduka-Pooja, there was an hour-long Satsanga. Prof. V.D. Randevji and Re-

vered Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj spoke about Gurudev. H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj, the General Secretary, concluded the forenoon session with the usual concluding prayers.

In the evening, at 6.30 p.m., a grand colourful Ganga Arati was offered at Sri Viswanath Ghat.

In the night Satsanga Revered Sri Swami Advaitanandaji Maharaj and Prof. Ved Prakash Grover (Registrar of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy) spoke on Sadgurudev and his teachings. Before the conclusion of the night Satsanga H.H. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj read out the write-up which THE TIMES OF INDIA published on September 8th, 2007, in the column "The Speaking Tree." It was *Sivananda's Do-It-Now Mantra For Karma* by Sri Pranav Khullar. The night Satsanga was concluded with the usual prayers for world peace and Arati. Holy Prasad was then distributed to all.

SWAMI SIVANANDA MEMORIAL LECTURE

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and The Divine Life Society (through Swami Sivananda Cultural Association, New Delhi) jointly organised *Swami Sivananda Memorial Lecture* in Delhi at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Lecture Hall, New Block, Kasturba Gandhi Marg, New Delhi on the occasion of Sri Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's 120th Punya Jayanti Celebration, on Saturday, the 8th September 2007.

The Chief Guest of the function was Dr. Karan Singh, M.P., an eminent scholar and President, Indian Council for Cultural Relations. He delivered a lecture entitled *Vedanta Today*. It was

very well received by the public who attended the talk. Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, President of the International Divine Life Society, had sent a special soul-elevating message for the occasion and it was read out and the participants heard it with rapt attention.* H.H. Sri Swami Yogaswarupanandaji Maharaj, Vice-President of the Society offered his vote of thanks to the dignitaries and the august audience.

On this occasion a number of books written by Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj were distributed free to all the participants of the function.

* Vide page 17 for worshipful Swamiji Maharaj's Message.

CULTURAL TOUR OF H.H. SRI SWAMI NIRLIPTANANDAJI MAHARAJ

Upon invitation from various quarters H.H. Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj, Vice-President, The Divine Life Society Headquarters, undertook Cultural Tour and visited some places.

Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT), a Deemed University, Bhubaneswar, had constructed Sri Sri Jagannath Temple within their premises. They had invited Swamiji Maharaj to attend the function of Installation Ceremony for Lord Jagannath and had requested Swamiji to preside over the function. Among the high dignitaries, the programme was attended by Gajapati Maharaj Sri Divyasingha Deb of Puri and Sri Babaji Chaitanya Charan Das. Swamiji attended the function and all the ceremonies connected with it on 28th June, 2007. Swamiji also gave a discourse at the public meeting which was attended by thousands of people.

From there, Swamiji proceeded to Baliguali and visited Chidananda Hermitage Shanti Ashram which is a Wing of The Divine Life Society Headquarters. Swamiji stayed there upto 17th July and looked into the affairs of the Ashram. While at Baliguali, he also met devotees who wanted to see Swamiji. Swamiji also attended the daily evening Satsangs in the Ashram whenever possible and also gave talks.

Swamiji also attended the meeting of the managing committee of Swami Sivananda Centenary Boys' High School, Khandagiri (Bhubaneswar) which was held at Baliguali on 15th July. Thereafter, Swamiji returned to Headquarters.

Swamiji again visited Chidananda Hermitage Shanti Ashram, Baliguali, from 24th August upto 12th September. During his stay in Baliguali, Swamiji attended to the important aspects of Management of the Ashram. Swamiji also attended the daily Satsanga whenever possible and gave brief talks. During Swamiji's stay, the work

of construction of the compound wall on the fourth and last side was taken up and completed. With this, the compound wall is completed on all sides and this has ensured safety and good protection of the property of the Ashram and enhanced the security of the inmates.

The Swadhyaya Parivar of Bhubaneswar is a registered Trust with Dr. P.K. Mishra, I.A.S. (Retd.) as Chairman and has the primary Aim to arouse value system among people, particularly among children. This Trust has been doing wonderful work by organising Annual Karmashalas (Workshops) on The Bhagavad Gita for School Children over the years. This year also they had programme and function in this regard, where around 300 students were to participate, in competitions for Recitation and Discussion among the Students. Upon invitation from them, Swamiji attended the function as the Chief Speaker on 3rd September, 2007 at Jayadev Bhavan in Bhubaneswar. Among others, Gajapati Maharaj Sri Divyasingha Deb had also attended the function. It was a very useful Function and the participation from the students of various schools was very lively and remarkable. It had a great impact on the participants arousing great enthusiasm and creating appreciable interest for the Bhagavad Gita among the children. Swamiji gave a discourse on the occasion, highlighting the importance of the Bhagavad Gita and its benefit in one's day-to-day life, for all sections of people, and particularly the students and younger generation.

There was a monthly Sadhana Shivir at the Baliguali Ashram under the Sadhana Ganga Programme from the 8th to 12th September (five days). Delegates from Bhanjanagar area of Ganjam District and Phulbani District had attended the Shivir. Swamiji attended the different sessions, namely, Early morning prayer and meditation, forenoon session and also the evening Satsang and gave discourses on all the Five days.

Swamiji spoke on various aspects of Sadhana and also the Yoga of Synthesis of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj.

'Chinta O Chetana' which is a Cultural Organisation, had organised The National Barsha Festival 2007 which is a national monsoon festival of Culture and Tourism, in association with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India and Culture and Tourism Department of Government of Orissa, from 10th to 12th September, at Jayadev Bhavan, Bhubaneswar. Cultural troupes from different States had also participated in it, with the idea of spreading the message of national integration and communal harmony. On their invitation, Swamiji attended the festival on 12th September. Among the high dignitaries who attended the function, were Sri Biswa Bhusan Harichandan, Hon'ble Minister for Culture, Orissa and other senior officers of Government of Orissa and Government of India. Swamiji gave a brief talk on the occasion, highlighting the significance and importance of Rain for Humanity.

On 15th September, Swamiji attended the Meeting of the Board of Trustees of Swami Sivananda Memorial Institute, East Punjab Bagh

at New Delhi.

Thereafter, Swamiji returned to Headquarters Ashram.

Swamiji also attended the 2nd U.P. State Divine Life Society conference at Holy Vrindavan Dham from 30th September to 2nd October, 2007. The Conference was hosted by D.L.S. Vrindavan Branch which has been started only about a year ago. All the D.L.S. Branches of Uttar Pradesh had extended their fullest cooperation and taken active part in organising it. Revered Sri Swami Sivachidanandaji Maharaj, a senior monk of D.L.S. greatly helped them in holding the Conference in all possible ways. Delegates from U.P. as well as some devotees from other States joined the Conference. Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj presided over the Conference and gave discourses in the morning, forenoon and evening sessions. Revered Sri Dibya Singh Deb, Gajapati Maharaja of Puri was the chief guest. The Conference brought about a great awareness among the local people of Vrindavan about Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, his lofty message of Divine Life, and the Divine Life Society. It was a grand success in every way.

ANNOUNCEMENT

KARNATAKA STATE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY CONFERENCE

The Karnataka State Divine Life Society Conference will be held from 28th to 30th December 2007 at Shri Kuchalambal Kalyan Mahal, II-Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore-560 011. Delegate Fee for participation in the Conference is Rs. 500/- (inclusive of food and accommodation). Further details can be had from Sri M. Satish, Secretary, The Karnataka State Divine Life Society Conference Committee, 71, Chick Bazaar Road, Swami Sivanandapuram (Tasker Town) BANGALORE-560 052, Karnataka.

Mobile No. 0-94483 85592

E.Mail: dls.karnataka@rediffmail.com / dilasa2001@yahoo.co.in

All devotees are requested to participate in the Conference.

—THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

REPORTS FROM THE D.L.S BRANCHES

INLAND BRANCHES

Agra (U.P.): During the month of July 2007, the Branch continued its regular activities of daily morning Yogasana classes, prayer and Japa on Sundays, and Havan and spiritual talk on Tuesdays. Its Annual Day was celebrated on 10th July with Havan and discourses. Many devotees attended it. Special Satsanga was arranged on Sri Guru Purnima. In the 4-day Yogasana camp from June 25 to 28 for E.M.E. Core of Army, the participants were informed about Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's teachings. During the Purushottama month Sri Hanuman Chalisa Path and discourses were arranged daily.

Ambala (Haryana): The Branch continued its regular activities as reported earlier. The special programmes on Sri Guru Purnima were Paduka Puja in the morning and Akhanda Kirtan in the evening.

Badakuanl (Orissa): The Branch conducted daily 2-time Puja, prayer and recitation in the morning, and Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotra Parayana, Srimad Bhagavat Svadhyaya and Bhajan-Kirtan in the evening. The weekly Satsanga, Paduka Puja on Sivananda Day and Akhanda Kirtan on Chidananda Day were the other regular activities. Bhagavad Gita Parayana on the second Sunday of the month was the newly added activity. It also arranged 3 mobile Satsangas and a programme of Paduka Puja at the residence of the devotees. The special programmes on Sri Guru Purnima included Brahmamuhurta prayer-japa-meditation, Paduka Puja in the morning, Akhanda Kirtan in the after-

noon and a special Satsanga in the evening.

Badhiausta (Orissa): The Branch achieved successfully its target of holding 108 evening Satsangas and spiritual talks in 100 different villages in less than 7 months. It also completed the tree plantation on both the sides of the 1-km long approach road to its premises. It distributed required free medicines to the poor. It is no surprise that 300 devotees from different villages joined its 15-hour Guru Purnima programmes, which included Brahmamuhurta prayer-japa-meditation followed by Yogasana-Pranayama, Paduka Puja with one lakh offerings with "Om Namoh Bhagavate Sivanandaya" Mantra, Bhagavad Gita Parayana, recitation of hymns, Bhajan-kirtan, discourses, Sankirtan procession through different streets of the village, Maha Prasad, etc.

Bangalore (Karnataka): The regular activities of the Branch are Paduka Puja and Svadhyaya of Gurudev's teachings on Thursdays, Matri-satsanga with recitation of Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotram and Sri Lalita-sahasranama Stotram on Fridays, a special Satsanga and Svadhyaya of Gurudev's teachings on the first Sunday, 3-hour Akhanda Kirtan on the third Sunday and Bhajan-kirtan on the fourth Sunday.

Baripada (Orissa): The Branch conducted Paduka Puja on Thursdays, the monthly Sadhana Day on 1st July and a mobile Satsanga. It distributed free medicines to 80 inhabitants of a leprosy colony. They were also served food on two occasions. On Guru Purnima Paduka Puja and Narayana Seva were arranged.

Bellary (Karnataka): Twice-a-day daily Puja and weekly Satsanga were the regular activities. Paduka Puja was performed on Sri Guru Purnima and 14th July, Mahasamadhi Day of Gurudev. Special Puja was conducted on the birthday anniversary of H.H. Sri Swami Devanandaji Maharaj.

Berhampur, Lanjipalli (Orissa): The Branch conducts Satsanga and once a month Narayana seva.

Bhadrachalam (A.P.): The regular activities are daily Japa of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra, weekly Satsanga at Sivananda Ashram on Mondays, weekly mobile Satsanga on Sundays, distribution of food to about 100 destitutes on Sundays, Prabhat Pheri on Thursdays and recitation sessions in the morning and evening on Tuesdays. Earlier it organised Bhagavat Saptaha from May 2 to 8, 108 times recitation of Sri Hanuman Chalisa on Sri Hanuman Jayanti, and special programmes on Swami Devananda Jayanti.

Bhilai (Chhattisgarh): In Matri-satsanga, recitation of Sri Lalita-sahasranama Stotram is done on Fridays, of Sri Hanuman Chalisa on Tuesdays, and of complete Bhagvad Gita and Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotram on Ekadasis. It was the co-organiser of Lord Jagannath Ratha Yatra from July 16 to 24. Guru Purnima programmes included Paduka Puja, Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotra Parayana, mass chanting of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra, Anna Bhoga Prasad to all the devotees as lunch.

Bhimkand (Orissa): The Branch conducted Paduka Puja daily morning, weekly Satsanga on Sundays and 12-hour Akhanda

Kirtan on Chidananda Day regularly. On the eve of Sri Guru Purnima mass chanting of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra was done for one hour. Paduka Puja, Akhanda Deepa, recitation of hymns and distribution of sweets to children, were the main programmes of Sri Guru Purnima.

Bhongir (A.P.): The Branch organised special programmes on 14th July, the Punyatithi of Gurudev.

Bhubaneswar (Orissa): The regular activities are daily morning Paduka Puja, weekly Satsanga on Thursdays, free health check-up on Thursdays and 12-hour Akhanda Kirtan on Chidananda Day, and Yogasana-Pranayama training from 1st to 10th of every month.

Bikaner (Rajasthan): In addition to its regular activities, the Branch organised the following special activities: (1) Discourses on Bhagavad Gita from July 20 to 26, (2) A discourse by a Mahamandaleswar Swamiji on 28th, July. (3) Sri Guru Purnima special Puja, Satsanga, Bhajan Sandhya, (4) Chidananda Day; distribution of sweets, fruits, biscuits, etc. in a blind school; distribution of food, clothing and other daily needs to the poor. (5) 9-day programme of special Devi Puja and Sri Ramayana Path from July 15 to 23.

Brahmanatarala (A.P.): The regular activities are: (1) Daily morning session of Mahamantra Kirtan for one hour, followed by recitation of chapter XII and XV of Bhagvad Gita, and Svadhyaya of Gurudev's teachings, (2) Daily Mahamantra Kirtan from 6 p.m. in all the member devotees' houses, (3) 3-hour weekly Satsanga on Thursdays, (4) Poor feeding to more than 150 destitutes daily, (5) Fortnightly programme of

Mantra Japa, (6) Bhagavad Gita Parayana once a month.

Cuttack (Orissa): The Branch conducts daily Paduka Puja, Anna Bhog, evening Arati of Mahanadi, one hour Kirtan, and morning Yogasana-pranayama class. Revered Sri Swami Tyagaswarupanandaji visited the Branch on 6th May and 1st July during the monthly Sadhana Days. Two discourses were arranged during the monthly Sadhana Day on 3rd June. In Sivananda Charitable Dispensary, senior doctors examine the poor patients and medicines are given free daily. During summer, it arranged serving of sweetened cold water at the bus terminals.

Gandhinagar (Gujarat): The Branch continued its regular activities.

Gudur (A.P): The Branch conducts the weekly Satsanga on Sundays with discourses on Srimad Bhagavatam.

Jaipur, Malaviyanagar (Rajasthan): The special programmes were:

Sri Sundarakanda Parayana followed by a talk of Revered Sri Swami Tyagavairagyanandaji on 17th July, and Paduka Puja, Havan and special Satsanga on Sri Guru Purnima.

Jaipur, Raja Park (Rajasthan): The Branch continued all its activities as reported earlier, and has now introduced recitation of Sri Suktam during the daily Satsanga on Fridays. Swami Sivananda Charitable Homoeopathic Dispensary treated 1447 patents during July 2007. The special programmes were: (1) Paduka Puja on Sivananda Day and Chidananda Day; (2) Mahamrityunjaya Mantra Havan on 5th July; (3) Jnana Satra of Revered Sri Swami

Tyagavairagyanandaji from July 12 to 19, with one hour meditation in the morning and 1½ hour discourses on “Upadesha Sara” of Sri Ramana Maharshi in the evening—more than 100 devotees attended both the sessions regularly; (3) Sri Guru Purnima: Paduka Puja and mass chanting of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra.

Khatiguda (Orissa): The Branch held weekly Satsanga on Thursdays, one mobile Satsanga, Satsanga with Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotra Parayana on Ekadasis and the monthly Sadhana Day and Narayana Seva.

Khurja (U.P): The Branch continued all its regular activities as reported earlier.

Nandini Nagar (Chattisgarh): In addition to its regular activities, the Branch arranged Paduka Puja and Sri Ramacharita Manas Path on Sri Guru Purnima.

New Delhi, Vasant Vihar: The Branch continued with its regular schedule during the Sunday Satsanga as reported earlier.

Raipur (Chhattisgarh): The Branch conducted the weekly Satsanga on Sundays, Nama Sankirtan for one hour on Mondays, and special Puja and Sri Vishnu-sahasranama Stotra Parayana on Ekadasis. The special programmes on Sri Guru Purnima included early morning Prabhat Pheri and prayer-meditation session, Paduka Puja and discourses in the morning and special Satsanga with Bhagavad Gita Parayana and Sankirtan in the evening.

Rajkot (Gujarat): A new chapter began with the inauguration of Sivananda Bhavan with Sri Gurudev’s Pratima. Now the Branch holds here biweekly Satsanga on Sundays and Thurs-

days. It also holds daily Satsanga at another centre, weekly Satsanga at a third centre and weekly Matri-satsanga. Many devotees attended Bhajan Sandhya on 5th June. It continued its social service (1) Free Homoeopathy clinic at Rajkot and another nearby town; (2) Eye camps in 6 different villages in the last three months—1250 patients were examined, 162 patients were operated free at Sivananda Eye Hospital, Virnagar; (3) Dental camp on 16th June—92 patients were treated and financial assistance of Rs. 39,000/- was given to 4 heart patients.

Salipur (Orissa): The Branch continued all its regular activities. Its special activities were: (1) Sri Gundicha Festival on 16th July with special Puja of Lord Jagannath, decoration, recitation; (2) 12-hour Akhanda Mantra Japa on Sri Parsuram Jayanti; (3) Sri Guru Purnima: on both 29th and 30th July with Paduka Puja and special Satsanga.

South Balanda (Orissa): The regular activities: weekly Satsanga on Fridays, special Satsanga on Sivananda Day and Chidananda Day, Sankranti Puja and 3-hour mass chanting of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra and monthly Free Health Camp—122 patients were treated. Special activities: (1) Mahamantra Sankirtan for 3 hours on 21st July; (2) Mahamrityunjaya Mantra Japa for 1½ hours; (3) Sri Guru Purnima: Prabhat Pheri at 4.30 a.m., Prayer-meditation, Paduka Puja and a special evening Satsanga.

Vadodara (Gujarat): The Branch conducted Satsanga on Thursdays and Paduka Puja and Mantra Japa on Sivananda Day and Chidananda Day. It continued its social service:

distribution of medicines to the poor patients of the main Government Hospital, Homoeopathic Dispensary—4 days a week, Ayurvedic Dispensary twice a week, and acupressure treatment once a week

OVERSEAS BRANCHES

Hong Kong (China): In the Mahamantra chanting on Saturdays, 52 persons participated during June 2007. On the 9th June the 7th Annual Day of the Branch, it held “Yoga Gala” with Yogasana demonstration—81 participants. It organised 10 new Yogasana classes, training 132 new participants during the month. It conducted a special Yogasana class for Yoga teachers imparting Yogasana, Pranayama and meditation training and guidance to 20 Yoga teachers. 64 participants were benefited by the special Yoga workshop covering the practice of Pranayama.

Sao Paulo (Brazil): The Branch holds 2-hour weekly Satsanga on Fridays and mobile Satsanga on Sundays on the pattern of the Headquarters. Sri Guru Purnima Programmes were meditation and Paduka Puja in the morning, discourses on Gurudev’s teachings and recitation of Guru Stotram and explanation of its meaning in the afternoon, and special Satsanga with a talk on ‘Role of Guru’, Kirtan, Arati, etc. It holds daily four classes for Yogasana-pranayama at the Branch premises and its 3 centres. The Branch conducts 2-hour class on “Teachings of Swami Sivananda” on Sundays. From 5th May, the fifth “Sivananda Yoga-Vedanta Teachers Course” was held. A course in ‘Mantra and Meditation’ is run on Saturdays in 1 ½ hour sessions.

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