

SONG OF A KARMA YOGIN

Hari Ki Premi Hari Hari Bolo
Avo Pyare Milker Gavro
Hari Charaname Dhyana Lagavo
Dukhme Sukhme Hari Hari Bola
Abhiman Tyago Seva Karo
Narayan Narayan Narayan Narayan,
Give up Brahmin, Sannyas Abhiman
Give up male-female, sex Abhiman
Give up doctor, judge Abhiman
Give up Rajah, Zamindar Abhiman
Relinquish Pundit, scientist Abhiman
Crush this professor, engineer Abhiman
Kill this collector, Tahsildar Abhiman
Abandon dictator, premier Abhiman
Kill this Vairagya, Seva Abhiman
Kill this Tyagi, Kartrutwa Abhiman
(Narayan...)
Remember always Hari Hari Hari Hari
Sing always Sita Ram Radheshyam
See God in every face
Share what you have with others.
Develop nicely adaptability
Serve always with Narayana Bhav
Scrutinise always your inner motives
Work without egoism
Cultivate the Nimitta-bhav
Give up expectation of fruits
Surrender always fruits to the Lord.
Have equal vision and balanced mind
Selfless work will purify your heart
Then you will get knowledge of Self.
(Narayana, Narayan...)

A TEST OF TRUE SANNYASA

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

What the true Sannyasa spirit is, is not properly understood even by very many Sannyasins themselves. Of course Virakti, solitude, observance of Mouna, living on Bhiksha, constantly chanting Om may all be some of the eternal characteristics of a monk but quite apart from all this is the real inner Bhava which constitutes the basic essence of the Sannyas spirit. This is the absolutely dispassionate sameness to all the pairs of opposites: heat and cold, pain and pleasure, grief and joy, failure or success, insult or honour. The Sannyasin receives and regards them all with same-sightedness and with calm forbearance. A Sannyasi is Dwandwatita. To him friend or foe is alike and praise and blame have no difference. How is this so? Why is this so? Because the true Sannyasin is above body. His Drishti should not be based upon Dehatma Bhavana. "No". The Sannyasi always ceaselessly tries to live in the thought that he is pure spirit. '*Deho na ham, jeevo na ham*' is his attitude. '*Nitya Suddha buddha satchidananda aham*' is his constant Bhavana. When he performs the Viraja Homa at the time of taking Sannyasa he offers up his everything into the Kunda including his Pancha-koshas with the Karma and Jnanendriyas, Pranas, Antahkarana Chatushtaya and Aham-bhavana." Thus from that moment onward he is Pure Chit. Thus he comes to regard all things that is said, done to or experienced by the body as having absolutely no concern with him. The Sannyasin should by all means be unshakably estab-

lished in the serene tranquility of his essential blissful spiritual nature.

If a Sannyasin does not strive to manifest spiritual Bhava then who else is supposed to do this? Moving with people of diverse natures and simultaneously endeavouring to keep up this inner Bhava will alone help in making this *pucca*. To easily get offended by adverse criticism, a little harsh treatment or unpopularity and become agitated and to leave the place and to go away is a sign that you have failed in sticking to your Sannyasa Bhav. Your ego is still grounded in the physical body only. You have been at once affected and upset by something done to the body. A Sannyasi has no body. How absurd to become upset by something said to this mere temporary garment that you are wearing which is only to be thrown away at a moment's notice!

A Sannyasin should have no Abhimana. It is Abhimana which makes you get offended easily at every trifle. Too much touchiness shows that you have not at all got rid of your idea of self-importance, the 'Ahamta' or superior ego sense. This is real death to a Sannyasin. Maana-abhimana is rampart inside. Keen self-analysis alone will help to save you from the self-delusion that you are established in ideal Sannyasa.

What to say of a little disrespect or insult; even if anyone is to beat you with shoe or slipper and cut your throat with a knife then too you must remain peaceful and perfectly

unperturbed. A garland of rose flowers put around your neck or a dirty shoe hurled at your head should both mean the same to you as a Sannyasi. Of course the perfect Bhava does not come in its fullness all on a sudden but even then every Sannyasi worth the name should strive every minute towards the attainment of this Atmic-bhavana. Under certain circumstances there may be a little agitation in the beginning. A sudden insult, an extreme experience, some harshness or disrespect may no doubt agitate you somewhat for a little time. Perhaps for a whole day or even two days in some cases. Perhaps more if you are of a very sensitive nature. But ultimately the Sannyasa spirit must prevail. Viveka and Vichara must set working at once. Who am I? What is insult or honour to me—pure Atman that I am? What is all this transitory experience of this perishable body? It is unreal, petty, of no account and as such not worth my consideration. I am in truth blissful, nameless, formless infinity. And moreover for what happens to the external body who is there to blame? Everything comes to this body according to its Prarabdha Karma. It is simply getting its due. How foolish to seek to put the blame upon some other

for this! Thus analyses the earnest Sannyasin and keeps his peace.

Such actual test in the field of active service helps to indicate your inner progress towards the ideal of Sannyasa. They afford an invaluable training ground for you to perfect yourself. To the Nivritta Sannyasi also Vyavahara (not Loukika or secular Vyavahara but Paramarthika unattached selfless Vyavahara) gives much needed scope for practical spirituality.

Beloved Atman, accept all experiences in a spirit of joy. Meet all difficulties and trials with serenity and fortitude. Remember O Sannyasi, that to you there is neither trouble nor trial for thou art Pure Atman. Sometimes some Karma may affect the mind a little. But it is a mere passing cloud only. Brush it aside O Sannyasin bright, and shine again with all the effulgence of thy true spiritual splendour! Let daily Vyavahara mean for you so many welcome opportunities to manifest and to give expression to your true inner spiritual nature. Learn the secret of regarding everything only from this atmic view-point. Dehatma Buddhi will vanish and nothing will affect you in the least for you will never forget that you are Pure Atman and Atman alone! May you all be ideal Sannyasins.

PURE CONSCIOUSNESS

Pure Consciousness is Brahman or the Absolute.
 Pure consciousness is Absolute Consciousness. It is consciousness *per se*.
 There is no thinking in pure consciousness. You can hardly conceive this.
 There is no play of senses in the pure consciousness.
 It is neither physical nor mental consciousness. There is neither seeing nor hearing. There is no perception here.

It is a mass of wisdom.
 It is Bhuma or the Infinite, Wherein there is neither seer nor knower, It is just the Thing-in-Itself.
 It is pure self-awareness, Beyond the reach of senses, mind and intellect. The ego-sense is absolutely dead here. Brahmic consciousness shines by Itself. In Its own pristine Glory.

—Swami Sivananda

HOW TO LEAD THE DIVINE LIFE

(Sri Swami Chidananda)

Life is precious. Life is valuable. Do not think that life is all misery, or all frustration, or all disappointment or all disillusionment. No. Amidst all these passing phases of life the great and glorious fact ever remains—that life ever beckons us to a high destiny, to a destiny that is no less than attaining our eternal abode. Attaining the experience of Supreme Bliss in God is our birthright.

God is the only Reality. God exists and He is the One Reality. He is the very centre of our life and He is the most important concern in our life. We have no other concern as vitally important and so very absolutely indispensable for our very existence, our happiness, our peace, our ultimate well-being as God is. He is our Goal.

It is not to get stuck in this earth-plane through which we are passing on our way towards Him, but to make use of this earth life to rise into the blessedness of blissful divine communion with Him—the indescribable experience of being one with Him, partaking of the sweetness of His essential blissful nature. That is the great task. That is the great business of life. That is the one great thing to be achieved in the midst of innumerable little things. All these little things ever keep changing, ever keep shifting and ever pass away but this great business of life starts with the cradle and it is not completed in the grave. No. It is completed only when we attain Him, no matter how many bodies we may have to take, that is the great business, the central

business amidst the passing distractions of our life here.

The present state of consciousness is a product of ignorance. Birth, death, pain, sorrow and suffering are all due to ignorance, or the lack of knowledge of one's own essential Divine nature. This confined personal identity is ignorance or egoism. This ego-consciousness of 'I am a human being', 'I am a weak being', 'I am full of defects and imperfections' is the basic ignorance and the prolific root of all sorrow, of all misery. Out of this springs desire. Desire is born of ignorance. Likes and dislikes are born of ignorance. Clinging to mundane life is due to ignorance, and the non-perception of your eternal life in the spirit, of your great destiny of perennial life in God—Bliss Infinite—forever, is also due to ignorance.

Identification with the body is the great error of man on earth. Mistaking this impure, inert and perishable body for the pure, immortal Atman or Soul, is truly the great malady of this Samsaric life. Egoism, likes and dislikes, desires, cravings and thoughts are all modifications of this prime error only. From this prime error are created all sorts of desires and their ramifications. To realise the objects of desire, the human being does Karma or actions. He likes some things, dislikes others, expects fruits of his actions which are not what he expected them to be, and is, therefore, thus bound to the wheel of birth and death.

Attain supreme divine wisdom, or the knowledge of the Great Reality, the wisdom of your own Supreme Self, and pain, sorrow and suffering will cease. You will attain Bliss immortal, everlasting Peace and Perennial Joy. You will be freed once and for all from birth and death. Discrimination, dispassion, non-attachment, serenity, self-restraint, endurance, renunciation, faith and devotion, cosmic love, courage, humility, truthfulness, compassion, concentration and meditation, and burning longing for liberation are all aids for Self-realisation, or the attainment of Brahma Jnana (i.e. knowledge of the Supreme, knowledge of the Eternal One).

God is self-existent. He does not depend upon others for His existence. He is what is called Svayam Prakash, Svayam Jyoti. He is self-luminous. He does not want any other light to reveal Him. He is the Light of Grace. God is self-proved. He does not want any proof. You do not want any proof to know that you exist. You do not require another person to come to you and establish the fact of your existence. Your existence to you is self-proven but it cannot be demonstrated outside your self. You are, therefore you are. God does not want proof, because He is the basis for all existence. All existence is made possible because He exists. You are because He is. Because God is, it is possible for you to be. He is that principle of Pure Existence or Pure Being within you. He Himself, is the basis for all the proof. He is self-contained. He contains everything within Himself—the entire universe is in Him. He knows Himself by Himself.

There is a great deal of quibbling nowadays about God not being personal or being personal, and so on. Who are we to say that He should be thus and not thus? A human be-

ing cannot dictate to God how He should be and how He must not be. We should not quibble about all those things. It is unnecessary. Personal or impersonal—what is all that to us? To us He is personal. He may be impersonal to philosophers, to metaphysical speculators. We are not in any way concerned with them. To us seekers, to each one of you, He is intensely personal. He is close to you.

We cannot even know what is going on inside of ourselves. We do not know how food is being digested. We do not know how blood courses through the minutest capillary. We do not know how a bud opens to become a blossom. And yet we would claim to know all about the nature of God and dictate to Him how He should be. Ours is to love Him. Ours is to seek to know Him. Ours is to approach Him. Ours is to live to get close to Him, experience Him and enter into His very essence. That is the great goal. That is the one thing that is worth doing.

Let us not talk about His nature. It is enough to know that He is inexpressible sweetness—He is Bliss which even the farthest reach of your imagination is powerless to comprehend or conceive of. He is Bliss—He is Peace. He is wondrous Peace. Be still and feel that Peace.

All Peace springs from Him. The highest Bliss that a human being can think of is but a faint reflection of the illimitable. He is Bliss. He is the marvelous Beauty of beauties, and the Radiant Light of lights. He is the Eternal, Infinite Light—the unchanging One. Peace, Bliss, Radiance, Light, Eternal Being, Existence—all that He is. He is Supreme Perfection. And more than all these—more than anything else, He is our very own. He is your very own. Your relation to all things upon earth has to end.

Enough of argument. Let us have no discussions—no arguments. Let us just know God is our own and God is here and now. Time is fleeting. Life is very short. We have to cut the knot of ignorance and experience the Bliss of God. We are here for it and great Masters, like Swami Sivananda, and many other Masters of both West and East, lived in order to bring you to that Fountain Source. They lived in order to make the Sun of Knowledge, the Sun of Wisdom arise in the firmament of your consciousness. They live in order to lead you on to that great and glorious destiny. So develop a heart of love. Remember the saints. Serve all. See God in all. That Inner Being alone is real. He is Blissful. We should directly find our way to Him somehow or other through this imperfect, unsatisfactory life on earth. Discipline the senses—

discipline the eye; discipline the tongue. Take little food; control your sense of taste; reduce your sleep, and fill yourself with the thought of God. Fill yourself with Love.

Overcome all your little dislikes and prejudices and disunities and make yourself a reservoir of love, oneness, unity and goodwill to all. See no difference of race or religion or caste or creed, or barrier of any sort. Embrace the whole universe in the arms of your cosmic love. Remove selfishness; control anger; develop virtues. Do something substantial while life is, while breath is in the body, and somehow pray, get His Grace, and quickly finish this journey here and reach the heavens of eternal delight in Him. Then alone life is fulfilled.

May God bless you!

ERADICATE DESIRES AND REST IN YOUR DESIRELESS BLISSFUL SELF

The spiritual Sadhaka daily comes nearer and nearer to God. Day by day, his spiritual struggle brings for him more and more freedom from earthly bondage, from Maya. Every desire annihilated adds new strength to the enhancement of this freedom. It is a fresh addition to the store of inner happiness.

Here are some of the methods of thinning out the Vasanas (desires).

(1) Self-denial: Curtail all unnecessary wants, activities and mixing. Too much of contacts with friends and promiscuous mixing stimulate the old habits, previous Samskaras (latent impressions). Hence worldly contacts should be reduced as far as possible. Exert a little pure will. Deny then and there and say, "No, I don't want it, since it is not going to help my spiritual well-being. Seek the counsel from the pure intellect and it will give you sure protection at the required moment. Slowly you will develop an attitude of looking at sense-objects as poison and delusive, a clever entrapment of Maya and then you will naturally deny them for your spiritual welfare.

(2) Vigilance: The past Samskaras are like dormant forces and coiled-up potential energies which sometimes assume violent forms and produce tremendous agitation in the mind, totally confuse and bewilder it and make it assume the very forms of desires. This is called Vishayakara Vritti.

So vigilance must be resorted to. No amount of leniency should be given to the mind.

(3) Non-cooperation: All the senses must be withdrawn slowly from their respective centres of pleasure. If you go on denying all the desires, then they will die a natural death.

So continue this incessant process of dynamic self-denial and become a conqueror of all desires. Thus having washed clean the mind of all Vasanas, the aspirant ultimately rejoices and sports in the pure consciousness, bliss and self-delight of Atmic awareness. —Swami Chidananda

THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH

(Sri Swami Krishnananda)

[Continued from the previous issue]

VI

We observed that our inner world is constituted of the psyche; it is a mental world, and that is the real world of ours, of which we are citizens primarily. We are nationals of a psychic world, more properly than the way in which we belong to the physical world of social beings. Our psychic apparatus is a complicated structure, because it has connections with almost everything in the world. It is like a main switchboard. We are not so much detached from things as we appear to be. There is a subterranean relationship between our inner contents and the whole cosmos outside. The moment we begin to enter the realm of yoga practice, we also start operating upon our cosmic relationships. This is something important to remember. At present we believe that we are isolated individuals with no connection whatsoever with others. But meditation is adventure, which opens up a new vista before us and surprises us with our relationships which were not apparent in our waking workaday life.

Our mind is not made up of any simple substance. It is rather a process than an entity. It may be compared to electric energy, if we would like to associate it with something known to us. We cannot say that it is a substance, or a body, or something existing in one place. It is almost like a fluid. At present it

pervades our entire body. That is why our thinking is connected with every part of the body. The whole body thinks, as it were, because of the pervasion of the body by the mind. This mind which is not an entity or a substance like physical objects, and appears to be a moving process, is our inner working faculty. We live a psychic life, rather than a physical life. Our joys and sorrows are psychic and not physical. Our activities, also, are psychic. Physical activities are no activities if they are divested of the psychic content. It comes to this finally, that the mind is everything.

The whole world is nothing but mind operating in mysterious ways, in its wondrous relationships of variegated types. Western psychology particularly distinguishes between three aspects of the psyche: (1) Understanding, (2) willing, and (3) feeling. But in Eastern psychology, a further diversity of this content has been noticed. It has infinite varieties of expression but in the main outline we may say that our psyche consists of many functions on account of which it takes various names. Even these aspects of nomenclature as understanding, willing, and feeling are the outcome of the different functions that the one psyche performs.

When the psyche decides, by a clarity of grasp, upon a particular situation, we call it

understanding. And the affirmation which follows the decision that is taken on the basis of the understanding of the situation is the will. Then something more significant takes place. When we understand that a thing is such-and-such, and we also decide to act upon this situation in a particular manner, our whole being reacts in a given proportion. That reaction is emotion. There is a welling up of our whole personality in regard to the existent situation outside. We begin to feel, and not merely will or understand. Now, this activity of the psyche, in the form of understanding, willing and feeling, is rooted in what is usually known as the ego-principle. The ego is the faculty of self-assertiveness or self-affirmation. As a matter of fact, it precedes all other functions. Before we can understand, will or feel, we have to be sure that we exist. This certainty of the fact of our existing as an individual is the activity of the ego. The word *ego* gets translated in various ways. When we generally speak of an egoistic person, we mean thereby a proud person, for instance. But the ego does not and need not necessarily mean 'pride'. Pride is only a gross outer expression of it. Its essentiality is something subtle, far more invisible than the outer expression as the so-called pride of the individual. The ego is a sense of individual being, our confidence that we exist as an individual independent of other individuals. The conscious confidence in us that we are isolated individuals, quite different, in every way, from others, is the ego-principle in its essentiality.

What, then, is the ego? It is a consciousness of our individual existence, isolated from other individuals. And this self-assertiveness concretises itself in various levels of our life. There are different kinds of egos. There is a metaphysical ego; there is the psy-

chic or purely volitional ego; there is the physical ego; there is the social ego; and, finally, it becomes the political ego. All these are expressions of a single impulse from inside to affirm oneself as distinct from others, to dominate over others, to absorb others into oneself. This desire to be distinct from others is the disease of man. It is a primary evil and yoga psychology calls this principle of the ego, '*ahamkara*'. This word, '*ahamkara*', is very interesting in its connotation. In the Sanskrit language, '*aham*' means 'I', '*kara*' means, 'one who does'. One who causes everything to feel that it is, is the ego. It is that 'which is developed from' the sense of 'self-consciousness'.

The ego does not rest quiet merely by an affirmation of itself. It becomes grosser, when it operates in external life, until it reaches the most concrete of its expressions.

The ego exists originally as a principle of awareness, a simple consciousness that one is. That is why it is then called the metaphysical ego. It simply 'is', but 'is' as distinct from others. The consciousness of "I am" is the primordial empirical and it is the philosophical ego. Then, this simple principle of self-affirmation in its primary capacity of isolation begins to operate as the psyche which starts to think objects outside. It does not merely think of itself as an isolated being. It has become something worse now. In the beginning, it was content with being only aware of itself. Now it wants to be aware that 'others are'. So, there is a further consequence following from the affirmation of oneself. If "I am", others also are, as distinct from me. This distinction between oneself or one ego and others expresses itself as distinction between physical personalities. The physical ego is the bodily

ego which identifies itself with the bodily encasement.

The 'I-amness' is not merely a consciousness of 'my being'. It is also a consciousness of others' being. It is a specific affirmation of this body as the 'me' and a distinction drawn between this body and other bodies.

Then there are the various social distinctions extending to almost endless details. We cannot even count how many social distinctions there are. There is a great variety of the differences that we draw between one and the other in our social life and we need not go into the forms of these, because they are all obvious. Then there is the worst form of the ego, which intends to exercise authority, power, by way of political manoeuvres, which may begin with one's family management and end in a desire for world-government by oneself, until the farthest limit of it is reached, wherein it seeks to affirm itself to the exclusion of others. One of the important features of the ego is not merely self-affirmation and distinction of self from other selves, but a resentment of the presence of other selves.

This follows as a consequence of the structure of the ego. The self-affirmation of the ego is charged with a deep impulsion towards survival of itself at the cost of anything whatsoever in the world. If we believe in the doctrine of the survival of the fittest, the ego says, "I am the fittest, and, so, I alone should survive, and nobody else". Naturally, if every

ego has this sense of the fittest in itself and if each one is the fittest, the consequence is battle and the wars that history records. These wars are nothing but the conflicts of egos, each ego wishing to assert itself as the fittest, whether it is an individual ego or a group of egos. These create a chaos of circumstance and if one goes into the inner secret of the sorrows of life, one will realise that all these are rooted in the ego principle. Understanding, willing, feeling, and the other psychological functions are the rays of the ego, which is the parent of all these manifestations.

We have heard that yoga is 'union', a common definition that is given in all textbooks. But union with what, and who is to be in union with which substance, or reality? This cannot be made clear unless we know the basis of this definition itself. In our study of the objective world, we concluded that in the farthest analysis of the universe outside, we come face to face with the reality of the perceiver getting involved in the perceived, inasmuch as nature is a whole, a complete continuum, and the bifurcation of the seer and the seen is foreign to the structure of Nature. Nature in its wholeness may not even be aware that there are such things as the seer and the seen, even as we cannot say that the right hand is the seer of the left hand or the left hand is the seer of the right hand in one's own body. These appellations would not apply to an organisation of parts which belong to a whole, in an inseparable manner.

(To be continued)

Be sincere at heart. Don't run after the shadowy toys of name and fame. Name and fame are illusory. They are mere vibrations in the air. Nobody can earn everlasting name in this Mayaic plane. Care not for the little perishable things. Care for the everlasting Reality only.
—Swami Sivananda

A GUIDE TO MEDITATION

(Sri Swami Shivapremananda)

[Continued from the previous issue]

3. STEP THREE: AFFIRMATIONS IN MEDITATION

After the practice of the second part a short pause is necessary, keeping the eyes closed and feeling detached and restful. If there is tension, move the shoulders and the head a little. Breathe freely for a minute or two and then refocus the mind in the breath to begin the third part of this integral meditation, all of it being a combination of *pratyahara*, *dharana* and *dhyana*. This last part is a process of seeding the subconscious with some basic affirmations, relative to their opposite traits which are common to human nature.

The mind is a complex organism susceptible to influence. No one is born like a blank page on which the parents and others write what is good or bad. We are all born with innate propensities of character, even though in a rudimentary state, but each as a distinct individual. Then the first few years are highly impressionable, marking the subconscious indelibly through parental influence. Afterwards, in adolescence and later years, we keep on marking the formative mind by the influence of our surroundings and by our own positive endeavour or falling into bad habits, as well as by being susceptible to wholesome or negative influence of individuals we closely come into contact with.

The purpose of the following part of meditation is self-educative, as to what

should be our nature and should not be, the *reality* being what we need for our security and happiness. One may make a list of affirmations as per individual preference and necessity, and memorise them. However, they should be few and short. The following six affirmations are recommended.

While inhaling and feeling the breath, mentally repeat slowly and with a deep conviction "*Peace is my real nature*" and while exhaling "*Not conflict*". Repeat the phrase three or four times each, then try to absorb the meaning in silence for about a minute, breathing spontaneously. Then continue with "*Love is my real nature*," "*Not resentment*"; "*Truth is my real nature*," "*Not untruth*"; "*Happiness is my real nature*," "*Not unhappiness*"; "*Strength is my real nature*," "*Not weakness*"; "*Freedom is my real nature*," "*Not bondage*."

Then give a short pause, breathing freely and feeling detached. Begin again, fixing the mind in the breath, and repeat three or four times each, inhaling "*Peace*" and exhaling "*Only peace*"; "*Love*", "*Spiritual love*"; "*Truth*", "*Only truth*"; "*Happiness*", "*Inner fullness*"; "*Strength*", "*Mental strength*"; "*Freedom*", "*Spiritual freedom*". Then conclude with a pause of at least three minutes, breathing freely.

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STRONG NERVES

(Sri Swami Atmaswarupananda)

Gurudev's Universal Prayer asks that our hearts be filled with divine virtues. We have a tendency to think of divine virtues as being values such as love, faith, devotion and compassion, but in his book *Ponder These Truths*, Pujya Swami Chidanandaji has a talk on *nishtha*, meaning steadfastness in a spiritual practice, which is a different type of divine virtue. In fact, the variety of virtues that we need in the spiritual life seems to be considerably beyond our normal way of thinking about it.

One day it was suggested to Pujya Swami Chidanandaji that a core spiritual value was strong nerves. Pujya Swamiji seldom reacts to such ideas, but in this case he reacted in a very affirmative way, indicating that in our spiritual life, no matter what other qualities we need to develop, we have to develop strong nerves. Otherwise, how can we face the inevitable difficulties of the spiritual life and ultimately face the fact that we don't exist as who we think we are?

Not only our identity but our sense of security is built upon our body and mind identification. If anyone insults us, or if we are threatened in any physical or mental way, we can become very upset, sometimes even panicky. Therefore what is required, even at this level, is strong nerves.

To help us to build strong nerves, God constantly tests us; and normally, at some stage of our spiritual life, it means opposition from those who are nearest and dearest to

us, those whose affection we do not want to lose. Very often it is family. If it is not family, it may be our dearest friend, someone whose opinions and whose affection we care about very deeply. It can become a real challenge: "Either choose us or choose the spiritual life. You can't have both." When we have to face into a crisis like this, such a test will help us to develop strong nerves.

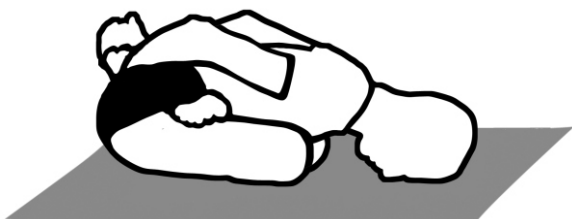
Devotees, therefore, often speak about being tested in the spiritual life as meaning whether or not we can stand up to a difficult situation without caving in. But there is another way of looking at it, which can be compared to the tempering of a fine steel sword. A steel sword is normally absolutely stiff, but you can make a steel sword so flexible that it can actually be bent backwards on itself. However, there is only one way to do this. You have to put it into a fire until it is white-hot, and then keep striking it with a hammer. This process is repeated time and time again until all the impurities have been pounded out of the steel, and the sword becomes totally flexible—a perfect specimen.

Therefore testing can be seen as a steady strengthening process, something absolutely necessary so that we can face the challenges that would otherwise undermine or even destroy our spiritual life. It is in being continuously tested and strengthened that we develop the strong nerves that are required for the higher reaches of the spiritual life.

Yoga for Health

YOGA MUDRA

(Sri Swami Chidananda)



TECHNIQUE

Sit on a folded blanket. Form a foot-lock by placing the right foot over the left thigh and left foot over the right thigh. In other words, assume the Padmasana posture. Keeping the head and spine erect, throw the hands to the back. With the left hand catch hold of the right wrist, behind the trunk. Exhale and slowly bend forward until the forehead touches the floor. Retain in this posture without inhalation, (or with normal breathing, whichever you feel comfortable) for ten seconds in the beginning. Concentrate on the forehead, abdomen and back muscles. Then, slowly return to the upright sitting posi-

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WHEN TO MEDITATE

The best time to meditate is in the morning, but only if one wakes up fresh. Otherwise, an appropriate hour should be chosen, but not immediately after a meal. This session of meditation will take from 45 minutes to one hour. In the beginning one may shorten it to 20 to 30 minutes and, after sufficient practice, prolong up to one hour. For most people a long meditation is not useful



tion and release the hands. Gradually increase the duration from five to six minutes with normal breathing.

Variation: Instead of catching hold of the wrist, you may catch hold of the toes, the right toes by the right hand and the left toes by the left hand, as in the picture.

BENEFITS

This removes abdominal disorders and tones up the abdominal organs of secretion. This also intensifies the peristaltic activity, removes constipation and increases the digestive power. This Asana also helps to awaken the Kundalini Sakti.

and may even build up tension. The quality is more important than the length.

FRUITS OF MEDITATION

An inner poise, a truthful, open, compassionate and unselfish nature, free from pretention, snobbery, prejudice and dogmatism, are the qualities one encounters in those who have progressed in meditation.

(Concluded)

GLORY OF BRAHMACHARYA

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

[Continued from the previous issue]

IMPORTANCE OF BRAHMACHARYA

Jaayate mriyate loke binduna natra

samsayah,

Etat jnatva sada yogee bindudharanam

acharet.

There is no doubt that people are born and live a healthy life by preserving semen and die prematurely for want of semen by letting it out of the body; knowing this the Yogi should always preserve semen and lead a life of strict celibacy.

The eminent European medical men also support the statements of Yogins of India. Dr. Louis says: "All eminent physiologists agree that the most precious atoms of the blood enter into the composition of the semen." Dr. Nicole says, "It is a medical and physiological fact that the best blood in the body goes to form elements of reproduction in both sexes. In a pure and orderly life, the matter is reabsorbed. It goes back into the circulation ready to form the finest brain, nerve and muscular tissues. This vital fluid of man carried back and diffused through his system makes him manly, strong, brave and heroic. If wasted, it leaves him effeminate, weak and physically debilitated and prone to sexual irritation and disordered function, wretched nervous system, epilepsy and other various diseases and death. The suspension of the use of the generative organs is attended with a notable increase of bodily and

mental and spiritual vigour." Dr. Louis refers to the ideal, moral character of St. Paul and Sir Isaac Newton saying: "Debility of intellect specially of memory characterises the mental alienation of the licentious."

'Life of celibacy up to the 24th year, 36th year, 48th year is called inferior, middle and superior Brahmacharya respectively.' According to the Vedas, "*Purushabhavah chaturvimshati varshan*", which means up to the 24th year the life of celibacy should be observed.

Life of householder (Grihastha) up to 55th to 60th year, "*Panchashad vanam vrajet*" which means after 50 Aryans should go to Tapovan to seek God. Life of renunciation is to seek God or search for Truth up to the 75th year called Vanaprastha. Bhikshu life of mendicant is lived till death.

Nowadays children beget children. Early marriages have wrought physical degeneration and early loss of semen. Man with his boasted intellect has to learn lessons from birds and animals. Lions, elephants and other powerful animals have better self-control than men. Lions cohabit only once in a year. After conception the female animals will never allow the male animals to approach them till the young once are weaned and they themselves become healthy and strong. Man only violates the laws of nature and consequently suffers from innumerable diseases.

He has degenerated himself to a far lower level than animals in this respect.

Ahara, Nidra, Bhaya and Maithuna (food, sleep, fear and copulation) are common to both animals and men. That which differentiates a man from an animal is Dharma (righteousness), Viveka (discrimination) and Vichara Sakti (power of thinking). If he does not possess these higher faculties, he is also a two-legged animal.

Eminent doctors of the West say that various kinds of diseases arise from loss of semen particularly in young age. There are boils in the body, acne or eruptions on the face, blue lines around the eye, absence of beard, sunken eyes, pale face with anaemia (poverty of blood), loss of memory, loss of eyesight, short-sightedness, discharge of semen along with urine, enlargement of testes, pain in the testes, debility, drowsiness, laziness, gloominess, palpitation of heart, dyspnoea or difficulty of breathing, phthisis, pain in the back, loins, head and joints, etc., weak kidneys, passing urine in sleep, fickle-mindedness, lack of thinking power, bad dreams, wet dreams, restlessness of mind, etc.

The future well-being of India entirely rests on Brahmacharya and Brahmacharya alone. It is the duty of Sannyasins and Yogis to train students in Brahmacharya, to teach Asanas and Pranayama and disseminate the knowledge of Atman far and wide. They can do a lot in improving the situation as they are whole-timed men. They should come out of their caves and Kutirs for Loka Sangraha. They should shake off their Maya Vaada a bit now. It is *Sarvam khalvidam brahma* (All this is Brahman) now for them.

The duty of the parents, guardians, teachers and professors is, therefore, to lead

a life of celibacy themselves and to train youngsters in Brahmacharya also. Training of youths means nation-building.

The importance of Brahmacharya was emphasised by our great Rishis. Lord Krishna therefore says that one on the path of Yoga should be with a heart serene, fearless and firm in the vow of Brahmacharya (Gita VI-14). Again He says emphatically that all those who wish to attain the goal should practise Brahmacharya (Gita VIII-11). It is not possible for you to enter the spiritual path that leads to union with God, unless and until you control lust and become established in Brahmacharya. If our mother-land wants to rise high in the scale of nations, her children, both male and female, should study the important subject of Brahmacharya in all its bearings, understand its supreme importance and observe this great Vrata (vow) strictly.

Any system of education which is not based on the principles of Brahmacharya, and has not in its curriculum a compulsory study of Sanskrit Literature will not be good for the Hindus. It is bound to fail! Those who are responsible for giving them a proper system of education are ignorant on this important point; and hence the numerous unfortunate experiments in education.

Without perfect Brahmacharya you cannot have substantial spiritual progress. There is no half-measure in the spiritual path.

Control the body first. Then purify your thoughts through prayer, Japa, Kirtan, Vichara and meditation.

Make a firm resolve "I will be a perfect Brahmachari from today."

May the Lord give you spiritual strength to resist temptation and kill lust!

(To be continued)

GOD—YOUR SUPREME GOAL

A WESTERNER ENLIGHTENED

“How to free ourselves from Karma, Swamiji?”

“As you perform your daily duties feel that you are only a witness of all that goes on around you, that you are a witness even of your own actions. This is called Sakshi Bhav. You should inwardly realise that you are different from the active principle in you. This is the Vedantic method.

“There is the other and easier method which is equally potent—the method of Nimitta Bhav. Feel that the Lord alone is the real doer of all actions, and that you are an instrument in His hands. Your actions will then be transformed into worship of the Lord, and you will not be bound by them. Work without the expectation of any reward and without egoism. Root out the idea of agency, and feel that you are not the doer. You will be freed from the shackles of Karma; you will not accumulate new Karma. Allow the past Karma to work out, then you will attain liberation.”

“Swamiji, is it true that man suffers only on account of his past Karma? If so, how do you explain the suffering he undergoes on account of natural calamities like riots and earthquakes?”

“It is perfectly true that man suffers on account of his own Karma. And it is the collective past Karma of a number of persons that gathers them together at a certain place where an earthquake works out this collective past Karma, and a large number of people enter the mouth of Kaala at the same time.”

“Swamiji, I have often come across this word ‘Kaala’ in the Indian scriptures. What exactly is meant by it?”

“It is the ‘Great Time’ personified. It is the destroyer of all names and forms. In the Hindu pantheon there are various gods and goddesses who are members of the Divine hierarchy. Just as our government is composed of various ministers and officials, the celestials who rule this world also have their Deities, who control various aspects of the creation, preservation and destruction of the world.

“Some are in charge of the different elements like air, fire and water; others are in charge of birth, death, the preservation of life, and disease. Kaala or Yama is the Lord of Death. The entire universe is under his control in a way, for, when the time comes, he brings about the end of the earthly sojourn of all beings. It is only a sage or a man of Self-realisation that transcends this Kaala and realises his own Self. All Sadhana is meant to help us transcend Kala, to conquer death and thus go beyond time.”

“In this quest after Truth, Swamiji, I can understand that great saviours like Lord Jesus can help us. But it is not always that such souls are present amidst us. What are we to do, Swamiji?”

“Saints are always present in the world. Rogues are also always present. Saviours and dacoits are ever present in this world, for it is a world of dualities. Good and evil are ever present here. Absolute good can be found only in God. You should get the guid-

ance of saints; only they can teach you the divine science. Books will certainly help you; they will put you in tune with the great ones who attained God. When you read the Bible you are in tune with Jesus. When you read the *Gita* you are in tune with Lord Krishna. This will also help you.

“But, just as you cannot learn the art of cooking merely by reading books, similarly, you cannot learn Yoga from books alone. However, you should not wait indefinitely for a teacher to turn up. As soon as the aspiration arises in your heart, you should at once start the practice with the help of some scriptural text that you like, like the Bible.”

“But, Swamiji, I have heard that it is dangerous to engage in Yoga practices without the aid of an expert Guru.”

“There is danger at every moment of your daily life. While going up the stairs, if you take a wrong step, you are likely to fall and break your bones; if you are a little absent-minded while crossing a road, you may be run over by a car. The danger of practising Yoga with the help of good texts is in no way greater. If you are sincere, if you use your common sense at every step, you will achieve success. In due course you will find a competent teacher also.”

“Apart from the Guru, Swamiji, do you think that a mediator is necessary in order to enable us to attain God-realisation?”

“Yes, yes. That is the tutelary Deity, the *Ishta Devata*. The mind cannot rise beyond itself all at once. The ego will seldom cut its own throat. Your limited consciousness will find it a difficult task to realise Cosmic Consciousness. Therefore, the name and form of a Deity are chosen to meditate upon. In due course this Deity will manifest Itself before you and do the work of annihilating the ego

and the mind, thus enabling you to realise the state of Cosmic Consciousness.”

“What Name can we choose, Swamiji?”

“Om. This is the Name of the nameless Supreme Being. This is the nearest approximation of the Truth. It is the mother of all sounds, names and forms.”

“During this practice is it proper to feel that we are in truth parts of God, Swamiji?”

“Not exactly parts, but God Himself in reality. Lord Jesus also declared, ‘I and my Father are one’. This is the ultimate experience, this is the ultimate truth which all the prophets, seers and sages have proclaimed.

“Lord Jesus, Lord Buddha, Guru Nanak, Kabir and Prophet Mohammed all delivered the same message in a way suited to the people of the age in which they lived. They all taught that God is one, Truth is one, and that man can realise the Truth by controlling the mind and the senses.”

“How to control the mind, Swamiji?”

The Master suddenly switched on to a little humour! “Take sour curd and lie down on your bed, covering yourself with a warm quilt, and then go to sleep!” Everyone burst into laughter!

“The method of controlling the mind has also been given very beautifully by all the sages and saints. They said, ‘Serve, love, give, purify, meditate, realise; be good, do good, be kind and compassionate; enquire about the nature of your own true Self.’ This is the essence of the teachings of all sages, prophets and saviours of the world. Follow them and attain Self-realisation this very moment.

“May God bless you! Come again and stay here for some time.”

Children's Page

ANGER

(Sri Swami Ramarajyam)

There were three princes named Baldeva, Vasudeva and Satyaki. All the three went to a jungle along with their soldiers. The horses of the princes galloped very fast so the soldiers were left behind. Night fell. The princes lost their way in the dark. They, therefore, took shelter under a tree. Before going to sleep they decided that by turns two of them would sleep and the third one would keep watch.

Satyaki was the first one to keep watch. Baldeva and Vasudeva fell asleep. Soon a demon came there. He said to Satyaki, "If you let me eat these two men, I shall spare you your life, otherwise I will kill all the three of you."

Angry at hearing this, Satyaki at once grappled with the demon. The more Satyaki was filled with anger, the more the demon grew in size. Satyaki was wounded badly in the fight with the demon. When it was the turn of Baldeva to wake up, the demon disappeared from the scene.

Satyaki told Baldeva all that had happened. Baldeva began to keep watch very cautiously. After Satyaki fell asleep, the demon appeared again and he repeated what he had said to Satyaki. Baldeva was already prepared to fight with him. The demon had hardly finished his statement, when Baldeva, boiling over with anger, assailed him. The fight went on for quite some time. Baldeva was extremely angry. The more Baldeva raged against the demon, the bigger the demon looked in appearance. Baldeva was also badly wounded in the fight.

When Vasudeva woke up, the demon again disappeared. Baldeva told Vasudeva

everything about his and Satyaki's fight with the demon and cautioned him to be alert and awake.

As soon as Baldeva slept, the demon reappeared. He repeated what he had said to Baldeva and Satyaki. Vasudeva smiled and took no notice of what he had said. This provoked the demon into fighting with Vasudeva. The fight, this time, was of a different nature. The demon was continuously attacking Vasudeva but the latter retaliated without getting excited. He kept his cool. The result was astonishing—the size of the demon began to decrease and finally he was transformed into an insect! Vasudeva wrapped the insect in a piece of cloth.

By that time, the day had dawned. Baldeva and Satyaki woke up. Vasudeva said to them, "I will show you the demon, you had fought with." And, he loosened the piece of cloth in which he had wrapped the insect. The insect fell off onto the ground and started crawling. Vasudeva said, "Recognise this to be the same demon. His name is anger. If anyone gets angry with him, he increases in size and strength. If one faces this demon calmly, he begins to lose his strength and ultimately becomes extinct. Both of you fought with this demon bravely but you did not know this secret of victory over him. That is why you had to suffer so much."

Dear children, are we not like Baldeva and Satyaki? If anyone gets angry with us, we also lose our temper. What happens then? The other person gets angrier. If we keep calm like Vasudeva, the other person also calms down.

NEWS AND REPORTS

NEWS FROM THE HEADQUARTERS

SEVA THROUGH SIVANANDA HOME

Sivananda home has been started by The Divine Life Society Headquarters to humbly serve the needy and the poor people, those who require medical aid, but have no resources, no human help, no shelter, no attendant and those who are suffering from contagious diseases and therefore are deprived of the opportunity of admission any other facility or hospital.

In the hours of bathing, after breakfast, many of the inward patients need assistance, are brought to the bathrooms or are given a sponge bath in the bed only; the distribution of supervised dose of medication, cleaning and dressing of the wounds, massaging and exercising, changing of the bedding, washing clothing, utensils, preparing of the food for all the inward inmates, accompanying a patient to the doctor for consultation, etc., are also taken care of.

For the elderly and the most senior elderly among us, the transition of the weather could cause a serious attack on one's general health and well-being. In Sivananda Home, not less than one-fourth of the total inmates are aged above seventy and even eighty. A simple cold may turn into pneumonia or bronchitis and a few days of fever and less intake of food has a great debilitating impact.

Four of these most vulnerable inmates were treated this month for high fever, bron-

chitis, tonsillitis, dehydration, loose motion, urinary tract infections, vomiting and high blood pressure, and recuperated slowly under medication and intravenous fluids.

However, in the twilight of the evening, before the night meal, handicaps, pains, sufferings, inconveniences, humiliations, all seem to vanish, when whosoever is able attends the hours of Satsanga in the small Mandir, be it by crutches, in a wheelchair or with walkers, visually impaired, young or elderly, a gathering together before the Face of the Almighty Lord. No longer the discarded ones, the ones without fingers, the so-called outcasts, the shameful, the dreadful, the blind, the unworthy, or the untouchable, but just a communion of His beloved children, joyfully praising Him, fully convinced that in His embracing arms the ONLY place of refuge and PEACE can be found. Having lost all material wealth and gone through the very depths of loneliness and despair, there they meet Him waiting: Mother and Father, Consoler and Protector, beyond caste, discrimination, health, wealth or sickness. Om Sai Ram.

"His Love is immediately available to you, for He is not a remote reality, but He is the indwelling Reality, nearer to you than anything else on earth. Rejoice that within you is the peace of God as your own Self"

(Swami Chidananda)

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

SRI ADI SANKARACHARYA JAYANTI CELEBRATED AT SIVANANDA ASHRAM

The sacred Jayanti of Jagadguru Sri Sankaracharya who propagated the System of Advaita Vedanta was celebrated at the Ashram on the 10th May, 2008. The function commenced at 9 a.m. with Kirtan and Bhajan, after which there were discourses by several Mahatmas. The beautiful marble statue of the Acharya which is installed at Vishwanath Mandir was tastefully decorated with flower garlands and the function was held in the temple premises.

Addressing the devotees Sri Swami Advaitanandaji Maharaj and Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji Maharaj and Br. Brahmattma

Chaitanyaji spoke on the life and teachings of Acharya Sankara and his unique contribution in the spiritual world.

Special worship of the Acharya was then performed in which all the devotees who had assembled, Sannyasins, householders, visitors, and other Sadhaks and Brahmacharis participated. It was indeed a joyous sight to see everyone offering flowers in great reverence while the sacred Namavali was being recited. The function concluded with Arati and distribution of the holy and sacred Prasad. May the benedictions of Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya be upon one and all.

SIVANANDA PILLAR GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

May 23, 2008 at Headquarters

The fiftieth Anniversary of the installation of the Sivananda Pillar at the Headquarter's Ashram was celebrated early morning on 23rd May, 2008, fifty years of the day worshipful Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj himself inaugurated it on 23rd day of May, 1958. The Pillar had recently been tastefully and beautifully decorated on all four sides for this auspicious occasion with flowers and festoons, mango leaves and banana plants by the Ravalji of Sri Vishwanatha Mandir, Sri Swami Gurupriyanandaji Maharaj.

The programme began at 5.00 a.m. followed by the chanting of the Shanti Mantras and silent meditation. Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj, General Secretary of the Divine Life Society lit the lamp to mark the commencement of the formal programme which continued till nearly 7.00 a.m.

Revered Sri Swami Atmaswarupanandaji Maharaj spoke of the significance of having the teachings of Gurudev on the upper part of the Pillar being supported by Vedic inscriptions on all the

four sides and all three levels of the foundation of the Pillar. Then Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj mentioned that he had been blessed to be present fifty years ago when worshipful Gurudev did the inauguration. A photo taken that day of Gurudev sitting in front of the Pillar was prominently displayed as part of the decoration of the Pillar.

Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj then drew the special attention of the large attending audience of Swamis, inmates, devotees and visitors to Gurudev's Universal Prayer and discussed its importance. He emphasised that if one studies this Universal Prayer and lives up to its teachings, it is enough for our life. This in itself will bring about a complete transformation.

After Ashtottara Shata Namavali there was Arati and distribution of Prasad. The assembled group completed the celebration by going around the Bhajan Hall singing Gurudev's favourite Mahamantra.

BHAGAVATA SAPTAHA CONDUCTED AT SIVANANDA ASHRAM

Parampujya Sri Swami Bhagavatswarup Acharyaji Maharaj, also known as Bhaskar

Swamiji gave discourses on Bhagavat Maha Purana for 8 days, from 22nd to 29th May 2008.

The discourses were held at Gurudev's Samadhi hall in the holy Ashram of Sri Gurudev daily in two sessions, from 2.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. and 8.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m. All the eight days the functions were well attended and people listened to the discourses with rapt attention. The Bhagavata Saptaha concluded in the evening of 29th.

After the conclusion of the Katha, Parampujya Sri Swami Bhagavatswarup Acharyaji Maharaj was honoured in the traditional way by garlanding and presenting Shawl, etc.

The function came to a close after worship of the holy Bhagavatam, Arati and distribution of sacred Prasad.

VALEDICTORY FUNCTION OF THE 58TH BASIC YOGA-VEDANTA COURSE

The Valedictory Function of the 58th Basic Yoga-Vedanta Course of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy of the Headquarters Ashram was held on Tuesday, the 29th of April, 2008, in the Academy's Lecture Hall. After the invocatory prayer, Prof. Ved Prakash Groverji (now Sri Swami Yogavedantanandaji Maharaj), Registrar of the Academy, welcomed all those present on the occasion. Prof. Rajinder Kumar Bhardwajji, Assistant Registrar, read the Report of the Course. Thereafter some of the students expressed their impressions about the Course. His Holiness Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj, General Secretary, The Divine Life Society Headquarters, graced the function and awarded Certificates and Jnana Prasad to the students and honoured the Members of the Faculty. The students also expressed their gratitude and offered a gift to all the Faculty Members.

Delivering the Valedictory address, His Holiness Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj told the students that it is due to their past Karmas and Divine Grace, that they stayed on this sanctified ground on the banks of Mother Ganga and in the

lap of the Himalayas, for about two months. Swamiji narrated the story of the emergence of the Ganga from the feet of Lord Hari which was due to the intense Tapascharya and repeated attempts of King Bhagiratha. He advised the students to keep an ideal before them and keep on making repeated attempts with perseverance like King Bhagiratha, till the goal of life which is God Realisation is achieved. From this moment they should start a new chapter in their life. They should take care that their Sadhana should not be on declining, and it should also be progressive. Swamiji pointed out that our ancients observed life and the world and came to the conclusion that the world is full of misery and the cycle of birth, growth, disease, old age and death goes on till the goal of life is achieved. Swamiji said that the students are going from here with Spiritual Wealth which they should utilize wisely in their day-to-day life and concluded his talk by invoking the blessings of Worshipful Gurudev upon them.

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

INAUGURATION OF THE 59TH BASIC YOGA-VEDANTA COURSE

The 59th Basic Yoga-Vedanta Course of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy was inaugurated on Saturday, the 3rd of May 2008, in which 43 students from 13 states have joined. After the invocatory prayer all those present were welcomed by Sri Swami Yogavedantanandaji Maharaj, Registrar of the Academy. Prof. Rajinder Kumar Bharadwajji, Asst. Registrar, introduced all the

students to the gathering. His Holiness Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj, General Secretary, the D.L.S. Headquarters, graced the function and lighted Deepa as a token of the commencement of the Course.

His Holiness Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj welcomed the students to Worshipful Gurudev's Ashram. Swamiji said that he came

here in 1953 and sat at the holy feet of two great masters—Worshipful Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and His Holiness Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj and learnt all that he knows now. In those days there were no paid coolies in the Ashram to help the masons in the construction work. He along with the other Ashramites used to do this work under the guidance of Gurudev. Swamiji gave a brief account, right from his arrival in the Ashram when he was a young boy; his stay in the artificial cave below Sri Dattatreya temple situated in the forest area which was infested with many snakes, scorpions and other wild animals in those days. He said that he had no time to study the scriptures. His job was only to do selfless Seva. He was sharing with the students only what he learnt from these two great Masters.

Swamiji told the students that man has five main desires—i) to live, ii) to have freedom, iii) to have happiness, iv) for acquiring knowledge, v) to get recognition. Swamiji said that everybody wants happiness, and nobody likes to have unhappiness. But we cannot find permanent happiness in the objects of the world. Moreover, man makes himself miserable and manufactures wor-

ries as soon as he gets up from bed. Swamiji advised the students to give an honourable burial to all worries. When guests, visitors and V.I.Ps came to Gurudev and used to tell about their problems, Gurudev advised them to add one more problem to their list of problems, that is to remember God always. They should also try to do something for the upliftment of other people. Then their problems will get solved automatically. Swamiji gave examples to explain the five types of desires which everybody has.

Swamiji told the students that although in the coming days their lifestyle will be different, they should not forget to start the day with the Lord, always be with the Lord and end the day with the Lord. They should also cultivate the art of speaking to God and remember God always and then their mind will become pure. Swamiji advised them to lead a simple life and reduce desires by controlling the mind. Swamiji concluded his talk after invoking blessings of Worshipful Gurudev upon them.

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

CULTURAL TOUR OF H.H. SRI SWAMI NIRLIPTANANDAJI MAHARAJ

H.H. Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj, Vice-President, The Divine Life Society Headquarters, undertook a cultural tour during April-May, 2008. Swamiji visited Rewari in Haryana on 28th April. On the 29th he attended the special Satsanga of D.L.S. Rewari Branch which was arranged on the occasion of his visit. Swamiji gave a discourse on 'Relevance of Spirituality in present times' in the Satsanga and also met the devotees.

On 1st May, Swamiji attended the Trust Board Meeting of Swami Sivananda Memorial Institute, New Delhi, of which Swamiji happens to be the Chairman.

From 2nd to 14th and from 24th to 28th May Swamiji stayed at Baliguali Chidananda Hermit-

age Shanti Ashram in Orissa and looked into the affairs of the Ashram.

The monthly Sadhana Shibir under 'Sadhana Ganga' programme at Baliguali Ashram was from 8th to 12th May. Swamiji attended the Sadhana Shibir and gave discourses every day for the Sadhaks participating in it.

Swamiji also attended the meeting of Managing Committee of Sivananda Centenary Boys' High School held at Baliguali on 12th May.

D.L.S. Rourkela Steel Township Branch had organised a 5-day Youth Vikash Shibir from 16th to 20th May and simultaneously a one-week Jagannath Kathamrit Programme in the evening from 16th to 22nd May. Swamiji attended both the Programmes. In the Youth Shibir about

160 young boys and girls including students had taken part. Swamiji attended the Camp in all the early morning, forenoon and afternoon sessions, conducted the prayers and gave talks on various topics relevant and useful to the youths. There was great enthusiasm and interest among the young people, and they received considerable guidance and inspiration. The Youth Camp was a grand success and was of immense benefit to the participating youths.

In the Jagannath Kathamrit Saptah programme Swamiji presided over the public

Satsanga meeting, and Pujya Babaji Chaitanya Charan Dasji Maharaj of Puri Bhagavat Ashram was the Chief Speaker. Swamiji also spoke at the Satsanga on all the seven days.

On 21st May Swamiji attended the Sadhana Day organised by the D.L.S. Rourkela Steel Township Branch. Swamiji conducted the prayer-meditation class and gave a talk. In the forenoon session also Swamiji addressed the devotees giving a discourse.

CULTURAL TOUR OF H.H. SRI SWAMI YOGASWARUPANANDAJI MAHARAJ, VICE-PRESIDENT, DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY (HEADQUARTERS)

The Italian Yoga Federation invited Sri Swami Yogaswarupanandaji to attend the "Sarva Yoga International Conference" held at Assisi, Italy, from 1st to 4th May 2008. Sri Swamiji accordingly participated in the Conference. Swamiji

delivered lectures at the opening ceremony of the Conference and also on the concluding day. He spoke on the importance of Yama and Niyama in the practice of Yoga and also conducted classes on guided Meditation.

CULTURAL TOUR OF SRI SWAMI PADMANABHANANDAJI MAHARAJ

Sri Swami Padmanabhanandaji visited Holy Vyasashramam, Yerpedu, Andhra Pradesh to attend the Mandalaradhana of Brahmaleen Paramapujya Sri Swami Vidyanda Giriji Maharaj which was celebrated on 27th April 2008. The function was attended by Mahatmas and Saints from different parts of India, besides devotees. Swamiji gave a brief talk on the occasion highlighting the role of the grace of saints in the spiritual path of spiritual seekers.

On 28th April, Swamiji visited the Divine Life Society, Karavadi Branch of Andhra Pradesh. The Branch is running a school with the name "Swami Sivananda School" in typical Gurukula model.

Children from the nearby villages study in the school. Besides the usual secular subjects the children are taught values of life and the importance of community living. In the Satsanga organised by the Branch Swamiji spoke on the importance of ethical living.

The Chinmaya mission Branch "Swarna Chinmayam", Sarada Priya Nagar, Ongole, Andhra Pradesh had requested Sri Swamiji to visit their Branch. Swamiji accordingly visited the Branch and spoke on Sadhana in Spiritual Life. Swamiji returned to the Headquarters Ashram in the morning on 30th April 2008.

Ignorant persons attribute their pleasures to external objects. That is a serious blunder, indeed. Really, there is no pleasure in objects. There is neither pleasure nor pain in objects. It is all mental creation, mental perception, mental jugglery. It is only the mental attitude or a certain kind of mental behaviour towards objects that brings joy or grief, pleasure or pain. Maya has her powerful seat in the imagination of the mind.

—Swami Sivananda