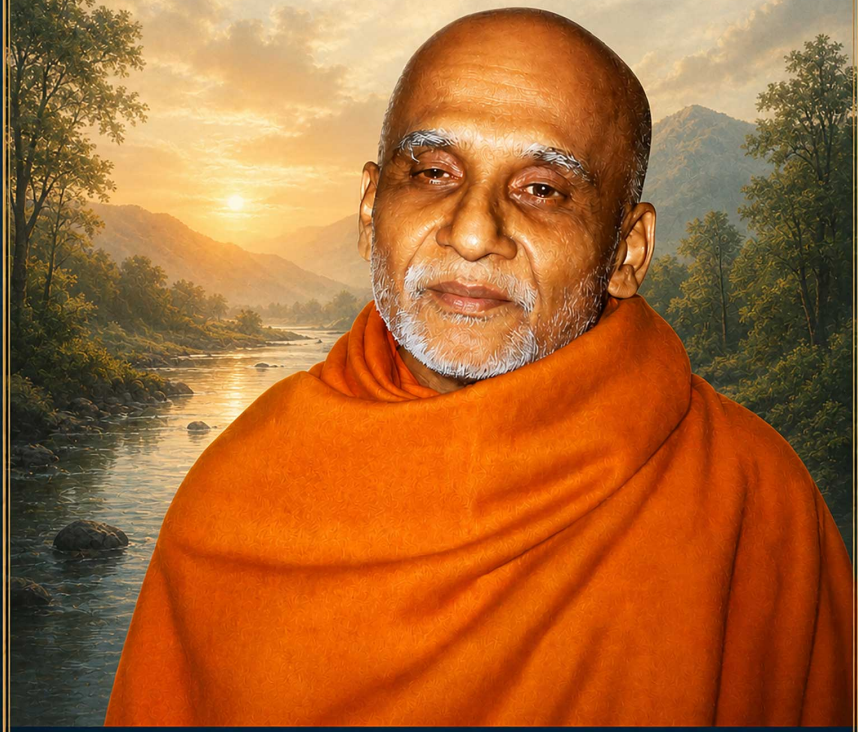
Yoga, Meditation *and* Japa Sadhana



SWAMI KRISHNANANDA

YOGA, MEDITATION AND JAPA SADHANA

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Published by

THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY
P.O. SHIVANANDANAGAR—249 192,
Distt. Tehri-Garhwal, Uttarakhand,
Himalayas, India

Price] 2008 [Rs. 20/-

Fifth Edition: 2007
[500 Copies]

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Published by Swami Vimalananda for
The Divine Life Society, Shivanandanagar, and printed
by him at the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy Press,
P.O. Shivanandanagar, Distt. Tehri-Garhwal,
Uttarakhand, Himalayas, India

YOGA AND MEDITATION

The Philosophical Foundations of Yoga

I shall endeavour to portray in simple terms what one may regard as the central objective of human life and the possible methodology that could be adopted in implementing this objective, and its realisation. You must have heard a lot about what is known as yoga. And many a textbook, many a discourse must have given you varied information on this mysterious technique known as the art of the practice of yoga. In simple terms, without involving technicalities, if yoga is to be defined, it can be called the system of harmony. For example, what is called harmony in the English language, yoga is in Sanskrit. Yoga is nothing mystifying or beyond the conception of human understanding. But there is a great proviso in this simple definition of yoga as harmony. While it is true that harmony in every field of life is what we seek in our day-to-day existence, it is necessary to know what harmony actually means. And when the essential of that simple fact called harmony gets imbibed into our consciousness, our personality gets stabilised. Stability of personality, equilibrium of consciousness, harmony in all walks of life, is yoga.

Harmony implies an adjustment of oneself with an environment that is external to oneself. When there is no proper adjustment of one thing with another thing, we call it disharmony. When there is a proper adjustment, a smooth working of one principle, one fact, one object, one person with another, we regard it as harmony. Now, the question which may arise in our mind at the very outset is, why should harmony be the central objective. Why should harmony be regarded as the essential of life?

The reason is the very structure of the universe. The universe is a system of harmony. We, as human individuals, form part of this universe. We form part of it in such a way that we are integrally related to it. Before proceeding further, it would be profitable to know what it is to be integrally related to anything in the world. I shall try to give you an example from common experience. You must have seen heaps of stones on the roadside. A heap of stones is a group of small units of inanimate matter put together in one place. In that heap of stones, perhaps each stone is touching every other stone. Though each piece of inorganic matter called stone in that heap is connected by way of contact with every other stone in the heap, we cannot say that any particular stone is integrally related to every other stone in that heap. They are mechanically connected, not vitally related.

There is a difference between a mechanical connection and a vital, organic relationship. The contact of one stone with another stone in a heap is mechanical. There is no life in this connection. If one stone is taken from that heap, the other stones will not be affected in any manner. They will remain as they were. There will not be any kind of harm done to the remaining stones or a diminution in their structure if a few stones are removed from the heap. So, a mechanical group is that in which parts are so related to the whole that if some parts are removed from the whole, the remaining parts are not affected at all. That is what is meant by mechanical relationship. But organic relationship is something different. We have the example of our body itself. We know very well that our physical body is made up of minute organisms called cells. These cells are so connected to one another that they give the appearance of a single whole called the body, similar to a heap of stones on the roadside, we may say, in one way. But what is the difference? While the removal of a few stones from the heap does not vitally affect the remaining stones, removal of a few limbs of our body vitally affects the whole body. We know what it would be to an individual, a human being, if the limbs are to be amputated —the legs or the arms removed. Remove a portion of the body of a person; what a difference it makes! The very existence of the body is seriously affected. To

come to the point, the harmony of the body is disturbed. That is why when a limb of the body is cut off, there is intense pain, agony and a dislike towards it. We dislike any kind of interference with the limbs or organs of our body because the limbs are vitally connected as a living whole in the system of our personality.

Now you know the difference between a mechanical relationship and a vital relationship. What I mean to say is that we are vitally related to the cosmos, not mechanically connected. Our connection with the universe outside is not like the connection of a stone in a heap so that we may do anything we like without affecting the world outside. That cannot be. Our connection, our relationship with the world outside is such that it can be compared to the relationship of the limbs of the body to the whole system of the body. Any meddling with the system is neither warranted nor called for.

To conceive what the universe would be, we have to conceive what a human individual is. In Indian Vedic mythology we have the concept of what is known as Purusha, the Supreme Being. 'Purusha' means man, the human individual. But when the Vedas speak of the Purusha in the cosmos, they mean the concept of the universe as a single individual, a Cosmic Individual, whose relationship with the parts

of the cosmos is similar to the relationship of an ordinary, limited individual to the limbs of the body.

Can you imagine, for a moment, what it would be to remain as a cosmic individual? Suppose you are the consciousness animating the universe; how would you conceive this possibility? For that, again, you have to bring the analogy of the human body. Do you know that you are an Intelligence, or a centre of consciousness? You may put a question to me: How do I know this? It can be known by an experiment. You know that you are a complete whole called Mr. So-and-so, Mrs. So-and-so, and so on. When you say "I am such and such a person", what do you actually mean? What do you refer to? To the hands, to the feet, to the nose or any part of the body, or to all the parts put together? What do you mean by saying 'I', or the individual that you are?

On a careful examination of the situation you realise that when you refer to yourself as So-and-so, you do not really take into consideration the limbs or the organs of the body, because if a hand is amputated, you do not say that a part of yourself has gone. You still remain a whole individual. If two legs are gone by any kind of medical operation, the individual is still whole. The individual never feels that a part of his personality has gone. He will say that a part of his body has gone, but a part of *himself* has not gone. He

will still think as a whole being. Otherwise, if the limbs of the body were to be an essential part of the personality, then, when the legs are amputated, for example, a person would be thinking in a lesser percentage. There would be half-thinking, one-fourth thinking, thirty percent thinking, and so on. But that does not happen. There is whole thinking, whole understanding—the entire consciousness is kept intact, in spite of the fact that the limbs are amputated or cut off. This shows that you are not the limbs of the body. You are something independent of these limbs that constitute your external form called the body. You are an intelligence, or a spiritual being. You are a centre of consciousness which animates this body, on account of which the amputation of the limbs does not in any way affect your personality. You are essentially consciousness.

The concept of the Virat Purusha, or the Cosmic Being, which I mentioned as stated in the Vedas, is only an extension of this concept of the individual consciousness to the cosmos. Can you close your eyes for a few seconds and imagine that instead of your being a centre of consciousness animating this small body, you are a centre of consciousness animating the whole universe? Can you expand your imagination to this extent? How do you do this? It can be done with a little effort of the mind. I shall tell you the technique.

The consciousness which you are, which animates every part of your body—hands, feet, fingers, nose, eyes, etc.—this consciousness that you are, which inwells your individual body, is so uniformly present in every part of your body that you may be said to be present in every part of your body. You are present in your fingers, you are present in your toes, you are present in your nose, and so on. You, as a complete whole, are present in every part of your body. Now, can you extend this analogy, or comparison, to the whole universe? Just imagine your consciousness is not merely in your finger or your toe, but it is also in this table that you see in front of you, it is also in the chair, it is in the mountain, in the sun and the moon, in the galaxy, etc.

If you can extend your imagination in this manner, if your consciousness can exceed the limits of your bodily personality, and if you extend this pervasive character of consciousness beyond the limitation of your bodily personality and concentrate it on every other object in the world, you become a Cosmic Individual. This is Yogic Contemplation, Meditation in the highest sense of the term. This is the apex which you reach after many stages of meditation

This is a difficult technique, because you will not be able, ordinarily, to extend your consciousness to other objects in the world. We have a prejudice, an old

habit of thinking that the objects are *outside* us. But, do you know that your ten fingers are outside you? They are objects; you can see them as you see any other objects in the world. If these ten fingers (i.e. these objects) can become part of your personality, then why should not other objects in the world become part of your personality? They do not become, because you have limited your consciousness by an old prejudice of thought. Prejudice is irrational; it simply asserts itself and is not amenable to reason. Why should you limit your consciousness to your small body? What do you gain? Why not extend it to other persons? Why not feel that all people seated here are part of a wider, social individual, just as you imagine you are a human individual? Why limit your consciousness to the people seated here? Go further to the vaster world and imagine that you are the world-individual! This world-individual is what religion means by God.

People ask, "Does God exist?" This is a meaningless question. If the world exists, God must exist, because God is only a name that we give to the Consciousness that indwells the whole universe, just as consciousness indwells your own individual personality.

You may ask, "How do you know there is Consciousness everywhere?" I ask you, "How do you

know your friend has consciousness?" You know you have consciousness, but you cannot see consciousness in your friend. But you infer from his intelligent activity that he has consciousness. Likewise, from the activity of the cosmos we can infer the presence of a Cosmic Intelligence.

This Cosmic Intelligence, immanent in all objects, is what is called God, the Supreme Being. It is called the Absolute because it is Complete Consciousness and there is nothing outside it. When there is something outside it, it is called relative consciousness. When there is nothing outside it, and it is All-in-All, all-pervading, it is called Absolute Consciousness. You are a part of the Absolute Consciousness because you are a part of the universe. You are an organic part of the universe, not a mechanical part like a stone in a heap. You are vitally related to the whole cosmos, so that you are an essential part of the cosmos.

From this analysis we come to the astounding conclusion that the whole universe may be compared to a vast individuality. This is what the Vedas call the Parama-Purusha, or the Supreme Being. When such terms are used in the texts, what is meant is that our salvation lies in being friendly with the universe as a whole.

The health of a finger of your body depends upon the health of the whole body. If the whole body is suffering from typhoid fever, can a finger be healthy? No, the finger will will be affected by the same illness because it is vitally related to the whole body. Likewise, whatever the universe is, that you also are. The universe is a perfect balance of forces; and so, inasmuch as you are an integral part of this perfect balance of forces, which is the universe, you know how you have to conduct yourself in life. You cannot afford at any time in your life to violate the law of the universe. You have to abide by the law of the cosmos, which is *samatva*, or equal distribution of attitude. Yoga is defined in the Bhagavadgita as *samatva*. Harmony is yoga. Bhagavan Sri Krishna, the Superman of the East, says: *samatvam yoga uchyate* (Gita 2-48). This is a very simple, unambiguous and non-sectarian definition of yoga. Harmony, balance, equilibrium is yoga.

What is harmony? Harmony is nothing but your adjustment with the cosmos. If you are properly adjusted with the universe, you are said to be in harmony with the universe. But if there is maladjustment with the cosmos, you are thrown out as an individual. Now, the very fact that, with your senses, you are able to see objects outside as something cut off completely from your personality shows that you are not properly

adjusted with the cosmos. You cannot see a cell of your body as something outside, because it is an essential part of your very existence. In this manner, if we are able, by dint of will and power of concentration, to visualise the world as essentially related to our consciousness, we would be automatically in a state of meditation.

The substance of the world is not matter or inorganic stuff. There is a misconception among most people that the world is made up of non-intelligent, dead matter. This is not so. You cannot see consciousness with your eyes. You cannot see consciousness, or intelligence, in another person. How can you see Consciousness in the world outside? But, inasmuch as it is possible to infer the presence of consciousness in another individual by his activity, you can also infer the presence of Consciousness in the universe by an analysis of a peculiar activity called perception.

The analysis of the process of perception of objects will give you an indication that the world is made up of Consciousness, and not matter. It is only by inference that you can come to this conclusion, not by direct, visible, sensory perception.

You look at an object, a mountain which is a mile off, in front of you, and say, "I see it." I ask you, "What do you mean when you say that you see it?" You will reply, "My eyes are open, light rays which

fall on the mountain travel from the mountain and impinge on the retina of the eyes, and then I am given a picture of the existence of the mountain." But I ask you, "Is light intelligent or is it non-intelligent?" You know very well that light rays have no consciousness, they are inert; and the mountain is inert. A non-intelligent principle cannot create intelligence, as the principle of logic demands that the cause must be at least as rich as the effect. The perception of the mountain is a conscious, intelligent activity (i.e. effect). So, the cause, the movement of light rays, must contain consciousness inherently; otherwise, it would be inferior to the effect, and consciousness cannot be produced by the inferior effect which is the light rays.

Also, take another aspect of this very problem. The mountain which is outside you does not jump into your eyes. It is far off. How do you come to know that there is a mountain in front of you? Your eyes do not touch the mountain and the mountain does not touch your eyes. Both are far from each other. There is a connecting link between the mountain and your eyes. That is the reason why you are able to know that there is a mountain. But what is the connecting link? You may say it is light rays. No. Light rays are inert. Inasmuch as inertness cannot produce an intelligent perception, we cannot accede that the light rays which are inert can be the connecting link, really. The

connecting link between an object and the seeing consciousness can be only one of two things, because there are only two things in this world—consciousness and matter; there is nothing else. The connecting link between the mountain and the perceiving consciousness would be one of the two: either it is consciousness or it is matter. If you say that matter or anything material is the connecting link between the mountain and your consciousness, there would be a gap between consciousness and the object. This is because consciousness cannot become matter and matter cannot become consciousness, they being characterised differently, just as milk cannot become stone and stone cannot become milk. Thus, if the connecting link is matter, there would be a gap between matter and consciousness and there would be no connection between the two, and you would not know that there is a mountain in front of you. So, that cannot be. And, naturally, the other alternative is that the connecting link is consciousness. Consciousness can mix with consciousness. By this inference we come to the conclusion that consciousness must be hidden behind even material objects—otherwise, perception itself would be impossible. Just as we infer the presence of intelligence by the activity of people outside, we infer the presence of intelligence in the world by the analysis of the activity of the individual, which is known as perception.

What we are driving at with all this analysis is that world is ultimately Consciousness in its nature; it is not matter. You are also not matter, because your whole personality remains unaffected even though the limbs are cut off. You are Consciousness. You are not a body. You are something far more than a body. Likewise, there is an immanent principle of Consciousness in the whole cosmos. This immanent Consciousness is what is called the Absolute, or Brahman, or the Atman. It is called the Self (i.e. the Atman), because it always remains hidden in the individual as the seeing principle, and not the seen object, because Consciousness cannot become an object which you can see with your senses. So, the Universal Consciousness, being incapable of being converted into an object, remains ever as a subject, as the Self. The Supreme Consciousness, which is the Absolute, is the Self of everyone.

If you can retain this state of mind for a few minutes—that the universe is a sea of Consciousness and you are like waves in this sea of Consciousness, and that there is nothing like matter or inorganic stuff in the world—this is universality of perception, as different from individual perception of objects. This is meditation.

Practical Techniques

What I have told you up to this time is the philosophical background. Now I shall give you some

practical hints, in stages, to attain the state of meditation. Otherwise, the mind will jump from one object to another, because it is used to think of objects only. Bringing the mind to this state of awareness of meditation, stability or harmony has to be practised in every walk of life. Harmony is of various grades.

1. You must be harmonious in your relationship with other people in the world. You should be friendly; you should have no hatred towards anyone. You should not harm or deceive anyone. You should not steal or appropriate what does not belong to you. You should have no disgust for any person or thing; you should have affection for all persons and things. All this constitutes harmony in outer relationships with society and the world. You should not take from the world more than what you have given to it by your service.

2. You must be harmonious within your own personality. The human individual is often out of balance with himself. You should take care of the minimal needs of the body: e.g. cleanliness, a bath regularly, eat only when you are hungry—i.e. eat only if your tongue waters when you see a dish of food. Treat your body as your friend. Live in ventilated places; breathe fresh air; spend at least two hours a day in the open. Adopt simple living and high thinking.

3. You must have harmony of the muscles and the nervous system. We are generally in a state of restless

activity and agitation. So we are asked to practise *asanas*, or physical postures, for the stability of the body. Though for the health of the body you may practise many *asanas,* you should sit in one *asana* alone for meditation. By staying in one single, steady, comfortable posture, you bring about a harmony in the nervous system and the muscles.

Why is this posture prescribed? Because some energy, we may call it electric power, is generated in the body when the mind is concentrated in meditation. If the extremities of the body are left open, the electricity that is produced in meditation will leak out. So, the purpose of posture is to lock up the fingers and the toes so that there is a circulation of energy throughout the body and there is no leakage of energy outside. Also, to prevent leakage, you are asked to sit on some nonconductor of electricity, e.g. a deerskin or mat, not an iron seat (that will give you a shock). Sit there, locking the fingers and toes, and keeping the spine, neck and head erect, in one straight line. If you cannot sit straight in the beginning, sit straight leaning your back against a wall.

4. Bring the breathing process, *prana*, into harmony. *Pranayama* is a normal state of breathing. Usually we are not in a normal state of breathing. And we are not happy when we breathe disharmoniously. The *pranas* are disturbed because we long for objects in the world,

and to desire an object is to be out of tune with the law of the universe. This is because the object is not outside the law of the universe; the object is an integral, vital part of the cosmos. So, when you imagine anything is outside, consciousness is disturbed, agitated, unhappy. Thus, this harmony is achieved not merely by control of breathing through the nose, but by reduction of desires. If you entertain too many desires in your mind, *pranayama* will be useless or may even be harmful. A person with no control over desires should not practise *pranayama*. First, you must be ethical and moral in your conduct.

In the beginning, do not practise technical methods (like alternate breathing); just practise normal inhalation and exhalation. Take a slow, full, deep breath and exhale slowly. Generally, you do not take a slow, deep breath; you take a fast, shallow breath.

The purpose of *pranayama* is to reduce the rate of breathing. And, when the *prana* becomes calm by this process of slow breathing, the mind also becomes calm. The *prana* is connected to the mind. When the *prana* is reduced in its activity, the mind is also reduced in its activity. Between the *prana* and the mind are the senses. The senses are the meeting point between the *prana* and the mind. The senses become active, whether the *prana* works or the mind works.

5. The fifth harmony is the control of the activity of the senses. The senses cannot be controlled as long as you live in the midst of attractive objects. So, in the beginning stages of yoga practice, you should try to live for at least some time in a year in such places where objects are not tempting to the senses. This is the reason why seekers of Truth try to live in ashrams, monasteries or secluded places. When you try to gradually abstain from sense indulgence by living in such holy atmospheres, the senses become subdued automatically. As the senses are in contact with the mind, control of the senses also involves a little control of the mind.

When the mind is accustomed to a life of seclusion and solitariness, and the senses do not ask for tempting objects, you are ready for concentration and meditation. This is the real field of yoga. All the stages earlier are only preparatory. From concentration onwards is proper yoga.

6. Now, concentration is of three forms:

A. Concentration on external points:

The mind is accustomed to think of external objects only; so, it would be dangerous to suddenly cut off the mind from external objects. You should not try to concentrate on internal centres in the beginning of your practice.

You must pick an external object that you have an interest in, that you have a love for. Believers in God usually try to concentrate on an external picture or symbol of God. You may keep a portrait of Lord Krishna or Jesus Christ in front of you, and gaze at the picture with open eyes. Where the eyes are, there the mind also is. You are not looking merely at a painted picture, but at a symbol of a living personality. So, when you gaze at a picture of Christ or Krishna, you immediately feel in your mind the qualities that these personalities were endowed with.

After three or four minutes of gazing at the picture, close your eyes and mentally imagine the picture. Concentrate on the form you saw. Continue this internal concentration as long as your mind is not disturbed. If, after a few minutes of closed-eyes meditation you feel that the mind is wandering, then open the eyes again and look at the picture. Again gaze the picture for a few minutes, then again close the eyes to habituate the mind to internal meditation.

Practise this process for a few months until you can concentrate without a picture. When you can concentrate, merely by closing the eyes, on the form of the portrait, without the external support of a painted picture, you have achieved the first success in meditation.

Feel that this internal picture is not merely in one place, but is in every place. When you begin to feel a uniform presence in all places, the mind ceases from all distraction. The other method to bring about this harmony of mental perception is to think of the vast space. Inasmuch as space is everywhere, try to concentrate on all directions at one time. You can also concentrate on the light of the sun pervading the whole space. Or you can concentrate on the vast ocean which is everywhere. You can gaze at the flame of a candle or a dot on the wall.

When you gain success in this, you can change your object of concentration; you will have such mastery of mind that you can concentrate on any object. The purpose of this concentration is to make the mind think only of one thing, and not think of anything else. So, ultimately, it matters little what object you choose for concentration if the purpose is served, i.e. to think only of one thing and nothing else.

When you are accustomed to this external meditation, you can turn to internal meditation.

B. Concentration on internal points:

Internal meditation means concentration on certain centres (*chakras*) of the body. The most important and most favourable *chakras* for beginners in meditation are the *chakra* between the eyebrows and the *chakra* in the heart.

In the waking state the mind functions in the brain, in the dream state it works near the throat, and in deep sleep it goes to the heart. The mind also goes to the heart in deep, objectless meditation. So, the ultimate purpose of internal meditation is to bring the mind to the heart. This is done in three stages: the mind comes from the external object to the head (i.e. the centre between the eyebrows), then the mind comes to the heart. Meditation on the point between the eyebrows is in two stages: (l) external gaze at the centre of eyebrows, and (2) to close the eyes and think of the spot alone (as a spot of light). Slowly, you begin to feel that the mind descends from the head through the throat to the heart. When you do this, you will fall asleep if you are careless. You must do this with caution and alertness; otherwise you will sleep and mistake it for meditation.

The other method of internal meditation is to directly meditate on the heart. You can imagine a blossoming lotus in the heart, or the light of the rising sun in the heart. The best form of meditation on the heart is to feel consciousness seated there. From this internal point of meditation on consciousness in the heart, you can slowly proceed to the universal.

C. Concentration on the Universal:

Just as consciousness is in your heart, it is in the heart of everybody. Try to meditate on this conscious-

ness as present everywhere, in everything, outside and inside uniformly. This is the absolute form of meditation, i.e. the Supreme State.

To help achieve this Universal State of Meditation, you can chant OM (Pranava) in a methodical manner. There are three types of OM chanting: (1) Short—about one second, i.e. 30 in 30 seconds; (2) Middle—each chant for five seconds, i.e. 6 chants in 30 seconds; (3) Long—each chant for fifteen seconds, i.e. 2 chants in 30 seconds. The elongated process is the best form of chanting. It makes the cells of the body subside in their activities, and the nervous system becomes calm. You need not take any tranquillisers. If you are disturbed, chant this elongated way for fifteen minutes. The whole system will become calm and quiet. When you chant like this, also feel that you are expanding slowly into the Cosmos.

OM is not merely a sound that we make, but a symbol of a Universal Vibration. This is really the Vibration that was made at the beginning of the creation of the world. This Universal Vibration (of creation) is the controlling force behind everything in the world. So, when you chant OM and create this Vibration in your system, you set yourself in tune with the Vibration of the Cosmos. The Forces of the Universe begin to enter into your body; you will feel strong and energetic; your hunger and thirst will

decrease; you will feel absolute happiness even if you have nothing (i.e. no material possessions) and are absolutely alone, unknown and unseen by people. You will have no desire for anything in the world, because you have become one with all things.

When you become the friend of the Universal Forces, then the world will take care of you in times of difficulty, and you will have no fear from anywhere. Then it is that you become a Saint or a Sage. In this state, if you have any desire, it will be immediately fulfilled because you have become the friend of all Forces in the world. In this state of Ecstasy or Bliss, great Saints sing and dance because they possess everything in the world. Here it is that you will realise that you are a Child of God. God Himself will perpetually take care of you and you will have no fear, just as the son of a King has no fear because the King protects him always and everywhere in the kingdom.

DAY-TO-DAY PRACTICES

This is almost a complete outline of the essentials of the practice of yoga. But, when you actually begin to practise it, you will find it is very difficult. So, you have to be very honest in your pursuit. Swami Sivananda taught us that *sadhana* has three prongs, like a *trisula*:

1. A Daily Routine of Practice: Have a fixed procedure of practice every day. One must keep fixed hours and discipline his personality. In daily routine, three items should be very important: (a) JAPA —chanting some *mantra* over and over to maintain the same consciousness. This is often useful when meditation is difficult; (b) STUDY—reading scriptures or texts on yoga, e.g. Upanishads, Bhagavadgita, The Sermon on the Mount, The Imitation of Christ; (c) MEDITATION—should be performed at a fixed time and in a fixed place every day; you should not change the place. Face the same direction daily, either the east or the north, and sit in the same *asana* (i.e. posture) every day.

2. An Annual Resolve: Vow to give up bad habits such as harming or hurting others, telling lies, and incontinence; these three must be given up slowly, by degrees. *Ahimsa*, *satya*, *brahmacharya* are to be practised. If you break this resolve, you should fast for one day. Because of the fear of fasting, you will be careful not to break the vow.

3. A Spiritual Diary: When you go to bed every night, you should review what you have done since morning. This diary may consist of questions you may ask yourself, e.g. "How many times have I forgotten God today?" "Did I get angry today?" etc.

With these methods you can take to serious *sadhana*, or the practice of yoga. And when your efforts are followed with earnestness of purpose, you shall achieve success in this very life.

JAPA SADHANA

The world of experience may be said to be constituted of three important factors: 'thought', 'name' and 'form'. These three are internally connected with one another. This relationship that obtains among thought, name and form is taken notice of in a very important aspect of spiritual practice, or *sadhana*, known as Japa Yoga. This is a term with which you are all familiar: the yoga of *japa*. In the Bhagavadgita, the Lord has referred to this aspect of spiritual *sadhana* as perhaps the best among the known methods of approach to God. *Yajnanam japa-yajnosmi*: "Among all the sacrifices, *sadhanas*, austerities or forms of *tapas*, I am represented by *japa*," says Bhagavan Sri Krishna. *Japa* is regarded as the most efficacious method of spiritual practice because it is intimately connected with the immediate realities of life which are intelligible to our understanding, and at the same time it is also inwardly connected with a secret silken thread to the ultimate goal of yoga. The terms 'name' and 'form', to which we have made reference here, mean much more than what we are likely to make out from them. The name is not merely an epithet or an appellation that we casually attach to a physical form.

These days we are accustomed to any kind of name according to our whim and fancy, in relation to a form, without taking into consideration the relationship between the name and the form. In ancient days, especially in India, the naming of a particular form was based on a well-established, scientific fact. The name represents a form and the form is symbolised or indicated by a name. In a famous system of spiritual thought known as *tantra* or *agama*, it is pointed out that the expression of a particular name in a recognised manner automatically projects a particular form. This form is usually known in the Agama Sastras as the *yantra*. The *yantra* is not merely a geometrical drawing or a formation, but a shape that a name is supposed to take when it is made manifest through expression. Thus, the name and the form are intimately related to each other. Not only this—the name and the form are related to the thought that is behind the expression of the name and the form.

In common parlance we can take the instance of any name for the matter of that, such as a 'tree'. A 'tree' is a name, a sound symbol that is supposed to indicate or point to a form which we know as the physical existence of the object known as the tree. We know very well how the expression of the name 'tree' evokes a corresponding idea in our mind. The idea, the name and the form seem to rise simultaneously in

consciousness, so that the one is not easily distinguishable from the other. The perception of an object may evoke the idea of its name, and the utterance of a name may evoke the idea of the object or the form. Even a thought, a mere idea, may manifest itself as the form together with the name which symbolises it.

In *sadhana*, which, in the present context, is spiritual practice, this inner secret of nature is well borne in mind. Inasmuch as every name is correspondingly related to a form and the world is made up of forms and nothing but forms, we are required to evoke in our minds that particular form alone which is supposed to rouse in us the particular form of Reality or degree of Truth which is higher than the one in which we are placed at present, so that we may be enabled to rise from one degree of Truth to another degree in its higher and higher progressive forms of manifestation until we reach the highest form of it, the last or the ultimate expression of Truth which we know as God—Ishvara. And our scriptures tell us that as we can evoke a particular form in our consciousness by the utterance of a corresponding name, we can also invoke in our mind, in our consciousness, the form of God, the Supreme Being Himself, by the recitation of the Name which is the sacred expression of that ultimate form of Reality or Existence, God Almighty.

In one of the aphorisms, or *sutras*, of a famous system of spiritual practice known as Raja Yoga, the author thereof, Patanjali Maharshi, tells us, in a cryptic expression, *tajjapastadartha-bhavanam.* He defines *japa* in this *sutra*. What is meant by *japa sadhana*? The contemplation of the implied meaning of a particular symbolic expression, the utterance of a Name—that is *japa*. So *japa*, according to this definition of Patanjali at least, is not merely a mechanical recitation of a Name or a formula, but includes also a simultaneous contemplation on the meaning thereof, though many protagonists of this form of yoga tell us that even a mechanical repetition of the Name has its own beneficial effect.

There are certain medicines which have their own effect on the system; they act on the system in the manner required, whether or not we know what medicine we have taken, notwithstanding the fact that a knowledge of the contents of the medicine may help us in creating the necessary psychological atmosphere in ourselves so that the action may be accelerated. Knowingly or unknowingly, God's Name can be taken, whether we know the meaning of the Name, whether we can appreciate the implication of the Name, or not.

The Name of God is compared to fire that burns. Knowingly or unknowingly we may touch fire;

it shall burn, it shall have its own effect. Likewise, this potency of the Name of God has its action upon our entire system, physically as well as psychologically, so that it purifies us. The process of purification is that action which takes place in ourselves, which transforms the baser metal of crude thinking engendered by *rajas* and *tamas* into that form of expression known as *sattva guna*. The recitation of a *mantra*, therefore, accelerates the process of the revelation of the *sattva* in us, transforming the *rajas* and the *tamas* in our nature. It is not so much a destruction of *rajas* and *tamas* as a complete transfiguration of the constituents that we know as *rajas* and *tamas*. Inertia, distraction and equilibrium are termed *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattva*.

In fact, these three qualities, or properties, known as *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, are not extraneous toxic matter that have entered into our system like a thorn that has struck our feet, but they are forms of our mind itself. The *gunas* of *prakriti*, known as *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, are not outside the mind, like dirt or dust that covers a mirror on its surface. While the dust on the mirror is different from the mirror and we can wipe the surface of the mirror and the dust can be eliminated, not so is the case of the transformation of *rajas* and *tamas* into *sattva*. The mind itself is the substance out of which these *gunas* of *prakriti*

manifest themselves. What is the relation between the mind and the three *gunas*, viz., *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*? The quality of a substance is generally distinguished from the substance. The redness of a rose is generally regarded to be different from the rose itself. We do not say that redness itself is the rose. The rose is the substance in which the character or the quality of redness inheres. Not so is the case with the mind in its relationship to the *gunas*. The *gunas* of *prakriti*, the qualities of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, in relation to the mind, are related to the mind as the three strands of a rope are related to the rope. You know what are strands of a rope: three thinner ropes make a thicker rope. The three thinner ropes are not outside the thick rope. They themselves form the thick rope.

The threads themselves form the cloth. There is no cloth outside the threads. Though we use two different epithets—threads and cloth—we will find it is only a way of naming two different circumstances of one and the same substance. The threads are the cloth, and the cloth is the threads, though when we purchase a piece of cloth we do not say that we purchase threads. It is a way of expression, but, actually, substantially, they mean one and the same thing. Likewise, the mind is the *gunas*, and the *gunas* themselves constitute the mind-stuff. So, in the transformation that takes place from the condition of

rajas and *tamas* to the state of *sattva*, what happens is an inner reconstitution of the elements of the mind into an inner setup of circumstances known as *sattva*. It is something like the transformation of the constituents of milk when it becomes another substance known as curd, though the analogy is not wholly appropriate here. I cite this instance only to tell you that the constitution is inwardly reshaped and an external element does not introduce itself. We ourselves become another thing in this process of transformation.

The principle of God is not wholly outside our nature. The Supreme Being, whom we are invoking through *mantra japa*, is not entirely disconnected with our inner constitution, or makeup. We are not importing God from outside, like an external element unconnected with our nature. God is not brought into our nature from outside, from the seventh heaven. The element of God, the principle of Reality, is manifest from within. This fact could be clear to us when we contemplate on the fact of the Immanence of God, as the scriptures proclaim. God is not merely transcendent to our nature, though He is also that, for He is at the same time immanent in us, which means to say that the nature of God is not only superior to the baser nature of *rajas* and *tamas* in us, which is the meaning of transcendence, but also that the principle of God is

hiddenly present, secretly permeating our own personality, our own mind, intellect—our very Atman itself. In fact, the Atman in us is the Brahman of the cosmos. This is what the ancients have declared. The Self is the Absolute. The internal is at once the Universal-All.

The invocation of *Ishvara-shakti* through *mantra japa* is, therefore, an attempt at bringing some higher face of reality from outside into our inward constitution as a manifestation of what is within us in a greater degree of its expression. So we play a very important role in the practice of *japa*. We, as *sadhakas*, seekers, are as important an element in the practice of *japa sadhana* as the principle of God, the Deity, and the constitution of the letters of the *mantra*. In fact, *japa* involves three important elements, or *shaktis*, or powers, viz., *mantra-shakti*, *devata-shakti* and *sadhana-shakti*. The *sadhana-shakti* is the power that is within our own selves; the *mantra-shakti* is the power that is hidden in the peculiar combination or juxtaposition of the letters of the formula; and the *devata-shakti* is, again, the power of the immanence of a higher principle in the *mantra*.

We have to take into consideration all these three aspects when we take to *japa sadhana*, so that it becomes a complete spiritual practice by itself. *Japa* is a complete *sadhana* and it does not need any

external addition to make it more complete. *Tajjapastadartha-bhavanam*, to repeat what Sage Patanjali has told us. The Name of God is a little different from the ordinary names connected with particular objects in the world. It is not like calling out to a tree or to a cow that is grazing in the field. While the temporal names which we attach to particular physical objects of the world rouse or evoke in our mind the form of that particular object alone which is by convention connected with the particular name, the Name of God rouses in our mind the idea not merely of any particular isolated object of the world, any temporal event or thing, but invokes in our mind the notion or concept of a wider reality than we are likely to conceive in our minds in terms of earthly relations.

The Name of God, especially when it is given to us in the form of what is known as a *mantra*, is a power by itself. It has a *shakti* of its own, and this is the reason why *bhaktas*, sages and saints have told us that even a mere repetition of the Name of God has the capacity to produce an effect of its own, though we may not be really meditating, though we may not be in a position to contemplate the actual meaning hidden behind it. The *mantra-shakti*, or the power of the *mantra*, arises on account of the fact that is beautifully and scientifically described in a science known as *mantra-shastra*, which is akin to the science of

chemistry in our own ordinary life. Chemical elements act and react upon each other. We know the action between acid and alkali, for instance. Different chemical combinations are supposed to produce different effects. Sometimes the chemical reaction is such that it can produce a tremendous effect. Mantras produce such effect, similar to the reaction of chemical elements, because of the peculiar combination of letters. The *mantra-shastra* is a secret which tells us that every letter of the alphabet is a condensed form of energy. Sounds are really energy manifest. The sound is not merely an empty form of verbal manifestation, but energy that is made to express itself in a particular shape. And this packet of energy, this tied up form of force, which is a particular letter of the alphabet, is made to come in contact with another packet of energy called another letter. They collide with each other, or, we may say, they act upon each other or fuse into each other—whatever be the process that takes place there—so that the utterance of a group of letters, which is the *mantra*, produces, by the process of permutation and combination of these letters, a new form of energy which gets infused into our system because it has arisen from our own mind, thought and the recesses of our being. We get charged with that force, as if we have touched a live electric wire. There is special name given to this science; it is *gana-shastra*, in *tantrik* parlance. Words are forces, thoughts are

things, so they tell us. Words are not empty sounds that we make when we speak or utter a name or give expression to an idea. It is because of the fact that thoughts and expressions are powers by themselves that the words of saints take immediate effect. The words that a saint or a sage utters are not empty sounds that he makes. They are forces that are released like atom bombs; they can manifest themselves in the physical world and events can take place. That is why people go to a Mahatma for *ashirvada*, or blessings. His words are forces, power that he releases to take immediate effect, or even a remote effect, as the case may be.

The utterance of a *mantra* is the release of an energy, not only inside our own personality but also in the outer atmosphere of which we form contents. *Japa sadhana* not only brings a transformation in our own inward personality, but also sympathetically produces an equal effect in the society of which we are a part. Therefore *japa sadhana* is also a social service. It is not merely a personal *sadhana*, inwardly practised by us in our *puja* room, but it is also a great *seva* that we do to mankind. An aura is produced around that *sadhaka* who takes to *japa sadhana* honestly and sincerely. We purify not only our nature inwardly but we also purify the atmosphere outside. We become a source of inspiration to people when we actually take

to *japa sadhana* with concentration of mind and with real faith in the efficacy of the practice. God's Name is a wonder. It is a miracle by itself. "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of," said the poet. The prayers that we offer to God are definitely capable of producing the desired result.

I had occasion to meet a humble *sadhaka* some years back—a householder. He was a votary of prayer, and a very honest person. He came to me to discuss a certain difficulty that he was experiencing while offering prayers. Incidentally, he mentioned his *sadhana* to me. He said, "Swamiji, my *sadhana* is only prayer to God. And with this *sadhana* of prayer, I also try to do a little bit of service to people outside. The people may be very far from me, they may be even in London; it makes no difference. I might not have even seen that person whom I want to help. I might not have even heard of his name." I asked him, "My dear friend, how do you direct your thoughts to a place or to a person whose name you do not know, whose location is also not known to you?" He said, "Swamiji, I have got that much of faith, by the grace of God, that the wonder is worked not by the prayer of my thought but by a medium which my prayer seems to contact, which works in its own omniscient manner." I was glad to see such a *sadhaka* who understood the secret of prayer and *japa*. What works is not

our personal strength or our individual thought, but that which our thought is able to rouse into activity and which is omniscient.

I can give you an illustration to explain what this perhaps means. In a broadcasting station people sing a song or send a message through the airwaves. The message is in the form of sound. We say something before a microphone in the station. What happens is that the sound that we make there in the form of a song, a *bhajan*, or a *kirtan*, or a lecture, or a discourse, is not really conveyed to the receiving sets—the radios or the transistors. The radios, in their internal mechanism, are not directly connected with the sounds that people make in the broadcasting station. What happens is that the sound is converted into energy. What travels through space, or ether, is not the sound that is made in the broadcasting station, but that into which the sound is cast, or moulded, or transformed. An impersonal form of energy which travels through space has an impact on the receiving sets, gets rechanged, or reshaped, or retransformed, into the sound which was originally made in the broadcasting station. That which is midway between the two instruments, the broadcasting set and the receiving set, is not the sound. Energy can be converted into sound through the receiving set, and sound can be converted into energy through the broadcasting set. This is the

secret of radio as well as television, and this is the secret of nature as a whole.

Prayers can work wonders in this manner. Our prayers or the invocations that we make through *mantra sadhana* or *japa* are converted into an impersonal force, which is the power of God, and the miracle is worked by God Himself. We cease to be the ultimate agent of the action. Our agency is only incidental. What really works is something higher than ourself. So the credit must go to God, finally, even when *japa* takes effect. God Himself seems to be doing *sadhana* for us. Who can do things in this world other than God? We cannot even lift our fingers without His will. As they say, even a dry leaf cannot move in the wind unless the Father wills it. The whole universe is divinity—resplendent, gorgeous in its glory and abundance. We have forgotten that we are an interral part of it. And in *japa sadhana*, particularly, we try to attune ourselves, attune our inner psychological constitution with that Omnipresent structure of the cosmos which is *Ishvara-shakti*, or Divine Will operating. We can appreciate how important *japa* yoga is. In the Shanti Parva of the Mahabharata, an entire chapter is devoted to this exposition of *japa sadhana*. Japaka Upakhyana is worth reading. It says how a person, a sage was devoted to *japa* entirely—Gayatri *japa* especially—and he could defy

the intrusion of even the higher *devatas* like Indra and Yama, and he attained *moksha* through *japa* alone. It is no wonder that, in the Bhagavadgita, Bhagavan refers to this system of yoga as the best: *yajnanam japayajnosmi.*

May I request you, brothers and sisters in the spiritual field, to take to this *sadhana* sincerely, wholeheartedly, and stick to it tenaciously. You will see for yourself that it makes you a different person. Small wonders and miracles will begin to take place around you. You will be surprised how things take shape without your knowing what happens. The atmosphere will slowly change. Prayers are powers; please remember this. And these powers which are generated by prayer are endowed with greater strength than even bombs. It would not be an exaggeration to say that you will be doing the greatest service to mankind if you honestly offer prayers to God from the bottom of your heart. God will hear your prayers through His All-pervading ears. *Sarvatah panipadam tat sarvatokshi-siromukham*: "Everywhere It has ears, everywhere It has eyes." It can see what you do even in the remotest corner of this world, and It can hear what you say wherever you are. Your prayers will be heard, and this will be a service that you do to your own Atman, your soul, for its salvation. Not only that, it will be a great service that you do to humanity itself.

May I repeat the request once again, that you take to this *sadhana* honestly, with intense faith, and you will see wonders, miracles manifesting themselves.

THE MISSION OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

The Divine Life Society is a veritable embodied form of the spirit of worshipful Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. It is impossible to conceive of or to work for the Divine Life Society without contemplating at the same time the ensouling principle of this Institution, Gurudev Swami Sivananda. It is his Virat-svarupa, his visible form, that is before our very eyes as a network of spiritual and cultural forces; that is the Divine Life Society. We are likely to think that an institution is a piece of land or a set of buildings or a few persons doing something hectically from morning to evening. The empirical concept of an institution in its material form needs a reorientation and has to receive a more sublime touch, in the same way as we cannot define a human being as a bodily personality or an individuality merely.

A human being is not merely a body. A human being is a set of values. Merely because we see a shape like that of a human body, we do not call it a human being. Human nature is what is implied in the concept of a human being. This nature is what characterises humanity and differentiates it from animality, and where the values or the characters or the natures are absent, we do not call it a human being. The

human being is a spot, a locality, a pinpointed individual wherein powers and forces and values and meanings and significances are manifest. When these significances are not manifest, we do not see human nature, and we do not see a human being. We may see a cannibal when the characters of the human being are absent. We may see a tiger without a tail.

Likewise, an institution is a collective, embodied form of the best values in human nature, which are grouped in various categories, on account of which we have various institutions. We have educational institutions, we have cultural institutions, we have industrial institutions. We have organisations of various types in the world, all which are dedicated to the manifestation, expression, nurturing, tilling and culturing of certain values which a set of people or a group of persons have held or are holding as their ideal or goal. The Divine Life Society is, thus, not a set of buildings or a piece of land or a few persons. It is something invisible. And it is this invisible significance that gives value and status to the visible form of it, which we generally call a Society or an organisation. As I mentioned earlier, it is a value and a culture and a significance that gives meaning to what we call the human personality. This was the interpretation and definition and concept held by Gurudev Swami

Sivanandaji Maharaj about this organisation, the Divine Life Society.

A value which subsumes every other value is a divine value. This is the difference between a divine characteristic and other characteristics. As they say, an elephant's footprint includes the footprints of all other animals; even so the divine characteristic or value includes within itself all other conceivable characteristics and values in the world. So divinity is not a transcendent miracle eluding the grasp of our understanding but an immanent force which vitalises and gives significance to even the material values of life. God is not, as erroneous religions may hold, an otherworldly superhuman creator, inaccessible to the yearning heart of man, but a here and a now, an eternity and an infinity fused and blended into a single mass of immanence, capable of being invoked at any moment. We have the historical and magnificent illustration of Narasimha-Avatara, God bursting forth through a brick pillar. He did not come from Vaikuntha, or Kailasa, or from the seventh heaven. He came from a pillar, most unthinkable indeed, and He can come from any place because of the immanence characteristic of God, apart from His transcendence.

Swami Sivananda's Mission, in the form of the Divine Life Society, was precisely to inculcate in the minds of people the values that have been

misrepresented by outdated religions and religious philosophies and to give a transforming touch to the concept of philosophy, spirituality and religion, by which religion becomes a living force and not a dead mechanism of temples and churches. Religion is a vitalising principle and power in our own personal lives so that it is impossible for a person to live or exist without accepting and adoring religious and spiritual values in the true sense of the term. Religion became an outmoded routine of incapacitated persons, on account of which erroneous doctrines today think that religion is a kind of opium which drugs the intellect of man and makes him cease to think for himself in a correct fashion. This is because religion has been defined and taught in a wrong way. Religion is a state of mind and consciousness and an attitude. It does not belong to temples, it does not belong to mosques and churches, it does not belong to monks and nuns or monasteries or nunneries, chapels—nothing of the kind. Wherever God is, there religion also is. The religious value is, in the hands of saints like Swami Sivananda, an instrument of world transformation. We may call it religion, we may call it spirituality, we may call it culture, we may call it philosophy; it makes no difference. All these nomenclatures point to a single *necessity* of life in its generality. We can underline the word 'necessity'. What we

call the ultimate necessity of the human soul is religion.

Religion is not a gospel from the books or a cult from a group of preachers or prophets, which one can accept or dispense with. It is not up to us to accept or dispense with religion, because it has already been said it is a necessity, and it is the ultimate necessity, not merely the slipshod variety of necessities that we have in our immediate day-to-day existence. The ultimate need of the human soul is called religion. This was to be taught to mankind. It was fading into the background and receding into the limbo of human consciousness. It was dying. Many saints and sages were projected by the Almighty Himself, right from the time of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, when empirical, material values began to gain an upper hand and the bodily needs, the economic necessities and public relationships were given a greater importance than the cries of the human soul. It was the time when life in India was in a turmoil, culturally speaking. It was then that personalities like Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa cropped up to set the forces in balance and hit the nail on the head at the right spot once again. Then we had a galaxy of saints and sages. Read the history of saints. I am speaking only of the modern renaissance in India. I am not referring to the ancient sages and saints like Vasishtha or Vyasa. Though they

were there, and they are there, I am particularly pinpointing the modern movement of the spiritual renaissance in India, right from the time of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Swami Vivekananda and Swami Rama Tirtha. Then we had Sri Aurobindo who accentuated these masterly strokes that the masters had already given—Ramana Maharshi, Ramadas and Mahatma Gandhi. God will not keep quiet. When He is ignored, He will assert Himself in every field of activity. He asserted Himself even in politics in the form of Mahatma Gandhi.

Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj brought into high relief this need for answering the call of the Spirit of man and projected forth the Divine Life Society—not a set of buildings, but a surge of values. The wakening of the mind of man, or shaking human nature from its slumber of ignorance, was the primary mission of Gurudev. It is very necessary that we, in our enthusiasm and hurry, do not forget this concept of the Divine Life Society as a spiritual organisation, which is a man-making concept and not a house-building or profit-making scheme. It is a methodology of creating humanity out of animality so that it may rise to Divinity. We are told that we rose from the mineral, came up to the vegetable level and then passed through the animal, and have come to man's nature. We are Homo sapiens. We are human beings, which

means to say that we have transcended the animal nature. We do not call ourselves human beings if the animal nature is still present in us. What are the animal natures? If we can sting like a scorpion or bite like a snake, show teeth like a tiger or pounce on another like a lion, we are not human beings. But, we can do that, we know it. At times we can bite like a snake and sting like a scorpion. This means to say, while we have risen from the physical structural pattern of the animal body, we have not yet transcended animal nature wholly. That is why we have wars, battles, cut-throatism, pick-pocketism, corruption and what not—which are attempts at overcoming one's own brother.

Divinity is a transcendence of human nature itself, which would be an impossibility if humanity has not gained its own consciousness, at least in an appreciable proportion. Divinity cannot show even its head in humanity if the animal nature has not been sublimated adequately, and Divinity completely manifests itself in human nature when animality is completely overcome and we become totally human. The total, purified and sublimated form of human nature is exemplified in the personality of Sri Rama. We cannot find a person like Rama. But he was the apotheosis of human nature, the perfection of human character, i.e., what man ought to be. He did not demonstrate

Divinity; that was not the purpose of Rama-Avatara. He demonstrated only human nature, to its perfection, to the logical limits. And if we can come to that level of human nature, reach that perfection of humanity, then we can automatically reach Divinity. We are trying to reach the seventh *bhumika*, and *nirvikalpa samadhi*, and we talk only of *nirbija*, and all these! We never talk of anything less than that. But all this is merely tall talk. It will end in nothing ultimately, when the roots are in the animal's bowels.

Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj was tirelessly hammering this point in the minds of people of different places in the world. He called them the Branches of the Divine Life Society. The Branches of the Society are not like the branches of a tree. They are invisible forces projected by his own Self. Swami Sivananda never travelled abroad during his lifetime. He was only in India. And it was only once that he travelled even through India. He stuck to Rishikesh. He said: "My characteristic is stickability." People used to call him "a stickable Swami"—i.e., he was sticking to one place only, he never moved anywhere. Well, he also wrote a poem on 'stickability'. With that stickability he has shaken the consciousness of mankind in an unprecedented manner. His arms reached humanity in different continents.

Saints and sages do not work through their bodies. Whether they fly in a plane or not, it makes no difference. They can fly without our knowing it. Saints and sages, masters and incarnations do not work through their bodies, because they are not bodies. The bodies are only the vehicles of a force which they really are. The electric bulb does not shine; it is the power that is inside it that shines, and it exceeds the limit of the walls of the bulb. We know that. The bulb is so small. It is only two inches in diameter, but the light goes so far. The radiation reaches a distance farther than the limitation of the wall of the bulb.

Similarly, masters like Swami Sivananda worked miraculously, to the wonderment of man, and stirred mankind, creating jewels and gems in different parts of the world. All this is due to his *tapas*, austerity. The more we remember the austerities, the *tapas* of Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, the more do we bow in obeisance to his lotus feet. His power is working in leaps and bounds. He used to say, "My mission is not complete." Sometimes, humourously, he used to say, "This birth, everything I have written in English. Next birth everything I will write in Sanskrit, because people would like to read my works in Sanskrit also." He was a very jocular person. His jokes were multi-faceted, all-instructive, full of wisdom, sometimes

going directly into the heart of a person and making him different that very minute. A few blessed souls have received direct grace from him, and there are hundreds of thousands who were inspired and transformed by him in a mysterious manner, through his writings. He has brought about a transformation in their hearts through his invisible powers, and those hearts he called the Branches of the Divine Life Society. "The Divine Life Society" is in the heart of every man. As a matter of fact, it is in the heart of man only. It manifests itself outside afterwards, in the form of action and the visible shape or instrumentality of its mission. The purpose of these Centres is to ignite other sparks. The spark is everywhere; it is in you, in me and in every person. But it is smothered, it is stifled, it is covered over and it is not able to become Self-conscious. When the spark itself is not Self-conscious, it cannot make others Self-conscious. To rouse the spark of the Spirit in man to its own Self-consciousness is the work of the Divine Life Society and its Branches.