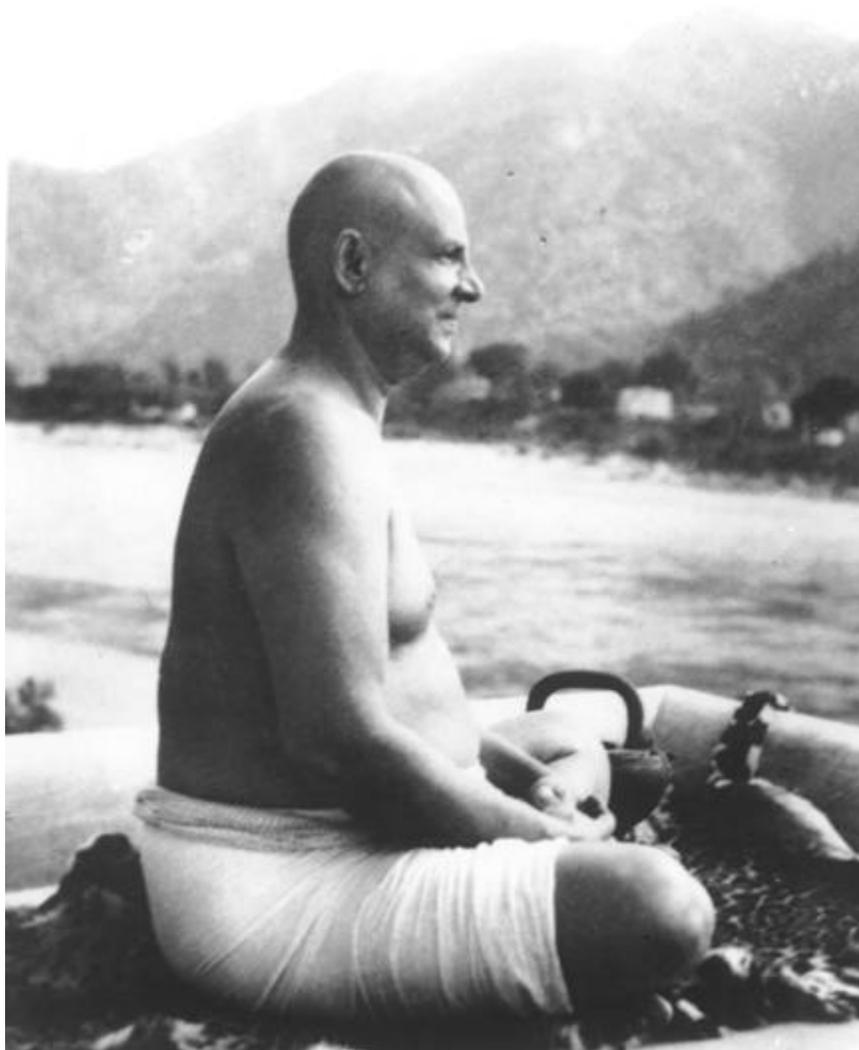


INSPIRING TALKS OF GURUDEV SIVANANDA



Chronicler: Swami Venkatesananda

INSPIRING TALKS OF GURUDEV SIVANANDA

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Siva Pada Renu

SWAMI VENKATESANADA



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To
Sri Swami Sivananda

Born on the 8th September 1887, in the illustrious family of Sage Appayya Dikshita and several other renowned saints and savants, Sri Swami Sivananda had a natural flair for a life devoted to the study and practice of Vedanta. Added to this was an inborn eagerness to serve all and an innate feeling of unity with all mankind. Though born in an orthodox family, Swamiji was broadminded and catholic, pious and devout.

His passion for service drew him to the medical career; and soon he gravitated to where he thought his service was most needed. Malaya claimed him. He had earlier been editing a Health Journal and wrote extensively on health problems. He discovered that people needed right knowledge most of all: dissemination of that knowledge he espoused as his own mission.

It was divine dispensation and the blessing of God upon mankind that the doctor of body and mind renounced his career and took to a life of renunciation to qualify himself for ministering to the soul of man. He settled down at Rishikesh in 1924, practised intense austerities and shone as a great Yogi, saint, sage and Jivanmuktha.

In 1932 he started the Sivanandashram. In 1936 was born the Divine Life Society. In 1948 the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy was organised. Dissemination of spiritual knowledge and training of people in Yoga and Vedanta were their aim and object. In 1950 he undertook a lightning tour of India and Ceylon. In 1953 he convened a World Parliament of Religions. He is the author of over 300 volumes and has disciples all over the world, belonging to all nationalities, religions and creeds. To read his works is to drink at the fountain of wisdom and grow spiritually.

The Three R's of Sivananda Yoga, viz.,

- (1) Righteousness.
- (2) Renunciation.
- (3) Realisation.

....are dealt with in sparkling detail in this volume.





GURUDEV SIVANANDA



CHRONICLER: VENKATESANANDA

A FOUNTAIN OF SIVANANDA YOGA

FROM SIVANANDA JNANA-GANGOTRI¹

A day with Gurudev Sivananda is better spent than a year in the study of scriptures or a life-time in a library. A word—always appropriate to the occasion, and to the person addressed—a look, a smile, an action seemingly trivial—all these are (and only they truly are) ‘Living Scriptures’. The inner truth which scriptures often hide from the gaze of the immature: the easy path to God-realisation which the complicated mind of the ‘modern’ man, fails to see: the fountain of wisdom which the educated man’s vision, blinded by the cataract of faithlessness, fails to perceive—are revealed like the apple on one’s palm, by a simple word from the Sacred Lips.

For a period of just over two years, Gurudev had granted me the boon of gathering these pearls of wisdom, as they fell from his lips. Those were the years of hectic divine life activity at the Ashram, too. They were the years during which the Ashram and the Divine Life Society had just emerged from their ‘teething troubles’ and the Mission began to take shape. Gurudev’s pronouncements of this period, therefore, assume the importance of a divine gospel. With open eyes and ears and with the mouth shut,—Oh, it was a joy, a privilege, an unrivalled education to hear him, to hear more, and to hear nothing else. One who heard him, one who saw him, one who had spent an hour with him, would exclaim with Sage Alavandar....

Tava-Amritasyandini Pada Pankaje

Niveshitaatmaa Katham-Anyadichchat

Sthitheravinde Makarandanirbhare

Madhuvrato Nekshurakam Hi Veekshate

(How shall my mind, which has entered the sweet arbour of thy lotus feet, wish for anything else?)

I offer that undiluted nectar at the feet of my Gurudev, enshrined in the heart of millions of seekers after Truth, all over the world. I have in my own humble capacity endeavoured to give the reader a pen-picture of the setting: in order that he may ‘live at Gurudev’s feet’ while reading these talks. Cold print misses something very vital—the gestures, etc., which often convey a lot. In such instances, I have taken the liberty of explaining a Talk. To those who have had his

¹ *Gangotri is the sacred origin of the Holy river Ganga; Jnana-Gangotri is the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy Press, from which issues the perennial sacred River of wisdom (Jnana Ganga).*

Darshan, this will call up the indelible picture of Ananda Kutir: if you have not yet had that good fortune, please have it now. Words cannot equal the Presence!

These inspiring talks have been recorded then and there, and published now as they were recorded, chronologically. They are not to be read as a textbook is read: but they are to be resorted to as a fountain—to quench the spiritual thirst. Any page and every page is laden with inspiration: and the usual ‘contents’ have been omitted in this volume, as it was felt that that would be confusing and cumbersome.

This book has been completed by the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy press in record time! To all those who made this possible, my spiritual brothers Swamis Amaranandaji (the Manager) and Jnananandaji (on whose patient shoulders feel the selfless job of proof-reading), Sri Vasudev, Sri Chary, Sri Sevakram, and Sri Buddhi—my grateful thanks.

May Sri Gurudev live forever and guide us along the path of divine life.

-Venkatesananda



INSPIRING TALKS OF
GURUDEV SIVANANDA

Om Sahana Vavatu, Sahana Bhunaktu, Saha Veeryam Karvaavahai,
Tejasvinavadhitamastu Maa Vidvishaavahai, Om Shaanti Shaanti Shaantih.

NOTE

IN THIS VOLUME 'SIVA' REFERS TO
'SWAMI SIVANANDA'

MARCH TO AUGUST 1948

25TH MARCH, 1948

LOVE OF NATION: FIRST STEP TO LOVE OF GOD.

It was a lovely evening. The sun was lingering over the Western hills to catch a glimpse of an epoch-making event.

Dr. K.N. Gairola, Health Minister of the Tehri-Garhwal State was addressing a mammoth gathering on the Ganges bank. The local municipality had erected a flag-staff just in front of the Ashram and had invited the Minister to hoist the National Flag. Even during the course of his inevitable political speech, Dr. Gairola made touching references to Siva, to the glory that the presence of saints like Siva brought to the entire State, and the profound spiritual influence that Siva exerted in the people. Even as he concluded his speech, Dr. Gairola requested Siva to give them his Upadesh.

As the flag went up, Siva roared OM OM OM. The entire gathering joined him and it looked as though the powerful current of the Pranava-chanting raised the flag up!

‘Vande Mataram, Vande Mataram, Vande Mataram

Jai Hind Jai Hind Jai Hind Jai Hind Jai Jai Jai Jai Hind’

....sang Siva and the multitude echoed his Kirtan. Siva has a Kirtan for every occasion!

‘Glory to Mother India. No other nation in the world has produced such heroes. No other nation in the world can claim to have given birth to illustrious saints and sages. No other nation in the world has had among her children mighty intellectuals and great mystics who could rise to great spiritual heights, who could display such intuitive wisdom and who could leave as a rich heritage unsurpassed philosophical treatises. No philosopher in any other land has been able to solve the riddle of creation, the mystery of birth and death and the problem of life itself as effectively as the sages of India have done.’

‘Such a spiritually mighty nation has achieved her political independence also in an unprecedented manner. Thanks to the Apostle of Ahimsa, Mahatma Gandhiji, India has conclusively proved to humanity that there is indescribable Shakti in non-violence. Gandhiji has demonstrated to the world that love is power, that love conquers. Such a demonstration of spiritual power would not have been possible in any other nation in the world. The national leaders in the West must now sit up and think; they must learn the lesson of non-violence; they must abandon at once violence in all its forms. The path of violence leads to destruction; the path of love leads to peace, plenty and prosperity.’

‘Our national leaders are all the trusted lieutenants of Gandhiji. They have sacrificed their all in the cause of the liberation of the motherland. Even though they have not embraced Sannyas formally, they are true Sannyasins at heart.’

'Patriotism is the first step to universalism. Love of one's own nation in time leads to cosmic love or the love of God. The main thing is to crush the low, mean-minded selfishness. A selfless servant of the nation will soon become a selfless servant of humanity; he will soon transcend his individual ego and realise God.'

Then Siva sang the Maha Mantra Kirtan. He thanked Dr. Gairola for giving him this opportunity of singing the Lord's Name. Siva showered his blessings on the Minister: 'May Lord bless Dr. Gairola and the other Ministers with health, long life, peace, prosperity and Kaivalya Moksha! May God bless you all!' After chanting the Shanti Patha, Siva resumed his seat.

Padmanabhan was all the time busy on the roof of neighbouring buildings 'shooting' the whole proceedings with his movie camera.

Siva then led the minister to the Ashram where the Ministerial party was entertained to tea.

28TH MARCH, 1948

MIRA BEHN AND SADHU ORGANISATION

'Om Namō Narayanaya! I am grateful to you for coming. Are you all right?' enquired Siva affectionately as Kumari Mira Behn came up the Ashram steps on the Ganges bank.

For over half an hour Mira Behn discussed with Siva her Pashulok scheme and the object with which she started it. She also acquainted Siva with the views of Mahatma Gandhiji on the position of Sadhus in Indian society. She thought that there was a lot of work that should be done among Sadhus to organise them so that they could become an integral and useful part of the society. She asked for Siva's blessings and for his moral support to her plans for organising the Sadhus of Rishikesh.

Mira Behn is a close follower of Mahatma Gandhiji to whose mission she has dedicated her life.

THE ALL-PERVADING SIVA!

'Wherever I have been, Swamiji, I have found that your name and your soul-elevating writings have gone ahead of me!' said Goswami Ganesh Duttji, a well-renowned public benefactor of Punjab. Sri Goswamiji had come to pay his respects to Siva whom he has known for a long time. The object of his visit was to discuss with Siva the question of Sadhu Seva (Sadhu reform).

24TH APRIL, 1948

VAIRAGYA

'Constant reflection on the great utterances of the Great,

Sarva Dukham Vivekinah

and developing Mithya-drishti or Dosha Drishti in relation to the objects of the world through discriminative thinking—these will help you to develop true Vairagya,’ said Siva when Sri Jayadaya Goenka of the Gita Press, Gorakhpur, sought Siva’s Darshan today.

As soon as Sri Jayadayaaji came in, Siva noticed a wound on his foot, immediately got the necessary dressing from the dispensary and applied the bandage.

There they were—Sri Jayadayaaji and his party in Siva’s Kutir on the lap of the Ganga—listening to Siva’s words of wisdom on Bhakti, Yoga, Jnana and Vairagya.

A member of Sri Jayadayaaji’s party gave expression to his admiration of Siva’s work and added that the excellently got-up Diamond Jubilee Commemoration Volume had enabled Siva’s message to spread far and wide. This led to a discussion of Guru-worship, and Siva said:

‘Some say that we should not worship a living saint. But, the wise say that whereas no one need be fanatical in his desire to celebrate the Jayanthi of any saint, he need not go to the other extreme, either. Those who like to celebrate, let them. It ill-behooves a Sannyasin or saint who has gone above likes and dislikes to abhor the idea of such celebration. Vairagya-Abhimana is as dangerous as Abhimana for worldly possessions.

‘Worship of saints has been taken more or less as a necessary Sadhana in the life of an aspirant in India. Even the Upanishads declare that a Sadhaka should have the same devotion to his Guru as he has to God. The idea is that by constantly thinking of his Guru, the Sadhaka is kept on the right path away from evil, and moulds himself on the pattern of his teacher.

‘Thus even a third-class teacher is fit to be worshipped by the fifth-class aspirant! The latter is sure to be benefited.

‘When a Sadhaka superimposes on his personal Guru the characteristics of the Impersonal Absolute—as in the case of idol-worship—the Sadhaka’s devotion reaches the Supreme! God, the Indweller knows the Sadhaka’s devotion and guides him along the proper path.

‘Even wise men sometimes lack this broader outlook and argue that the human figure of a saint should not be adored with devotion due to God! As with God, so with Guru—the way to the Impersonal lies through the personal.’

25TH APRIL, 1948

MONSIEUR BOGROFF OVERPOWERED BY LOVE

‘A Guru is necessary. But you must first prepare the ground for the reception of the seed of knowledge from the Guru. He cannot do this for you. Simple living, simple food, simple clothing, aversion to sensual pleasures, speaking the truth, developing a heart of love, continence, endurance, self-control, all these you will have to develop.’

'You should have a keen longing to meet a Guru and be initiated by him. Then God Himself will provide a Guru for you. God books written by realised Yogis who have trodden the path will greatly help you. Mere talking will not do. You must practise!' thundered Siva, as Mon. Bogroff listened spell-bound.

Mon. Bogroff, a Russian businessman in France, was on a flying visit to Ananda Kutir, prompted to see Siva, by one of Siva's admirers in Delhi, —Sri B.L. Nehru. He came in to say 'How do you do?' but stayed most part of the day under the spell of Siva's love.

Bogroff admitted that Indian Yoga largely meant to the French either black magic or tall talk! And, he felt that Siva's message of practical synthetic Yoga for Self-realisation was badly needed by the West.

Bogroff told Siva that he was interested in Raja Yoga and requested Siva to select a place for him where he could practise. Siva said: 'Any cool place will suit you. You can go to Uttara Brindawan to Sri Krishna Prem (Mr. Nixon),' and then briefly described the glory of Sri Krishna Prem and gave his address also. And, quietly Siva autographed a copy of 'Sayings' and handed it to Bogroff. The latter took leave of Siva with perceptibly great reluctance; took a number of snaps of Siva; took a number of Siva's books; and took, most of all, Siva's potent blessings.

IT IS OUR OWN HOME

'Do not feel shy. Be quiet at home in this Ashram. It is our own home.' Thus instructed, Sri Rao Saheb A.V. Raman of the Government of India when his young daughter was pondering over the acceptance of the proffered cup of coffee. He had lost his heart to Siva even on his first visit to the Ashram last year on his way to Badrinath.

I AM THOU

With Sri Raman, Siva was long conversing on Delhi affairs rejoining here and there with his own practical philosophy.

A youth who had accompanied Sri Raman found Siva lending an ear to his eloquence on the general principles of office organisation and organisation of squadrons and air force ranks. In this youth's opinion, the huge organisation of the Divine Life Society deserved to be a directorate with Siva as two-thousand rupee Director! A hearty laugh of encouragement from the Director of the Universe whose salary is the wealth of the world!

Sri Annapurna's mouth was watering as Siva the 'mountain recluse' was recalling to her some of the delicacies served in costly urban hotels. To her discomfiture, Siva knew more of the culinary art than she herself knew!

Srimathi Liliane sits there entranced as the dexterous fingers of Siva play the keys of her piano. 'This simple looking Sannyasin long secluded from urban life, knows this, too.'

Siva's divine eye pierces into the very soul of every one, and he at once finds out the other man's interest. Conquest of hearts is then child's play.

28TH APRIL, 1948

TO FOLLOW AND TO ADORE

What a flower of devotion—this Sri C. Alavandariah! Guru Siva is verily God unto him. He has known Siva from the latter's Swarg Ashram days.

Sri Alavandariah and I went to Siva's Kutir at about 8 a.m. and sat outside the Kutir, meditating on the lotus feet of Siva. What bliss, what peace pervades the entire atmosphere! No wonder: we were even physically so near the omnipotent dynamo. Time sped.

Siva came out of the Kutir punctually at 8 a.m. as previously arranged. Sri Alavandariah had with him four pieces of white silk, and a Gerua-Tiruman paste. (Tiruman is a kind of plaster of Paris used by Vaishnavites to put on their caste-mark. Gerua is the ochre powder.)

Siva then seated himself on a chair outside his Kutir. A small wooden plank was placed just near his feet. Over this were spread one small four-folded blanket and a small piece of cloth—to serve as padding.

With indescribable, but visible, joy Sri Alavandariah smeared the gerua paste on the soles of Siva's lotus-feet, as Siva sat diving deep within and bringing up his real Swarupa.

Then, Siva placed his feet squarely on the silk cloth spread over the padding and stood up, uttering 'Sivoham: Satchidananda Swaroopoham'. He then reclined in his chair again as we were busy removing the silk cloth with the precious, divine impression of Siva's lotus feet (indeed so even by their appearance on the cloth) and applying the gerua paste again, for the next impression.

When the four prints had been taken, Siva enquired in his own child-like simplicity: 'What will you do with these?' Even a trace of Gurudom was absent: and I felt that he had lost all identity with the foot-prints which he deemed to be 'Sivananda's'.

Alavandariah explained: 'Swamiji, Vaishnavites revere this greatly. They take the foot-prints of their Acharyas and worship them as the very Lotus Feet of the Acharyas themselves. Then the devotees place these foot-prints on their head and do their Japa or Dhyana. They derive wonderful benefits by this practice. They get concentration of mind more easily; their thoughts are noble, pure and sublime.'

'Especially, Swamiji, when the foot-prints are those of a living sage like yourself, the effect is bound to be miraculous. Even when I touch these foot-prints I am transported to realms of peace and joy. The moment we press these foot-prints to our eyes or place them on our head, or worship them, we are bound to feel your divine spirit working within us, and the yearning will be awakened in us to follow thy footsteps. Only, I need your blessings.'

SIVA WORKS THROUGH MANY

Srimathi....., a Punjabi lady who had migrated into India on account of disturbances in Pakistan, recollected the work she had been able to do in Pakistan before the riots, under the auspices of the Divine Life Society. All this she had to discontinue. All the materials had to be left behind in Pakistan. Siva at once said: 'Start your work afresh in Dehra Dun.' She replied: 'Yes, Swamiji, I must do some work. Your spirit, a spark of which works in me, does not allow me to remain idle even for a day. I want to do some work at Dehra Dun also. But, before the start is made, I want your blessings.' When she got this, she took the dust of Siva's feet with reverence and left with the great joy of satisfaction at heart.

2ND MAY, 1948

THE BUTTER OF ATMA

'I am glad you take so much interest in agriculture and dairy-farming. They are very essential for maintaining the health of every man in India. But there is another, a supreme type of butter, a knowledge of which is essential for every man, especially in India. That butter is that of Atma! Do you know how to churn the Koshas and take the butter of Atma?' said Siva, when Sri Ramdas (M. Sc. in Agriculture) informed Siva of his forth-coming visit to the U.S.A. for prosecuting his studies in agriculture and dairy-farming.

'Swamiji, I have not even heard of this churning and how to obtain this butter of Atma. Please let me know the process.'

'You have to go to the Forest University to obtain a knowledge of this butter.'

The five sheaths of the body represent the vessel that holds curd. OM is the churning rod. Practise meditation on OM with Brahma Bhavana. You will soon get the butter of Atma which will make you immortal and ever blissful.' The scientist said: 'Thank you very much, Swamiji, you have really opened my eyes now. I shall practise this spiritual churning to eat the butter of Atma and become immortal.'

CLEANSE THE MIND

Sri H. Ram Ram Ram, D.Sc. (Botany) had just returned from America after getting his D.Sc. at an American University. He elaborately described the glories of life in America.

Siva quietly remarked: 'You must be tired after such a long journey. Throw off your 'America', the suit and your D.Sc., and then take a bath in the Ganga and attend the worship at Viswanath Mandir.'

He was a bit surprised and asked: 'Swamiji! How to remove America? I can very well remove my suit.'

Siva then explained: 'Remove American habits and thoughts of America and the D.Sc. Abhiman which is more dangerous. Forget about the glamour of America; give up this D.Sc. Abhiman.'

He laughed heartily and resolved: 'I shall try to remove these two. But it is rather difficult, for they are ingrained in me for a very long time.'

5TH MAY, 1948

REAL KARMA YOGA

'In youth itself man should try to lead a simple life, to repeat God's name, to practise Yoga, to do Vichar, to study Gita and other scriptures, to control the Indriyas. Singing Kirtan and Japa of Nam will bestow perennial joy and supreme inner peace on you; but you can realise this only if you practise.'

'Yet, youth will not hear! Only when man gets knocks and blows in the daily battle of life will he turn to God. Why not thank God for His mercies and adore him in every form.'

'Do selfless service....'

'Yes, Swamiji, we are in a way doing this. We earn money, we work and support the family. So, we are all Karma Yogins.'

'This is a serious mistake. What do people know about the secret and technique of Karma Yoga? They are attached to their families; they waste their lives on earning for the sake of their bellies, and imagine that they are doing Karma Yoga. What do they know of Karma Yoga? Karma Yoga is different. You should give up Abhimana. You should renounce Kartritwa and Bhoktritwa: you should identify yourself with the Atman.'

'Even a little of this selfless service imperfectly done is good. It will purify you. Combine this with Japa, Kirtan, Dhyana. Then you will realise the Bliss.'

'Next time come here and stay at least for a week. Then you will have ample opportunities for doing intense Sadhana.'

The above conversation between Siva and an American businessman is revealing.

MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS

Dr. Sri Pattawardhan, Ph.D. (Chemistry) of Roorkee came to have Swamiji's Darshan. Swamiji remarked: 'Dr. Saheb, everybody wants to become a Ph.D. or D.Litt., or I.C.S., or M.B., B.S., or Bar-at-Law: no one wants to know the nature of the Atma! The play of Maya, and the Gunas; what happiness is; what the mind is; what the relation between man and Brahman is; how to get eternal bliss; how to free oneself from bondage. He does not believe in the life everlasting, beyond the senses, in transcendental matters. Everybody wants to have wife, some children, bungalows, gardens, a car and money in the bank. His mental current naturally flows towards objects. He is not able to believe that the repetition of Nam can produce joy and inner peace.'

'I suppose there is a period of life for such beliefs and practices, Swamiji.'

'This is the best period—youth. What will you do in old age? You will be deaf, how can the sound of Lord's name enter your ears: how can you enjoy Kirtans or Kathas? You will not be able to see; how can you read holy books like the Gita and

other scriptures? You will not be able to sit at a place and do Japa; you will not be able to control the Indriyas; Sadhana will be impossible. You will waste all your life in useless pursuits and turn when it is too late to the proper path.'

The Doctor asked: 'Swamiji, if all become Sannyasins, what will become of this world?'

Siva replied: 'This can never be. Why do you bother about this? Your mind tricks and wants to dupe you. The Omnipotent Lord will create another batch of people in a minute. Mind your business! Enquire and remove your ignorance.'

The Doctor became silent. He was convinced.

17TH MAY, 1948

SIVANANDA MEETS SIVANANDA

'OM Namō Narayanaya, Swamiji Maharaj!' so saying Siva swept into the room in Ramashram and before those gathered could realise what was happening had stretched himself on the ground at the feet of Swami Sivanandaji of Mukti Dham: Siva not only said but actually meant the OM Namō Narayanaya with tears in his eyes. The two Sivanandas exchanged greetings.

This Swami was an old Sannyasin, aged 82, more than half of this span spent as a monk. When two worldly men meet after a long separation, they start talking of the clubs, theatres and races they used to visit together, and the picnics they had arranged, etc. God help those who witness this scene! They will be bored. Blessed were the souls who were present at the meeting of these two saints.

Siva served the Swami nicely with fruits and Lassi (sweet buttermilk) and all the while both of them exchanged views on Dharma, the necessity for everyone following the tenets of the Sastras, and the value of elders' blessings in the life of every man. To the eager listener the Swami then described in detail the growth of Rishikesh during the past half a century. By his child-like attitude, and his deep reverence towards this Swami, Siva set an example to all Sadhakas. True meaning of Narayana Bhav was also vividly portrayed in Siva's behaviour towards the Swami. Siva then gave a hearty send off to the learned Swami Sivananda.

18TH MAY, 1948

A MILLIONAIRE'S DAUGHTER BREAKS STONES WITH SIVA

We have already seen several times how Siva insists on the need for one and all engaging himself in selfless service. Siva has always said that an aspirant should be prepared to be a coolly and a scavenger, as much as to be a king emperor. He himself sets an example to others in this respect. We have seen how he inspired high officials and rich businessmen to carry baskets on their head by his own behaviour.

No one is spared! Young daughter of a Jewish millionaire—Sri Annabella—and her mother—Srimathi Liliane Shamash were strolling along with Siva near the

Yagnashala. Without a moment's premeditation, Siva mingled with the labourers there and started breaking the stones. A broad, winning smile, and a characteristic 'Hum'! He invited the two ladies to join him in the task. Soft hands began breaking hard stones.

Swish! A small pebble had flown into Srimathi Liliane's nose. Before she could even realise what had happened, she sneezed and the pebble was out without any injury to the nose. Of course, with Siva nearby, no harm could befall his devotees.

19TH MAY 1948

WELL DONE, SWAMIJI

Swami Satchidanandaji, an old Sannyasin who was staying in the Ashram entered the office, bowed to Siva and sat on the bench contemplating with joy Siva's countenance full of peace and bliss.

Sri Gopala Iyer entered and exhibited to Siva several clippings from the newspapers containing his contributions on the results of his researches into the sacred epics of the land. Surely, a lifetime's labour would evoke great enthusiasm and approbation from Siva!

Sri Gopala Iyer, too, sat beside Sri Satchidanandaji having nothing else to do (Siva had by now diverted his attention to his letters) he picked up a conversation with his bench-mate. Polite words, courtesy, arguments, slightly heated debate—the mercury in the 'egometer' was rising high! Satchidanandaji was trying in vain to impress on the pundit that Adwaita was not to be trifled with; that those who went mad if milk did not reach them in time for their morning coffee should not poo-poo Puranas, divinities and saints. This touched the pundit's delicate chords and he burst out almost calling the Swami names, characterising him as pseudo-Sannyasin, a mere flesh clothed in gerua, a waster of life, etc.

A sudden mellowing, and Satchidanandaji gave a welcome twist to the dissension. 'Maharaj! My knowledge is very poor. I have not touched the fringe of the ocean of knowledge in which you ever swim. I am as yet a student; you are advanced. I beg your pardon for arguing with you.' This silenced the pundit who went out with the head held erect, with egoism.

Siva smiled to Satchidanandaji and said: 'Very good reply!'

Who can doubt that Siva, seeing the heated debaters advancing towards each other, sent out his thought-current transforming Satchidanandaji, and used him as his medium to convey his own peculiar message of humble indifference to humbug?

25TH MAY, 1948

MY ONLY SAGE

'No, Swamiji! I will not take Sannyas from anyone else. I consider that you are the only real sage today by whose initiation alone I will derive great benefit. I do not

consider anyone else can even approach your Holiness in greatness.' Thus said a Bengali gentleman, a candidate for Sannyas. He had already come to the Ashram several times previously and requested Siva to initiate him into Sannyasa. Once he came to the Ashram, changed his mind and went to another Ashram in Rishikesh. The above was in reply to Siva's humorous suggestion that he might take Sannyas from some other Mahatma!

YOU ARE A MILLIONAIRE

The topic changed. And, before taking leave of Siva, the Bengali gentleman wanted to get some money from Siva. Half-humorously and half-seriously, Siva remarked that there was paucity of funds in the Society; and that it would gratefully accept donations, however small from the visitor himself! Astonished, the visitor revealed: 'Swamiji, they say in Rishikesh that you are a millionaire!'

Yes: Siva is a millionaire, the king of kings, whose treasury consists of everyone's purse and Kubera's wealth! But, that, the visitor did not know.

26TH MAY, 1948

STRANGE BLESSING

Sri Natarajan had come from South India on a fund collection mission on behalf of Akhilandeswari Temple. They had found it difficult to carry on the work—Pancha Prakara Utsavam—which was being done by his father. He had come to Delhi for the purpose of collecting funds. He did not meet with the success he expected to achieve. He requested Siva to bless him for success in the undertaking.

Siva was silent for a while, watching the two, one would have gathered the impression that Siva was unmindful of the visitor's plea. He was listening all the while, besides doing his own work.

The pen was put away!

'Do some Anushthan. This sort of running about for money is no good. By sheer Adhyatmic power you must invoke God's grace and you will get what you need. Money will come to you. You need not run after money. Reduce the food expenses in connection with the function. What money is collected you must try to utilise it for cultural purposes. Food will only create more quarrels and unnecessary crowd.'

'Start a Sanskrit College. Bring out translations of the Vedas and Upanishads. Then people will be benefited; they will appreciate your work and money will pour in. Study the working of such colleges elsewhere. Take suggestions from Sri S.V. Iyer of Chingleput—he has organised a Sevashram there.'

'That is the way to work. Then people will come to know of your spirit of service and will themselves come forward to help. No one nowadays will give you charity for the sake of feeding!'

'Swamiji! Food is also necessary, isn't it?'

‘Yes, that also. But the main thing is cultural service.’

‘Annadana first and....’

‘No. No. Jnana Dana first and Annadana next. You can give a man food—in a few hours he is hungry again. Further, if you don’t satisfy him and feed him according to his likes, he will abuse you.’

Sri Natarajan actually experienced the truth of this saying—he kept still for a long time trying to digest the food-for-thought Siva had given him.

28TH MAY, 1948

THE MONTESSORI-ADVOCATE

Sri Krishnamurthy and Mr. Lilly Felt arrived at Ananda Kutir with a letter of introduction from Sri Swami Nityananda Kaveeshwar and Sister Lalitha of Tapas Ashram. Sri Krishnamurthy and his companion belonged to the Inner Circle of the Theosophical Society at Madras and friends of Sri Henry van Zeyst, a disciple of Siva. They were on their way to Badrinath.

Siva received them in his own way, with divine cordial greetings. Quickly, he found out that Sri Krishnamurthy was interested in the Montessori system of education. During the evening Satsang Siva initiated a lively discussion on the Montessori system of education during which Sri Krishnamurthy gave a short talk in the system. Incidentally, it is noteworthy how Siva gives everyone his place of importance at Ananda Kutir. There is neither a superiority nor an inferiority complex there. Everyone is received in brotherly love; and anyone who has acquired knowledge in any branch of learning has an opportunity to share it with others. Even if the visitor is shy Siva would insist on his delivering a lecture. And, Siva himself would be the first and foremost student and listener!

BUDDING RAVI VARMA LAUDED

Here comes one of free India’s legislators, Sri Mohanial Saxena, M.L.A. (Central) with his wife and son. They received a hearty welcome and were entertained by Siva himself. Both the couple were pious and devoted. They listened enraptured to Siva’s discourse on Yoga. Young Nanda Kumar, however, found in Siva an object for his pen. Quickly, he sketched Siva’s bust! Siva was all-appreciation of this young boy’s art and awarded him the First Prize for proficiency in drawing. Siva also awarded the title of ‘Chitra Kala Kushala’ on the young artist.

30TH MAY, 1948

SECRET OF KARMA YOGA

‘Prasad distribution is a spiritual Sadhana. He who distributes Prasad should be a good Karma Yogi. There may be some important persons who will go away immediately after the function is over. They will not wait for Prasad distribution. You must serve them first. Others can wait. You should always use the power of discrimination....You gave so little to Punditji!’ chastised Siva, the Prasad-

distributor after the opening ceremony of the Diamond Jubilee Hall extension had concluded.

'Swamiji, we prepared only very little. We did not expect there will be such a big gathering.'

'Every function is holy. Even the opening of an office hall is an occasion for all to do Kirtan and have Satsang. All should be invited and served.'

'Hereafter we shall do so, Swamiji.'

'And, even if there is only a little Prasad and a big gathering, you should first serve the visitors and we shall share what remains. That is the spirit of Karma Yoga. Have you now understood?'

UPADSEH AT EVERY TURN

'You want my autograph? Come, why hesitate?' relieved Siva, Srimathi Kamala Tuli's embarrassed silence.

Astonished, Srimathi Kamala merely smiled and nodded 'Yes'.

'First, I thought that the thing in your hand was a money-bag; but when I noticed your embarrassment, I found out it was an autograph book. Give it to me.'

When the book was handed to him, Siva looked at it this way and that with the admiration of a child. 'It is so nice. Very good. But there are no autographs in it!'

'Swamiji, I wanted the book to be opened by you.'

Quietly Siva wrote:

Srimathi Kamala Tuli

Serve. Love. Give. Do Kirtan. Do Japa. Control anger through patience and forgiveness. See God everywhere.

Mediate. Realise God. May you shine like Mira, Radha, Sita! May Lord bless you with health, long life, peace, prosperity, and Kaivalya.

—Sivananda

A full-page Upadesh in answer to a devotee's prayer for a simple autograph. Anyone else would have often refused so much as a signature. For Siva every opportunity for disseminating spiritual knowledge should be utilised.

31ST MAY, 1948

SIVA'S MIRACLE

'It is a miracle how they have all been saved. Even a sight of the wreckage is sufficient to turn one mad! The very thought of the accident was enough to kill the passengers. They were saved only through Lord Viswanath's grace. Instead of meeting with the accident in the middle of a jungle where there would have been little chance of being saved, they were all brought to the feet of Lord Viswanath

where they could get immediate treatment, tea, sherbat, and all comforts!' Siva thus extolled the grace and power of Lord Viswanath, as the victims of a nasty bus accident just adjacent to the Ashram dispensary were being treated zealously by the inmates of the Ashram.

I was wondering within myself to whom this miraculous help should be attributed.

Surely, to Siva whose very life-breath is selfless service and who is the supreme saviour. But, then Siva is SIVA and the two are one.

2ND JUNE, 1948

LOSS OR GAIN?

'What are six hundred rupees before the evolution of one single individual soul? I shall not be sorry if the consignee does not pay even a pie for the six-hundred-rupee-worth of books we sent him. What will he do with the books? They are not eatables. He might sell them at one anna per copy at the Moore Market or even give them free. In any case, they will go round. At least one man's eyes will be opened and he will begin to do Japa. I am satisfied. God will give us money when He thinks fit. Why should we consider this a loss? Said Siva when the case of a book-seller (without a shop) who had taken out a consignment of Siva's books worth Rs. 600 had not even intimated his whereabouts to the Society for years.

POLISHED CHEAT

When the news was broken to him, Siva, between winks and a sarcastic smile, said: 'So, you have all been deceived by this polished cheat. It is a wonder how you entrusted such a large consignment to a stranger!'

'Swamiji, before that he had purchased books worth Rs. 20.'

'Yes, he bought books worth Rs. 20; sent you a nice letter on his beautiful big letter-head; ordered Rs. 600 worth of books and bolted! He is a polished cheat.'

Every one laughed and said: 'Yes, Swamiji.'

'There was a similar case in Singapore. A man opened a big shop; had a lady typist, big office, etc. He had a roaring business. He borrowed some money from the local people. One day he was missing with all the money. He had opened a similar shop in Saigon!'

Every one seemed to have reconciled himself to the view that all of them (including Siva) had been deceived. All kept silent in utter shame. Siva noticed this and read our thoughts. He instantly poured forth his heart as given in the beginning and concluded, 'We have not incurred any loss!' Everyone was astounded.

Beware of cheats. Do not become polished cheats. Nothing is indeed a real loss. How beautifully are these lessons taught by Siva.

And what an untiring zeal has Siva for disseminating spiritual knowledge at any cost!

3RD JUNE, 1948

THE GURU IN ALL

'I was coming out of my Kutir. A tonga was standing on the road. A Sadhu and...., a learned pundit, and Bhakta were having hot words with the driver. Suddenly the Bhakta started poking the driver's ribs with his umbrella and the Sadhu jumped into the tonga and started kicking the driver.

'Mysterious is the power of Maya. The Samskaras and Vasanas are very powerful. This Sadhu has been doing Tapasya here for at least 25 years past. He is old, learned. But, these evil traits do not leave him!

'We should learn a lesson from this and be very vigilant,' said Siva and immediately entered the office.

Do not see others' faults. But if you happen to see any, take a lesson and avoid it in yourself.

4TH JUNE, 1948

THE INEXHAUSTIBLE WEALTH

'Acquire Kirtan-wealth and meditation-wealth, too. Mere material wealth is not of much use. Law-degree-wealth and Excise-Inspectorship-wealth will disappear.' These humorous remarks from Siva's lips produced a tremor in an LL.B. Excise Inspector's body.

Siva did not stop with that. He immediately got up and led the party into the verandah. He initiated them all into Japa and Kirtan.

'Do Japa. Do Kirtan. Lead the Divine Life. Speak the truth. Practise Ahimsa and Brahmacharya. That is the essence of all Yogas.

'This is a great day for you all. On the bank of the Ganges you have all repeated the glorious names of the Lord with faith and devotion. Even five minutes' devout Kirtan produces lasting effects on you all! Jai Ho!'

GOD FILLS MY MONEY BAG!

The visitors offered some donation. 'Shall I receive it in my hands or in my bag?' asked Siva: all laughed. The small donation was received in the bag!

'Like this my bag gets filled. God will provide the wherewithal for carrying on His work! Jai Ho!'

Within five minutes of their stay here these visitors had gained a life's wealth of wisdom!

I LIVE FOR THEE!

A few minutes later....

A heart-broken man walked in. Disgusted with the world on account of a series of failures, he wanted solace. How to treat him? Is he to be turned off? No.

The pen dropped from Siva's hand. The spectacles disappeared into their case. Siva led the young man out of the office. Seated him on a bench outside. 'The Lord's name will dispel your gloom. Now repeat the name with me.' Siva did Kirtan with the visitor. OM chanting followed. The effect on the visitor was miraculous. He regained composure. Siva asked him to do Japa on the Ganges-bank. This is Siva's spiritual treatment in short, treatment par excellence: a quick war-time initiation followed by lasting victory.

A EUROPEAN, TOO!

'That is the best present you can give me,' acknowledged Siva as Sri Milsiter laid on Siva's table a few very important bottles of drugs and a torch-light. 'Only you know what I like best! Thank you very much!'....(seldom said by Siva while addressing an Indian.) Siva started playing with the torch. 'How nice! Very beautiful indeed!' How quickly does Siva adapt himself to all sorts of people! In a minute he metamorphoses himself from an Indian into a European.

GLORY OF SANNYAS

'Take Sanyas. Then you will get whatever you need. That is the secret of renunciation. When you need money, you have to write to your bank. When I need it, some one comes in and offers it, with prostrations and with love and respect. Some one brings sweets. Some others bring torches, medicines, etc. Renounce all desires. Then God will ever dwell in you and take care of you.' Siva thus gave the gist of the Upanishads in a few words to Srimathi Liliane and Sri Annapurna who were looking on with astonishment at all that was going on.

6TH JUNE, 1948

VEDANTIC ETHICS

'Neither want, nor give up—that must be the attitude of a Vedantin. He should not say: I have given up salt: I have given up sugar: no, not even: I have given up the world. He should be supremely indifferent. He should rest in his own Swaroopa and realise the unity of Existence. He should see Brahman alone in everything and everywhere,' said Siva, when Swami...., a Bala Jnani, quietly placed a packet of sweetmeats (the offering of a visitor) on Siva's table and walked away. In such cases, the conveyor gets the first (and the lion's) share of the offerings: the young disciple, full of Vairagya was reluctant to put himself in that position.

WISDOM-MOUSTACHE

Sr. B.K. Desaiji slowly peeped in.

'OM Namō Narayanaya!' greeted Siva. Then turning to Sri Padmanabhan, he said: 'O Padmanabhaswami! Give him a copy of 'Necessity for Sanyas'....(every one looked at the two with a look of query)....Yes. He is a candidate for Guru Poornima!....(Siva threw up a glance at Sri Desai)....You will have to shave your moustache now! But do not be sorry for that: I will replace it with the Wisdom-moustache. You will be supremely happy.'

7TH JUNE, 1948

SLEEP OR SAMADHI?

'Your face indicates something: sleep or Samadhi, or both?' Every one present laughed at this remark from Siva's lips. K...., a student of Raja Yoga, was walking out of the office in a dazed condition.

How often do we mistake Tamas for Satwa! How often, again, do we admire and fall at the feet of the indolent, mistaking them for saints of pure Satwa!

8TH JUNE, 1948

COMFORTABLE SANYAS

'M. wants Sanyas!' Siva remarked as he was reading a letter from a disciple who had gone on a pilgrimage of Uttarakhand.

There was silence and no further talk. Siva left the office.

The following poem Siva brought in the afternoon, as a surprise commentary on his morning Sutra:

Comfortable Sanyas will not help you.

Sanyas is sterner stuff.

It demands endurance, renunciation and dispassion.

You have not abandoned Pansupari,

Smoking, tea, love for crop and newspaper reading,

Mixing with householders freely.

You are saturated with worldly ambitions.

People should see something of Sanyas in you.

Some kind of Sanyasa aroma should waft from you.

Otherwise, what is the use of your Sanyasa?

Is it for respect or receiving Namaskar?

Then, you are deceiving yourself and others, too.

Shave the mind first by destroying Vasanas and Raga Dwesha.

Give colouring to your heart, first.

This is real Sanyas.'

ANSWER? SILENCE!

Here is a pundit: good learning and old age.

'What is divine life, Swamiji?

'To observe Ahimsa, Satyam and Brahmacharya. To do Japa, meditation, Kirtan. To study Gita, Upanishads. To serve all. To love all. —That is divine life.'

'How to control the wandering mind?'

'By Vairagya and Abhyasa.'

'How to develop Vairagya?'

Silence....

'I think you are not well acquainted with Hindi, Swamiji. Shall I talk in English?'

Silence....

After the pundit had abruptly left, Siva said:

'Vain discussion. He will never do anything in his life. They have studied some books. They ask some stock questions of every one they meet. They will go on asking. If we also go on replying, a discussion will arise—heated debate—hot words—then: you are a fool, you know nothing! It is a waste of time talking to them. Do they not know the simple thing—Japa, Kirtan, Swadhyaya, God's grace, etc.? They will never practise. Nor will they approach any one with Bhav.'

I AM THY SEVAK-GUIDE

Sri Harichandani had been in the Ashram for three or four days. He would daily come, bow to Siva and take his seat in the office. Patiently he waited. This morning he found Siva alone and free in the office. He prostrated.

'Swamiji! I have a small doubt: I have heard of a powerful Mantra of Devi, Shodashakshari. It is reputed to fulfil one's desires quickly. May I have Upadesha of that Mantra from your holiness?'

'Please do not run after these Mantras. It is very much safer to go on with the Gayatri. It is the best of all Mantras. It will give you Moksha. Please go on repeating it.'

'Yes, Swamiji. I have been repeating the Gayatri 1008 times for the last three months. But I want success in life. Will I get it from Gayatri?'

'Do not expect to have this or that good fortune from Japa. Do it with Nishkama Bhava. You will get everything. You expect to get a money-order every day.'

Sri H. was surprised to receive this answer.

'How long have you to study for getting a matriculation certificate?'

'Ten years, Swamiji.'

'How much longer should you practise Japa for getting the Lord's Infinite grace? Go on repeating the Gayatri all your life. Do not expect anything out of it. You will get everything!'

What a contrast with yesterday's conversation.

Siva knows our heart. His response depends on our Bhav.

9TH JUNE, 1948

INDRA SABHA

'This is like sitting in the Indra Sabha, Swamiji. I am very happy to be in it. Kirtan, sweetly sung by several inmates and visitors, with Harishji playing on the violin, that devotee of Sri Vishnu Digambar singing inspiring Bhajans, Narayanaswamiji reading Gita and Upanishads, Sri Shamash's children very melodiously singing the Lord's name, and also English songs, all crowned by your holiness's soul-elevating Kirtans—they make me forget where I am. This is in sharp contrast to several other Ashrams where they prohibit singing or playing on musical instruments, where only dry philosophy is taught. They make one feel a college atmosphere! I am indeed blessed to have visited this Ashram....What is that light, Swamiji?'

'That is the office where several Sadhaks are busy working.'

'It is wonderful'

'I love synthesis of work, devotion and knowledge—everything should be nicely combined. Some Vedantins in their ignorance condemn Kirtan. They class personal gods in the Paroksha category. Direct realisation of the Impersonal Absolute they term Aparoksha. They greatly extol the latter and thoughtlessly condemn the former. Truth is neither Dwaita nor Adwaita. It is beyond both. Greatest Adwaitins like Sankaracharya and Madhusudana Saraswati have devoutly sung the glories of the Lord. What a great devotion they had. They had understood Vedanta in its true perspective. There is no life in either institutions or individuals if the Lord's names are not sung. Even Suka who always lived in Truth recited the Lord's name. It is high time the present day Vedantins and sanyasins realised this.'

The above is the gist of a very interesting conversation that took place between Siva and Deputy Collector and a Headmaster who were both on a visit to the Ashram.

GLORY OF SERVICE

'You have only developed a little love for Kirtan. Otherwise, you like to read and meditate only. You cannot enjoy meditation if the impurities in the mind are not completely washed off and your ego subdued. This time it is all right. Next time you come, you must do a lot of work. Then, by comparison, you will know the glory of selfless service,' said Siva to a young Kundalini Yoga practitioner, who had come to the office to take leave of Siva after a short stay in the Ashram.

PASS THE TESTS

A Sadhu from Rishikesh called on Siva and narrated to him at length a dispute between the Mahant of an Ashram and a rich Bhakta who had also built an Ashram near the former's. The quarrel arose over a piece of land. The attitude of the rich man clearly proved his jealousy at the Sadhu's popularity among the devotees.

'Money, fame and lust are all great tests. A Sanyasin or a householder devotee might imagine himself great and saintly: when these tests come, he will succumb to them like a lamb at the hands of a leopard. Saintliness consists in constant vigilance and jumping over the hurdles of money, fame and lust, when they are set up by Maya. Great South Indian saints were put through strange tests. Maya tried to lead a saint astray: on whatever he set his foot, it would be turned into a diamond. Apsaras girls were sent to attend on him. But the saint was unmoved. Only then could he reach the divine.' Said Siva to us when the Sadhu had gone.

11TH JUNE, 1948

THE PLACE OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN KIRTAN

'They derive a lot of inspiration from the cymbals and tymbals. Especially in public performances these musical instruments are a great help. Concentration of mind is also induced.' Siva said as people were beginning to collect near the office for the Kirtan by Swami Mukund Hari of Bhatinda.

'The type of Kirtan that we do is good for meditative people. Without the harmonium or other musical instruments, go on singing the Kirtan and this induces meditation. Samadhi will easily supervene. There are no distractions.

'One must be trained in both. For personal Sadhana and for select meditation groups, the Kirtan without instruments must be used: and for mass gatherings the harmonium, etc., will be helpful.'

12TH JUNE, 1948

TO THEE, O SEVAMURTHY!

It is within the memory of many Sadhus living in Rishikesh now that Siva used to walk a few miles from his secluded hut to the Annakshetra for his Bhiksha in the hot midday sun. The Sadhus generally do not have the 'Darshan' of a great functionary than the cooks in the Kshetras. Even the Manager's clerk is rarely approached by the Sadhus.

By dint of selfless service over a long period, however, Siva's fame had taken wings. His glory is sung everywhere. Siva's humility and easy accessibility have now become proverbial.

To Siva's abode of Bliss wends his way the Secretary of the Kali Kamliwala Kshettar—Sri Rai Bahadur Sridutt Sharmaji. Siva greets him with a hearty laugh and respectful Pranam.

The characteristic hospitality: fruits, milk, etc.

'Swamiji, I have a request to make.'

'I am always at your service!'

'Kindly accept the honorary Advisership of the Kshetra. We all of us feel that the Kshetra and the Rishikesh Sadhus generally will all be greatly benefited by your sage advice. You are the only Sanyasin who can advise us.'

Siva sank into a silence.

The Rai Bahadur pleaded, insistently.

'Yes, Maharaj, I shall certainly serve you all as an adviser.'

After the Rai Bahadur left, Siva told us: 'At first I did not want to accept the job. But, then I thought this might be an opportunity offered by the Lord for me to serve the Sadhus. I will not forsake any opportunity of doing service. So, I accepted. He was also greatly pleased.'

14TH JUNE, 1948

DIVINE LIFE IN PRACTICE

Sri R.R. Tiwari, M.A., LL.B., of Gwalior introduced to Siva his friend, a retired Colonel, who had held the post of a Minister of a State: an old man who confronted Siva with the question: 'How to lead the divine life?'

'Practise meditation. Do Japa. Get up at 4 a.m. All these I have given in my Twenty Instructions.' Siva handed a copy of the leaflet to the Colonel.

'All these I know, Swamiji.'

'That is all. The rest lies in practise.'

'I have been practising in my own way. But I have not actually experienced the Anand that is said to flow from such practices.'

'You must be regular in your practices. And, go on doing till you reach your goal—even if it takes several births.'

'Ah, that is it! I have not been regular at all, Swamiji. I shall try now.'

'You must devote your entire time now to Sadhana, as you are retired now.'

'Unfortunately, Swamiji, I am still leading the old way of life. I retired on a pension which was my full pay.'

'That is extraordinary. It is all due to God's grace. You must do a lot of charity. You must reduce your expenses. So long you have supported a small family. Now you must expand and treat all poor people as members of your family.'

'That, too, I have not done so far, because my expenses have remained the same. But in a way I am doing charity also. I am paying a number of servants.'

'No, no: that is not charity. How much money have you given to the lepers on the roadside? Every man is generous to himself. You must lead a life of seclusion and spend at least half your pension, if not the full amount, in charity. Then you will experience the bliss that comes out of Lord's grace.'

15TH JUNE, 1948

JIVANMUKTI EXPLAINED

Sri R.R. Tiwari is a Jnana Yogi. He repeats OM and has adopted Nirguna Upasana.

He asked Siva to suggest the royal road to Bliss.

‘Control the mind. Eradicate the Vasanas inside. Become a Jivanmukta.’

‘Swamiji, please tell me how to eradicate the Vasanas.’

‘Meditate constantly on the Satchidananda Atman. Raise the Brahmakara Vritti. Through intense practice you will be able to beyond even this. The complete elimination of all mental modifications is the goal according to Patanjali Maharshi also. This is the road to Jivanmukti. By this practice you will soon attain Manonasa.’

‘What will be our condition after Manonasa, Swamiji?’

‘The whole world is a mere creation of your mind. With Manonasa this illusion also vanishes. You are able to realise your own Satchidananda Swarupa. You will become a Jivanmukta if you are established in Brahmic consciousness.’

‘Swamiji, I have a doubt. If the Jivanmukta has had Manonasa, then how does he work in the world?’

‘Some Vedantins hold the theory that there are two things—Samadhi Jnani and Vyavahara Jnani. When the Jnani is in Samadhi, he has absolutely no dualistic consciousness. However, when he comes down from this state and undertakes Lokasamgraha, he has Vyavahara Jnana. He is conscious of the unity in diversity.’

‘Swamiji, if the mind is completely annihilated, how can Vrittis arise in it again?’

‘In a Jivanmukta, there is Sarupa Manonasa. The Rajasic and Tamasic elements in it are destroyed. Pure Satva alone exists. This lasts so long as Prarabdha lasts. Prarabdha has its play on his body. Heat and cold, diseases, etc., affect the body. But, as his Antahkarana is devoid of Rajas and Tamas and only pure Satva is left, he is conscious of Atman in this. The Dwandwas do not affect his inner blissful state. In Videhamukti when the body falls as a result of the exhaustion of the Prarabdha, there is Aroopa Manonasa. The Jnani rests forever in the non-dual state till the body is decomposed. This is the supreme state. Attain this by vigilance and vigorous practice. Jai Ho! Tiwariji!’

THOU, NOT I

Yesterday afternoon Siva had asked me to write a letter to one Capt. G.S.K. Iyer of Tiruvidamarudur who had just organised a branch of the Divine Life Society. At that time, Siva had told me that this Capt. was Siva’s school-mate. He told us several reminiscences, too. What a loving memory of old companions.

This evening I was typing that letter. Siva was talking to several visitors. While I was yet halfway through the letter, he suddenly turned to me and said: ‘This G.S.K. Iyer was previously in Benaras.’

I was literally taken aback. What a coincidence! Dumb-founded, I listened.

'He was a very pushing man. He has had a very eventful life and has acquired many titles and much fame—naturally, a lot of money, too. Write a nice letter to him.'

I shyly admitted to Siva that I was just typing the letter.

A mere 'hum' and a mischievous smile which said, so to say: 'See, how I knew what you are doing.' or 'Do not let your head reel in pride. It is I who am working through it. I know just exactly what you are doing and when! Beware!'

Oh Siva, may thy lotus feet crown my head.

7TH JULY, 1948

YOU HAVE ATTRACTED THE ENTIRE WORLD

The most friendly and cordial greetings extended by Siva to an old colleague, Swami Abhayananda, was a touching scene when Siva and some of the important disciples had just finished a meeting of the Ashramites and the local public on the subject of the amendment of the Hindu Code.

Siva (touching the feet of the newcomer) 'OM Namō Narayanaya! Ayiye, Maharaj.' Siva made the new Swami sit by his side and commenced a pleasant conversation.

Swami A: 'Swamiji, I admire the work you have done. Everywhere people are singing your glory.'

'It is all the grace of saints like you that has enabled me to do a little service.'

'No, no. Maharaj! This is all the fruit of your intense Tapas and devotion to the Lord.'

'I think we are meeting after about 15 years.'

'Yes, you are right. Swamiji, I can never forget your inspiring song, Agad Bhum. You have created a big institution around you and attracted the whole world. You are the same easily accessible humble Swamiji of 111 Kutir of Swarg Ashram. Though many things have developed around you, I see you are the same loving Prema-murthy.'

Siva (turning to a disciple) 'Bring some fruits. Maharaj, have this little offering. Please be gracious to honour the Ashram's Annakshetra today.'

'As you command me.'

Siva: 'Swamiji, do you remember our trip to Paraso hills (Parasara hills) where we had good Kirtan?'

'Yes, I well remember Pt. Krishna Chandra Sharma, Advocate, taking us to Gudgawa near Delhi and thence to Paraso hills. We had just attended the annual function of the Nawal Kishore Prem Sabha.'

'Yes, we had whole night Kirtan there.'

'Your publicity work is really marvellous. In all important journals, be it health, political, religious—your article is there.'

'Yes, 'My Magazine' of India is publishing my articles for a very long time since 1929, for nearly twenty years.'

'What! Twenty years? No author has written for so long a time and no publisher has been patient enough to publish the articles of any one individual contributor for so long. That clearly shows that you have got a very tight grip over the reading public and you have simply captured their hearts. Spiritual Lessons in the 'My Magazine' is like nectar drops.'

4TH AUGUST, 1948

THE REFUGE OF ALL

An aspirant has come from Orissa. He has received ochre-robles from a Sanyasi of his place who, however, did not accept him as his initiated disciple—it was his policy not to initiate anyone into Sanyasa and make him his disciple.

'Yesterday, he came and requested that he should be initiated into Sanyasa. I said: No. Yet, he has the perseverance to come again today and request again. I had a heart-to-heart talk with him. Now, I have decided to give him Sanyas.

'There should be some like him. I should have a heart-to-heart talk: if my heart permits me, I will give them Sanyas. God will take care of them.'

Turning to the new arrival, Siva said: 'Yes, I will give you Sanyas on Vijaya Dasami day.'

Mystic or plain language?

25TH AUGUST, 1948

WHAT IS REST?

Sri A....is enjoying a furlough. He caught Siva's eye.

'You are on leave? Yes: you should have some rest! You are heavily over-worked!'

And then added with a mischievous smile: 'Na Gurur Na Sishyah! What is there in service? Silent meditation in seclusion is the only way to Moksha!'

Siva does not believe in holidaying. Change of work is rest for him. Nishkamyā Seva with Narayana Bhav is itself the highest form of meditation, which compels perennial adherence.



SEPTEMBER, 1948

2ND SEPTEMBER, 1948

COBRAS WITHIN

Siva was returning from the temple. As he was passing near the Yajnasala, Sivadayalji saluted him. Siva in his characteristic way asked: 'Everything all right Sivadayalji replied: 'Yes, Swamiji. But there was a serpent in the room. So, everything was upset last night.'

'You are afraid of this small creature! Look within. Introspect. There are countless cobras—Kama, Krodha, Lobha, etc., —within you. They are biting you every day. Still you take pleasure in feeding them! Mind is the biggest and most venomous cobra. Vrittis are its hoods. Eradicate them.'

3RD SEPTEMBER, 1948

THAT WHICH IS THERE IS HERE

A few Madrasi disciples of Siva and myself had just returned from Badrikasharam and Kedarnath. Like a fond mother, Siva enquired about our welfare, the comforts and discomforts on the way, etc. The affectionate pair of eyes noticed that some of us had been thinned out.

'You are much reduced. It will perhaps take a month to pick up your health again.' After thus comforting us, he asked: Now, where is the next trip to? To Tirupathi?....Ohji, do not run about here and there. Tirupathi is here only.'

Yes: and I could not help thinking: Himalayan regions are worth seeing—the places where great Rishis did Tapas. Further, the walking exercise, inhaling the pure Himalayan air laden with the healing power of innumerable herbs bestows good health on the pilgrims: but some people develop this into a craze for wandering. All their life is spent in wandering. Then they begin to extol certain places and criticise others. You have now visited one or two important places; other places are also like this only. Now you should stick to this place—there is a lot of work to do!

A TWO-FOLD LOSS

'OM Namō Narayanaya! Swamiji!' Siva greeted a new arrival. But this new Swamiji will not speak!

'Achcha! You are a Mowni Baba? Dear Swamiji, give up this sort of meaningless Mowna-Sadhana. Mita-Bhashan is Mowna. You should talk a little and talk sweetly. You are not making proper use of a good faculty and thus losing the opportunity of discussing spiritual subjects with others, and thus learning. You have also lost many opportunities of rendering service to His children. A comforting word to some, a consoling message, a good word of greeting—how

much joy you can infuse into others. This is a great loss. Give up this Mowna now itself.'

Then turning to us, Siva said: 'Some of these people do not know why they are observing Mowna. Somebody observed Mowna: and, they also started imitating. They will not talk: but they will waste hours trying to make others understand what they could have conveyed in a couple of minutes. They will not talk with their mouth, but their mind is always talking fruitlessly. Control of speech is Mowna. Mita-Bhashan is Mowna. But this Mowna is merely a whim!' said Siva with a meaningful smile.

4TH SEPTEMBER 1948

NEELAKANTHA DIXIT'S AVATAR

Swami Satchidanandaji presented to the Ashram library a copy of 'Ananda Sagara Sthava' of Sri Neelakantha Dikshita, an illustrious savant of the Appayya Dikshita's family, and an author of many famous works in Sanskrit.

'Swamiji,' said Satchidanandaji, 'In this work, Sri Neelakantha Dikshitar has often prayed with a melting heart full of devotion and yearning, that he should live in seclusion on the banks of the Ganges. Providence, however, decreed that he should pass away without fulfilling this desire. And, Neelakantha Dikshitar was also very fond of dealing with Siva Lilas. In this regard, I was wonderstruck to find that what he has done in Sanskrit you have done in English, the modern language. Swamiji, I am perfectly certain that Neelakantha has re-incarnated as Sivananda, to fulfil his great desire.'

Sri Lakshminarayana Sastrigal, a descendant of Appayya Dikshita, is also of the same opinion. 'Swamiji, many people in Pattamadai and Kodahanallur also think that you are Neelakantha's Avatar.'

Siva's only reply was a Vedantic smile and he went on with his work. He knows how many souls' yearnings have found their fulfilment in him.

FOOD SADHANA

The Hanuman Prasad distributor at the conclusion of the evening Satsang provided the occasion: Siva first remarked that it had been nicely prepared and exhorted someone in the Satsang to take a second helping, too. Sivanarayanji was taking some Prasad for some Ashramite who could not attend the Satsang.

'For whom? For Sridhara² Swamiji?' Siva asked. And, this led him to a nice discourse.

² Sridhar was Swami Chidananda's pre-Sanyas name.

‘You will be wonderstruck,’ he remarked, turning to a visitor. ‘Sridhara Swamiji has developed a baby-stomach. He takes very little food. He cannot digest more. In his case, it is due to ill-health. But, there are some who concentrate all their mind on food-Sadhana. All their life they will be thinking of which food is Satvic, which food Rajasic and so on. Some abhor chillies. They cannot take even mildly pungent things. Their health will be upset. They become faddists. They make their system very sensitive. Even a slight deviation from the routine spoils their health. One should not be like that. I think it is necessary that a Sanyasin should have an Asuric stomach. He should be able to eat whatever he gets without insisting on this or that kind of food. Sometimes the Bhiksha will consist only of sweets: sometimes roti and dhal: sometimes rice and sambhar full of chillies.

‘Too much of food-Sadhana creates egoism also. ‘I have given up sugar: I have given up salt: I eat only neem leaves; I eat only raw vegetables.’ This way he is filled with ideas of what he has left and what he is eating. Food is, after all, a necessary evil. The main thing is God-realisation. They forget that.

‘There are many such whims among Sadhaks. Some will wear only a kowpeen. Swami Pranavanandaji will go about naked through villages. The Avadhoota state is difficult to attain. It is not external nakedness that is needed but mental nakedness.

‘There was an Avadhuta, Swami K. He used to stand in the Ganges in winter and in the hot sands in summer. He would sleep only on grass. Once Pundit Malaviyaji took him to Mussorie. There the Swami began to demand his grass bed. And, it had to be got after much difficulty.

‘These Sadhanas have no real value. No doubt such restrictions are necessary for some time. But extremes are always to be avoided. The goal should not be lost sight of.’

8TH SEPTEMBER, 1948

VEDANTA KESARI

No one expected: and no one noticed.

The Bhajan Hall was packed with Sadhaks and visitors: the morning Sadhana class was in progress—silent Japa and meditation had been done, Krishnanandaji had led the audience in reciting Santi Pattha and Guru Stotras, and Sridharji* was talking on Sadhana. Visibility outside was yet too poor for persons moving about a little away from you to be recognised.

Quietly, Siva slipped in through a side door! And,—I cannot express in words what my own feelings were when I accidentally happened to see this wonder of wonders—he had taken a ‘back-bench’ seat—as one of the members of the audience intently listening to Sridharji’s lecture!

The entire gathering literally sat up and rubbed their eyes when this magnificent personality stood up and roared OM at the conclusion of Sridharji’s talk. There was pin-drop silence. Siva did Kirtan, which gradually turned into a lecture-

Kirtan on the lines of 'God is truth—Govinda'. Then....better hearken to Siva himself:

'The srutis declare, 'Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma, Neha Nanasti Kinchana—All indeed is Brahman: there is no such thing as diversity.' This is your essential nature. In truth, you are Akhanda Paripoorna Satchidananda. It is described as Amala, Vimala, Achala, Santam, Sivam, Advaitam. Due to Avidya you do not know your essential nature. When Avidya is removed, you shine as the Akhanda

Paripoorna Satchidananda. In reality you are Aparichchinna, undivided, one, the Essence. You falsely imagine that you have hands, feet, eyes, mouth. Remember this: 'Thou art That' (Tat Twam Asi). Tat Twam Asi—the Self is identical with Brahman. You are one with the Supreme Truth. When you are suffering from any disease, remember you are the Akhanda Paripoorna Satchidananda. Assert 'I am not the body, I am not the mind. How powerful is this medicine—Sivoham, Satchidananda Swarupoham. Do not run to doctors. Do not take injections. This is the most potent injection—Satchidananda Swarupoham!

'Through ignorance you identify yourself with the body. Remove ignorance, through constant practice, renunciation, through this powerful assertion. In whatever condition you may be, you may have no bread to eat—even if you have no clothes to wear—assert Sivoham, Satchidananda Swarupoham and constantly dwell on your identify with Brahman.

'Thou art That. This is the gist of Vedanta: this is the most powerful remedy for all ills. This is what the sages have taught in the Upanishads.

'May the blessings of Sankaracharya, Lord Dattatreya and the Brahma Kumaras be upon you all. May you all shine as Jivanmuktas in this very birth.'

Blessed indeed are those who listened to these words of wisdom fall from the lips of Siva—the Vedanta Kesari. Thrice blessed are those who have inscribed his words on the tablet of their heart.

JUST PLAIN SPEAKING

'Ohji, just a minute' —Siva stayed the formal opening of the Silver Jubilee Kutirs this morning. Then, facing the gathering:

'These Kutirs have already been opened three months ago. Sadhaks were coming in large numbers. We were in need of rooms. So, we opened these Kutirs with Kirtan. This is only the formal opening ceremony.

'You see a silk cloth there. It merely covers a slab on which is written that these are Silver Jubilee Kutirs constructed out of the donation given by Mrs. Liliane Shamash, etc. There is nothing but that. The world is just a veil like this. Brahman is covered over by colourful Maya. When the veil is removed, you see the Reality. Therefore, remove the veil of Maya through Viveka and Vichara.

'The world is a mere play of colours. Do not be deceived. It is all like the play of children. You simply close your fist—the child is curious to know what is within. Then you open out the fist—there is nothing inside. You have a hearty laugh. Similar is the case with the world.

'These Kutirs are opened a second time today. There is nothing but repetition in the universe. There have been many Vyasas, many Naradas. Even now people do not know which Vasishtha expounded the Vasishtha Ramayana. It is all a cycle of births and deaths. It is all the play of Dwandwas. Rise above this play of Dwandwas. Tear the veil. Negate the false colours. Perceive the Reality. In Reality you are all the same Atman. Just a paint, a touch of powder, lip-stick, dupes you. Wake up and realise your essential nature which is Satchidananda.'

Siva then formally declared the Kutirs open.

IN RETROSPECT

Sadhu Murugadasji has arrived.

Siva recognised him at once. Murugadasji had previously come to the Ashram long ago with a plain dhoti on, without any money. Murugadasji went to Badrinath. On his return, Siva was enamoured of his sweet Kirtans—Siva's life-breath—and requested him to stay on for some time. Now, Murugadasji had acquired great renown as an inspiring Kirtanist, and was moving about in 'planes.

Hearing this, Siva humorously remarked: 'We, too, did not have one anna worth of potato when we came here. Now look at the Ashram.'

Such is the glory of Nivritti Marga and devotion to the lotus feet of the Lord.

THE LADDU THAT GIVES IMMORTALITY

Murugadasji sang a song. It was sweet. As it was in Tamil, Siva started explaining it in English. And, how? —in the form of sweet music.

'Murugadasji sang a sweet song. It was like sweet Laddu, Jilebi, Rasagulla. What did he say? He wanted you to eat the sweetest Laddu—that sweet Laddu is the Name of your Indweller. The two-lettered name of RAMA is the sweetest Laddu. Muruga, Radheshyam—all the names of God are sweet Laddus. OM is the sweetest Laddu. It is the most ancient Laddu which the sages like Yagnavalkya, Shams Tabriez and others ate. It is this Laddu alone that will make you immortal. Eat this Laddu and you will have no more births and deaths. Who will not eat this sweetest Laddu?'

To Siva all sweetness, all goodness and all auspiciousness are only in God. Worldly objects have no place in his domain.

SIVA'S CREED

The unopened book in Sridharji's hand attracted Siva's attention, as we were all coming out of the Silver Jubilee Kutirs after the opening ceremony.

'You wanted to read something?'

'Yes, Swamiji, I wanted to read a couple of chapters from this, on Siva's Creed and Siva's Philosophy.'

'Siva's Creed? What is Siva's Creed? It is all Mithya, delusion, a play of sounds—mere words!' Siva gave a hearty laugh and walked away, leaving the gathering to understand this—Siva's Creed—to the best of their understanding!

ONLY DIFFERENCE IN OUTLOOK

An admirer of Arya Samaj has come; he expressed his dislike for Karma Kanda.

'Yes: there—in the cities—you have one type of Karma. Here you have another type. It is binding there. Here is Nishkama, free—a type of Karma which liberates you from the thralldom of Maya. This is the Sannyasi-Karma Kanda'.
'The difference is one of outlook—but that is in fact an ocean of difference!'

TRUE IMPORT OF DAYANANDA'S TEACHINGS

'Swamiji, I want some instructions on concentration.'

'You also do not believe in names and forms? But, that is not easily possible for all. The mind wants something to hang on. In the initial stages, it cannot hang on nothing or an idea. At least you should have the form of OM.'

'This antagonism to names and forms is the creation of some people who have not correctly understood Dayanandaji's teachings. Dayanandaji himself did not condemn Kirtan of God's name. He was in a high stage of evolution, and he concerned himself only with the fundamentals of Vedic truths. He did not categorically condemn Nama-Rupa. He only omitted any mention of them. People should take him in the proper light instead of reading their own views into his sublime teachings.'

'You read my book: 'Concentration and Meditation'. It will clear all your doubts. It contains a solution to every problem that can possibly confront an aspirant in his practice of concentration and meditation. When you have finished reading it, you will find that you have no more doubts. If you still have any, then come to me. I will explain the subject to you.'

A SURPRISE REJOINER

A visitor was greatly eulogising Siva's organisation at the Headquarters of the Divine Life Society.

'But, Swamiji, there should be more Kutirs and rooms for visitors.'

'Yes: I, too, would like to construct many more rooms,' came Siva's ready rejoinder, 'but, the money is in your pocket.'

THE SUPREME SAVIOUR

Sri Thakur Prasad Singji has arrived—to attend the Sanyas Silver Jubilee Celebrations. He says: 'No one else has done so much as Swamiji to awaken humanity to the purpose of Life. I would say after Sankaracharya no one else has done so much to uphold Hindu Sanatana Dharma. Swamiji's message has spread through the world illuminating countless hearts, and turning the deluded souls straying in various directions to the right path.'

PROMISE MUST BE FULFILLED

Sri Thakur Prasad and his family belong to the orthodox type. The entire family insist on having Siva's Darshan before they take their food. He made this request to Siva. Siva was busily engaged the whole morning: and had gone to his Kutir. At

once he remembered of his promise. He should not keep quiet one more minute: nor could he ignore the promise. He at once went out to Sri Thakur Prasadji's Kutir.

THE MASTER WAITS

There he found that Thakur Prasadji had gone out. Wonder of wonders—the Master waits there till the disciple comes back. He does not consider that a waste of his time nor that it is beneath his dignity to wait. He utilises this period also very usefully. Siva makes the children in the house sing the Lord's name and teaches them some Kirtan Dhwanis. Then a sweet discourse to these 'little devotees'.

THE PEACE MAKER

Swami A....comes there and salutes Siva. Swami A. has had a bit of a quarrel with someone else. Siva found that the best opportunity to patch up the quarrel, and to advise both the parties to be peaceful.

Then Thakur Prasadji and his family had Siva's Darshan and Siva returned to his Kutir.

SIVA'S LOVE CONQUERS

Last evening the Satsang programme was extended as it was raining and the Ganga Arati was postponed. So, Siva called upon the daughters of Srimathi Liliane to deliver short lectures.

A local resident got a bit offended that his children were not given an opportunity to speak also. He was fond of criticising the Ashram activities, too. But Siva's patience and love know no limits. He does not even adopt an attitude of indifference towards those who carp and cavil at him or the institution. He extends to them, too, his love!

Next day (today) one of the first items in the programme was lectures by those children. And, Siva presented Rs. 10 to the children as a token of his love.

SIVA-KRISHNA IDENTITY

The procession with the palanquin in which had been placed the pictures of Lord Krishna and Swamiji was in progress. Half the way, Krishna's picture was in front and the party sang the Maha Mantra.

When the time to turn back arrived, we who were carrying the palanquin just turned the other way ourselves, instead of turning the palanquin round. Automatically, Swamiji's picture occupied the front. The Kirtan Dhvani was changed to

Guru Maharaj Guru Jai Jai

Sivananda Sat Guru Jai Jai

Siva would not allow this.

We managed to keep Siva's picture in front: but then Siva insisted that we continue the Maha Mantra.

We were all happy: for, Siva is indeed Lord Sri Krishna.

9TH SEPTEMBER, 1948

OF COURSE, I KNOW YOU

'What is your name?' asked Siva, scanning a lady devotee sitting in front of him: she had arrived this afternoon with her husband and children.

'Sarala Devi.'

The left eye closed with one hand, Siva reflected for a moment. 'Oh, yes. I remember. You have come here previously. I think your mother also came with you.'

'Yes, Swamiji, we had your Darshan in the room below.'

'That is right. That was the old S.P.L. Office. Where do you come from now, from Ambala?'

'No, Swamiji, we have been transferred to Rohtak now.'

Pointing to the gentleman by her side, 'He is your husband? You previously said your husband was an Excise Inspector or something.'

'Yes, Swamiji, you are right. I am an Excise Inspector in Rohtak,' replied Sri C.L. Nangiah.

To Mrs. Sarala Nangiah again: 'You were a small girl then: now you have grown into a big lady!' They had all a hearty laugh. Yet, Siva is able to recognise them!

IMPORTANCE OF DIARY

Sarala DeVji is a very earnest Sadhak: and a pure-hearted Bhakta.

'Swamiji, kindly tell me some method to control this mind. It seems we will never be able to control it.' The husband just looks on.

'Do Japa. Be regular in your Sadhana. Do Kirtan also. Through practise alone will you be able to control the mind. You should maintain the diary. Now you are not doing this.'

'I do maintain the diary, Swamiji.' Siva's face brightens. 'But, I am ashamed of sending it to you as my Sadhana is very irregular.'

'Whatever little you do, however irregularly, you should send me the diary. Then only there will be the inducement to be regular in Sadhana and to evolve quickly.'

THE GLORY OF NAME

'Why, the sky has miraculously cleared' was the expression on everyone's lips.

'Ring the bell,' said Siva.

Sridhara Swamiji came with a towel on his head—it was still slightly drizzling—after a heavy downpour of rain! 'It might begin to rain again!' thought a few.

The party left Ananda Kutir with Maha Mantra Kirtan. Swarg Ashram—the destination—was hung over with heavy clouds. When the bridge was crossed, sky cleared on the Swarg Ashram side and the clouds moved to Ananda Kutir side!

From the opposite bank, Siva sent out an OM roar, as a wireless message to Gauri Prasadji.

Many Sadhus had assembled in Judge Gauri Prasadji's house. With Maha Mantra Kirtan, Siva's party walked into his house.

Murugadasji sang. Then Siva got up. The sky was rent with the name of the Lord. Yet, Siva was not satisfied. His keen eyes searched out the 'silent pockets' —and quickly he pointed his finger in that direction. Then OM chanting—louder—still louder—till Siva was satisfied.

'Jis Halme Jis Deshme Jis Veshme Raho

Radha Raman Radha Raman Radha Raman Kaho!

The response was not up to Siva's mark.

Siva burst forth:

'Lord Jesus says that man cannot live by bread alone. But man can live eternally on the Divine Name of the Lord alone. The name is the source of all strength and power, all joy. Tukaram, Kabir, Tulasidasji, Mira, Gauranga—all of them lived on Name alone. When you are hungry, you take food: but after some time, again you feel hungry. Permanent satisfaction cannot come out of food.'

The name of the Lord is a divine healer, too. Man is deceived by a false notion that his diseases are cured by the doctor's injections. I have got a divine Prem injection which cures all diseases, and infuses new energy in you. That is the Gopikawallabh-injection. (Siva actually administered the injection—Siva uttered at the top of his voice 'Gopikawallabh': the audience responded 'Radheshyam'.)

The doctors only inject some liquid, a little water. This is the divine injection which will cure you of the disease of birth and death.

'You do not need any great intellectual power; you need not be a millionaire; you need not perform severe austerities. But, you should have faith—the heart. Do not bring your intellect here. Do not argue. Intellect is a finite instrument and cannot take you far. Reason can take you to the threshold. The heart alone can give you that transcendental experience.

'Like Mira, you can dance, too.'

So saying, Siva danced! This was again followed by Om and Ram chanting. Then loud Japa of RAM.

'If the external thoughts are more numerous, and the mind wanders more, repeat RAM faster.'

With a prayer for Vishwa Kalyan Siva terminated the function.

On our way back Siva and party went to the Tika Rani's Siva temple. The Maharani was eager to see Siva who at once paid her a visit.

As the party was returning to Ananda Kutir, the moon shone in all her splendour amidst a sprinkling of white clouds which added to the grandeur of the blue sky. The murmuring Ganges reflecting the silvery rays of the moon was a fitting background music to the Kirtan Dhwani that arose from Siva's Party.

10TH SEPTEMBER, 1948

FORGOTTEN SO SOON?

I entered the office and prostrated to Siva, in the morning. Siva at once recognised me as one who had missed the previous night's Divya Nama Kirtan.

'Divya Nama Kirtan has been held several times: but last night's Kirtan excelled all others. Murugadasji, Sivaramakrishnier, Venkateshwara Iyer and many other experts participated. It was most wonderful.

'Even if you felt tired, or even if you were out of sorts, Divya Nama Kirtan would have made you all right. It is the most powerful tonic. And, I had just said so—in my Swarg Ashram talk.'

Shame-facedly, I sought Siva's feet with my eyes.

ETERNAL STUDENT

'I am always a student. Some people think: It is the same Divya Nama Kirtan, I have already seen it a number of times. I never feel so. I attend every function and carefully listen to all lectures. What wonderful points Sridharji brings forth! I am all attention to these. I then introspect and find out the subtle defects inside. I am eternally a student and Sadhaka. Some people take Bala Mantra, attain some Mantra Siddhi and then go to sleep. They do not think of the innumerable defects that still lurk inside. That is the most essential thing.'

VEDANTIC COOLNESS

Siva should be watched only during the busy days at Ananda Kutir. The din and bustle of intense and multifarious activity—as is witnessed during the birthday celebrations—is enough to disturb the mental equilibrium of any one. Duties are sometimes neglected, details ignored, workers get tired out, it is then that Siva's Vedantic coolness comes into full play and his powers of Ashtavadhan find a proper occasion to manifest themselves.

The organiser in Siva wishes to keep the neighbouring institutions friendly: Siva asks someone to take a plateful of fruits, money and flowers to Darshan Mahavidyalaya as an offering of love. Sweets are distributed to the local people, too.

I was a bit surprised when Vishnudevji walked into the office early in the morning with a covered plate in hand and said: 'Swamiji has asked that this should be kept ready on his table. Murugadasji is leaving today and these fruits and cloth are for him.' The preparations had started yesterday itself. When Siva casually asked Murugadasji if he wore only Khadi, one could hardly guess what was up Siva's sleeve. Siva wanted to present Murugadasji cloth to his own liking.

SYNTHETIC PRESENT

Murugadasji comes into the office to take leave of Siva. He gets a 'synthetic blessing' from the Prophet of the Yoga of Synthesis.' Siva's own silent blessing for Murugadasji's soul: some books for his 'head': and some for his 'heart': and cloth for his body: and money for whatever need he may have on his way back to Madras.

Murugadasji is now very well off: yet, Siva's love cannot be repressed.

Another visitor who intends to leave today is talking to Siva, having his doubts cleared. Sivaramakrishnier is waiting for an interview. In the meantime, Radha is waiting with a message from her father. Piles of letters on his table—visitors and Sadhus all round—all waiting for Siva's attention. Anyone might get irritated or run away to seclusion, considering all this waste of time and energy. One by one, the Master attends to the Lord's devotees, his own masters.

What a great faith do these people have. Sivaramakrishnier says: 'Even amidst the most trying circumstances my wife and I remain absolutely calm. For, we know Swamiji's protecting hands are ever around us and we feel that Swamiji is God and that everything happens according to his will.'

Sivaramakrishnier needs some legal advice. He represents his difficulties to Siva who at once introduces him to Sastriji. This is one of the unique traits in Siva. He does not hesitate to introduce the devotees to one another to the advantage of all concerned. He introduces a European Sadhaka to one of the advanced Yogic students of Europe: this pen-friendship is a great service.

A recent incident comes to mind. A leprosy patient came from Chingleput. He had been refused admission in the Government hospital. Someone sent him to Siva. From here Siva sent him to Chingleput with a letter of introduction to Dr. Mangalam, asking her to help the patient, if necessary by sending him with a special note to the hospital. Selfless service has found in Siva its very soul.

FOOD SADHAKS

Here is Raman Nambiar who has been living on nuts, fruits, and milk, for a considerable time now. This came to the notice of Siva.

'Sadhana is grossly misunderstood. What the Lord meant by Satwic food is that man should not take too much of chillies, too much of salt, etc. Chillies are good appetising agents. Salt is necessary for health. A little of chillies and salt are essential. Control consists only in not catering to the vagaries of the palate. The practice of control methods should not weaken the system or make it sensitive.

'Venkataramier of Namakkal told me once that he had given up salt, chillies and tamarind, for some time: his system had become so very sensitive that even a little of these in food would upset him. Such people then have to live their whole life on such restricted diet. Venkataramier had to resume normal diet with much difficulty.

'There was another good soul in Swarg Ashram—Sri P.V. Acharyaji. He was a B.A., LL.B. He was a good Bhakta and a very good Sadhak. He used to measure

his food in a balance. So much atta is necessary for so many breads: so many ounces of dhal, etc. He was very fond of this sort of Satvic food. But he thought that sweets fell into this category: and he consumed a lot of sweets. In course of time, this produced diabetes in him. Then he came to me and said he was at last disillusioned. Then he began to take normal diet.

GANDHIJI AND C.R.

'Sastriji once said that even Gandhiji admitted that his dietetic regulations were the price he had to pay for his health. If people accustom themselves to taking goat's milk once, they will have to carry a goat with them wherever they go. But, C. Rajagopalachariar is of my type: he would take any kind of food, but moderately. That should be the attitude of every one.

'You should observe these regulations once in a way. Once in fifteen days, observe a complete fast. Give up salt on Sundays. Live on milk and fruits alone for some days. Train yourself like that.

'In Ayodhya, some people live on chillies alone. That is going to the other extreme. The wise plan is to observe moderation in everything.'

At this time some one offered some guava fruits to Siva. And, Siva offered one to Raman Nambiar.

'What are the properties of this fruit Swamiji?'

'Don't ask me all that: eat it.'

He not only ate the guava fruit without further argument, but started eating a little bread, etc.

THINK TWICE

'Swamiji, I want your blessings. I think of leaving for Banaras today,' said Sri Ramachandra Iyer who had a slight misunderstanding with some other workers in the Ashram and had decided to leave.

'Beloved Ram! Sit down. Do not jump to conclusions. Think twice before you act. Now, tell me—for what purpose have you come here?'

'I came here to do Sadhana and to realise God, Swamiji.'

'I have read in your own books, Swamiji, that Sadhana is self-control, Japa, Kirtan, service.'

'Have you thought over the matter for a moment—is this action of yours in leaving this Ashram and going to Banaras in consonance with your own resolve to do Sadhana and realise God?'

No reply.

'Sadhana is, as you have rightly said, self-control. Self-control means maintaining mental equilibrium under all circumstances. A little word from someone greatly upsets you. You are not able to bear a harsh word!'

'But, Swamiji, such things disturb my peace of my mind. I wish to have peace.'

'You will get that peace in Banaras only? If you do not get peace of mind here, you will not get it anywhere else. Peace is within yourself. Thank again: stay here for, say, another three days more. Then come to me and say if you still feel like going to Banaras.'

Silence....

'Can you visualise what you will feel three days later? Beloved Ramachandraji, the whole thing will appear as a dream. You will realise that the offensive words are mere vibrations in the air. Now, you are excited. This excitement blinds your vision. You are not able to reason, to discriminate properly. When your mind is cooled down, you will realise your mistake.'

Again silence. Ramachandra Iyer is immersed in deep thought.

'Where else will you get such a spiritual atmosphere? There is the temple: you can attend the Puja morning and evening and get hot, hot Kitchadie Prasad also. There is the Bhajan Hall where you can do Akhanda Kirtan for a few hours daily. Even if you sit for a few minutes in the Bhajan hall you will be elevated. Ganges bath, good food, tea, milk and fruits—Oh, it is a blessing to live here. When you go out and suffer, you will realise the difficulties of Samsar.

'My dear Ramji, so many people are daily writing to me: 'I cannot live here any more, I want to join your Ashram after resigning my job!' God Himself is looking after us. The entire place is filled with the peace-vibrations of sages and saints of yore: therefore, we are ever contented and peaceful. This is the best place for Sadhana. Why do you think of running here and there? Ohji, give up this idea.'

Ramachandra Iyer prostrates to Siva. He has decided to stay: he is completely transformed now.

NO MOHA FOR ANY ONE

Not a few hours had elapsed before another 'case' came up to Siva.

Swami X., an old disciple of Siva who had taken Sannyas from Siva years ago and who has his own circle of followers, etc., got a little irritated over a trivial incident: and thought of going back. He came to take leave of Siva.

'Om Namō Narayanaya, Swamiji Maharaj, I want to return today,' he said and briefly explained what happened.

'But, what do these little boys know? You are an old Sannyasi. You are a pillar of the Society. The Mission needs veteran Sadhus like yourself. Now, I have got all young boys: there must be some like yourself, aged Mahatmas. Only if you stay here will the institution be respectable.' And so on—Siva argued with him for a little while.... 'Achchaji, if you feel like it, you can go.' and then forgot all about it.

Siva tries his best to persuade everyone to stick to the path and to serve the divine life mission: but Siva has no particular attachment to anyone—even if he is the most important worker.

HELIX HEDEIRA

'Ohji, third reminder—what about your resolves form?'

‘Swamiji, I will fill it in just now and give it to you before I leave.’ Immediately this visitor left Siva’s presence—he could not stand Siva’s gaze for an instant longer—and, retired into a nearby room for filling in the resolves form.

Siva said: ‘This is what the postal authorities used to do. The first reminder was called Helix. The persons to whom it is addressed may sometimes sleep over it also. But, when he receives the Hedeira reminder, he will not take his lunch, too. He will run about here and there, get the reply and send it at once. This was my Hedeira reminder to this man. I told him on the 8th night that he should fill in the resolves form. I reminded him yesterday morning. And, this morning’s is in the Hedeira reminder. He cannot rest quiet now till he fills in the resolves form.’

The visitor re-entered with the resolves form, duly filled in.

‘Nangiahji, it is now your turn: Vishnuji, give him two resolves forms. One for yourself and one for your Sahadharmini. Just take a few mild resolves: I will do two Malas of Japa daily, I will give up eating pedas once a fortnight. You have also learnt Asanas: also Ram, Ram!’

‘Are these vows, Swamiji?’

‘They are not vows: but if you have Sraddha (faith) you can convert them into vows. They are only resolves. Always keep them in your mind and try to stick to them. Pray to God: He will give you strength to stick to them and to progress further.’

They both gave him their resolves forms. Smilingly, Siva received them and said: ‘This is my JABARDASTHI YOGA.’

INITIATION INTO DIVINE LIFE

R.L., the admirer of Arya Samaj, has decided to follow Siva! During the conversation, Siva elicited from him information about his habits and mode of life. The case needs thorough overhauling: but Siva’s handling of it is full of tender love.

‘Try by gradual practice to get up at 4 a.m. Then wash your face. Sit for Japa. Sit erect for some time. Then you can lean against the wall, if you feel difficult otherwise. Repeat OM Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya. Meditate on the picture of Lord Krishna—at the same time associate the Mantra with ideas of Purity, Perfection, Wisdom, Infinity, etc. Repeat the Mantra a little aloud if your mind wanders. You can sing the Mantra also. (Siva actually sang the Mantra.) You can write this Mantra neatly in a notebook. This is Likhit Japa, a powerful Sadhana for developing concentration.

‘Observe Mouna for some time during the day. Go to bed early enough to enable you to get up at 4 a.m. Do not take heavy food at night.’

‘Swamiji, I take tea late in the evening: and my night meal also late.’

‘That is it—the food habits need a thorough overhauling. Take your noon meal at about 11 a.m. Give up the late evening tea and finish your evening meal before p.m. Also try to keep it as light as you can. That will give you a sound sleep also.’

'Maintain the spiritual diary and send me a copy every month. What little Sadhana you are able to do, record it there. Also, write to me about your experiences and difficulties. I will answer them and also review your diary.'

Siva then asked Vishnudevji to get a copy of 'Sangeeta Bhagavat' and 'Sadhana': he then handed them to Sri R.L.

'This pamphlet 'Sadhana' contains sufficient material for you to start with. You see the sample 'Daily Routine' there? Kindly frame your daily routine on this model. Once you are successful in changing the old habits, you will cultivate a taste for Sadhana, and progress will be rapid. With the progress in Nama-Japa, God's Grace will also descend on you and help you onwards.

'The book 'Sangeeta Bhagavat' contains the essence of the 11th Skandha of Bhagavate. You can sing it nicely. (Siva sang a few lines.) It contains priceless instructions on Vairagya, Japa, Dhyana, renunciation, etc. Kindly keep this for your daily Swadhyaya. Besides, you can get from Gita Press, Gorakhpur, some good edition of the Gita with Hindi translation and go through that also every day.'

Sri R.L. saluted Siva and started to go: Siva blessed him with folded palms!

'God's blessings are always with you. Jai ho!'

11TH SEPTEMBER, 1948

SECULAR DUTIES, TOO

Sri P. K. Subramanian wants to give up his studies and join the Ashram.

'Swamiji, of late I am not able to read class books, for I feel immediately I take up my class books that they are not worth studying since they do not contain the element that would satisfy my hungering soul.'

'Beloved child! It is too early for you to renounce the world. Besides, you have got your parents. You should serve them nicely. Earn your livelihood by honest means. Work hard. At the same time, adopt the Nimitta Bhav: work as an instrument in His hands. Cultivate this. Carry on your studies also. No doubt, knowledge of this phenomenal world would not confer Moksha on you. Yet, it has got its own uses. Nothing is bad in itself; it is the use to which a particular branch of knowledge is put that matters.'

'Try to carry on your personal Sadhana also side by side. Practise my Twenty Instructions to the best of your ability. Maintain the spiritual diary and send me a copy every month. I will guide you. Always keep the goal in view. When the time comes God Himself will facilitate your renunciation. OM Namō Narayanaya.'

When the young man had left the place after prostrating with tearful eyes to Siva, Siva added:

'So many young men are eager to renounce the world!'

‘Yes, Swamiji,’ said a visitor: ‘Your books are so inspiring that those who read them get such a burning desire to pursue the path of Nivritti for attaining their goal, and have no further taste in worldly pursuits or studies.’

‘That may be. But, I do not encourage juvenile enthusiasm. Often this ‘desire to renounce’ is a bubble which bursts after some time and vanishes into an airy nothing! Adwaitanandaji used to tell me the very interesting story of his own brother.

‘This young man suddenly felt himself drawn to Nivritti Marga. He neglected his studies. He used to shut himself up in a room always repeating that the world is false, and other Vedantic ideas. He thought that he had full Vairagya. His family people succeeded in due course in tempting him away from this assumed saintliness: they did this through a woman. This man changed suddenly, married this lady and is now the father of many children.’

Siva generally preaches the glory of the Nivritti Marga and also points out the worthlessness of worldly life. But, if the Sadhaka asks to be initiated into Sanyasa, Siva would quietly advise him to live the divine life in his station in the world and develop Vairagya.

The talk turned to Nivritta Marga. Siva, in ‘serious humour’, said:

‘Oh, Raman. What are you thinking now? Will you resign your job and remain here itself?’

‘Yes, Swamiji, I can do it: and that was what I was thinking of even now.’

‘No, no. Wait for a little while more. Do your work: earn money—you have got your mother. Serve her nicely. Do not marry: if you avoid this, you have already registered your place here! Occasionally come here and practise Sadhan. Then, when the time comes, you can make this your permanent abode.’

What a strange spirit! Not the come-here-work-for-me spirit: but the spirit of doing the right thing for the other man.

IMMEDIATE EFFECT

‘OM Namō Narayanaya, Judge Saheb, Avo-ji,’ greeted Siva.

Judge Gauri Prasadji walked in and with great devotion bowed to Siva. He handed a cheque to Siva.

‘What is this?’ asked Siva, rather surprised to see the cheque for Rs. 2000.

‘Swamiji, it is for the construction of a Kutir in your Ashram. You see: it happened like this. Day before yesterday night after you had come and performed your ecstatic Kirtan in my humble Kutir in Swarg Ashram, myself and house-keeper had both wonderful experiences and visions. I had the vision of Light thrice during the night—an indescribably bright Jyoti. And, my grand-daughter—a young girl graduate who was greatly interested in Sankirtan, and who had passed away just a few days ago—appeared to my house-keeper in her dream and said, distinctly: ‘I want to live with my grand-father. Kindly construct a Kutir for me. I am greatly delighted that you held Swamiji’s Kirtan in your house today. I

am very happy now. But I want you to construct a Kutir for me.' I know she is fond of Kirtan. In your Bhajan Hall the Akhanda Kirtan is going on throughout the day. I want a Kutir to be constructed near the Bhajan Hall so that the girl's soul may find peace there.'

HUMILITY! NOT I, BUT HE!

After the Judge Saheb had left, Siva told me: 'See how the cosmic will works out. That day it was even suggested that we should drop the idea of visiting Swarg Ashram, as it was raining. I would also have agreed: but I felt we should go. So, I told Narayanaswamiji that even if it rained, we should carry out our determination! This girl's soul must have been thirsting for Kirtan. It had to be quenched.' O, my Siva! Only you knew it: and even Indra shuddered before your vow and withdrew the clouds.

SIVA'S VIRAT NAIVEDYA

To Siva the world is the Virat—everyone is indeed the Lord Himself.

What a delight Siva takes in distributing Prasad. Chimanlal Thakore of Ahmedabad has sent a big parcel of sweetmeats. When this is announced Siva at once jumps out of the office: 'Bring the Prasad in buckets.'

Padmanabhan is called—for he has been injected by Siva with the same distribution instinct. P. actually is beside himself with joy.

Siva and P. go round the entire Ashram.

'Chimanlal Thakore and Mrs. Lall only know me in this respect. Every year Mrs. Lall sends a large consignment of mangoes: and Chimanlal these sweetmeats. I cannot give pinches of Prasad to anyone. I must give to MY satisfaction. And, my family is large—so, whoever sends Prasad has to send a lot.'

'OM Namō Narayanaya, Swamiji, come here, take this Prasad. 'Patram, Pushpam, Phalam, Thoyam....' Siva greets one by one and gives handfuls (with his large hand) of the Prasad. Hands are full: but Siva does not stop. 'Take in that towel.' 'But, Swamiji, I will fall sick.' 'Oh, don't worry. I will give you medicine.'

My turn comes. Then Siva reveals to me his secret source of joy. 'I see Lord Narayana in everyone to whom I give the Prasad. When I give, I actually perform Naivedya to the Lord. I repeat 'OM Namō Narayanaya' when I meet everyone: that makes for Japa. Thus even this is converted into a potent form of Sadhana. The heart is also developed nicely.'

12TH SEPTEMBER, 1948

JNANA GANGA SNAN

Siva stopped before the Kutir in which Sivaramakrishnier was staying and called him for the morning Satsang.

S. said: 'Swamiji, I shall take my bath, perform Sandhya and then come.'

But Siva would not brook delays: S. had to accompany him.

When they were returning from the class, Siva smiled and said: ‘Gangasnan is indeed very essential. It destroys your sins. It purifies your body, mind and soul. It invigorates you. You have not lost anything by foregoing your morning bath today. If you had spent your time in bath, etc., you would have missed the morning Satsang.’

‘Common meditation and Japa are powerful Sadhanas. Individual Sadhana often means lethargy. A few Malas of Japa and then the pillow invites you. Even while you repeat the Mantra the mind wanders. But, in group meditation, a powerful spiritual current is generated. Everyone is benefited greatly. The mind gets more easily concentrated.’

‘Yes, Swamiji, and the Vedantic Kirtan that you sang was most inspiring.’

‘Even ordinary words have great power. They generate two kinds of Vrittis – the Sakthi Vritti and the Lakshana Vritti. When you utter the word ‘milk’, you think of its qualities—white colour, liquidity, etc., —this is Lakshana Vritti. Then you also think of its uses—it gives health, it is Satvic food, etc., —this is Sakthi Vritti.’

‘When such is the case with ordinary words, what must be the power of Vedantic formula. When you repeat OM Antaratma, Nitya, Shuddha, Buddha, Nirakara Kutastha, Vyapak Swayamjyoti Poorna Para Brahma Sakshi Drishta Turiya Santam Sivam Advaitam, the Brahmakara Vritti is raised up in you. You are one day bound to realise the Supreme.’

‘This is Jnana Ganga Snan. It is the most powerful purified. It at once cleans the Antahkarana and turns the mind inward. When you listen to discourses on Sadhana, your mind receives new, healthy ideas—new Samskaras are formed—evil Samskaras are eradicated—your thirst for God is intensified—you are prompted to introspect, find out your own defects and to erase them.’

‘Ganga Snana is necessary, no doubt. But I only wanted to point out that you should on no account miss a bath in the Jnana Ganga. You can take a bath in the Ganges now. But, if you had missed the morning Satsang, that loss would have been irreparable.’

With a heart full of gratitude, S. prostrated to Siva.

SUBTLE SELFISHNESS

A visitor had failed to attend the morning class. He caught Siva’s eye in the morning: and was offering an explanation.

‘But, it is not your fault....’

Swami X entered.

‘X should have called you, awakened you and taken you with him to the Bhajan Hall. Previously I myself used to sing OM outside every Kutir, rouse everyone and take all to the morning class.’

‘This visitors will naturally have the Bombay habit of sleeping till 7 a.m. (To X) But you should have awakened them, if necessary by applying water to their eyes, waited till they got up and taken them to the Bhajan Hall.’

‘Not only this—you should have prepared the ground the previous night itself. You should have told them about the morning class, about the benefits of common meditation and Japa, about the lectures that they will be able to hear and benefited by—so that they will go to bed with that Sankalpa.

‘Selfishness. That is at the root of all this. You want to go on with your own Sadhana and consider such service as this a waste of your time.’

A thorough inner search and analysis of human nature.

MAYA’S SECRET DOOR

With his characteristic candour Siva listened this morning when our Sastriji was narrating his experiences with other Sanyasins. About one Sanyasin, he was saying:

‘Swamiji, this Sadhu never speaks a word. He has taken the vow of Akhanda Mowna. Not only this—he does not come out of his Kutir at all.’

Siva gave a hearty laugh: ‘Then, how to see him?’

‘People who wish to have his Darshan one by one gather on the verandah of his Kutir. When he is informed that thirty or forty people have thus collected he comes to the window of his room on the side of the verandah. Gracefully, he holds up the blind a little aside, so as to provide for the visitors just a glimpse of his face. He stands in this posture for just a couple of minutes. Then he again gracefully nods his head and drops the blind.’

‘That is all! And, a large number of people go there for this much, taking all the trouble?’

‘Yes, Swamiji, for this Sadhu has been living like this for a considerable time now: and his own disciples have naturally woven many stories around his seclusion, Mowna, etc. and deified him, so that the credulous public feel that his Darshan is enough to confer Mukti on them.’

‘This is all one type of spiritual trade. What is lost if he comes out, talks to people and consoles and inspires them? In a short time, he develops his egoism to a great degree. He cannot respect others: he cannot bow his head before others. He feels that he is a great man. Arrogance, self-conceit, hypocrisy and egoism of the worst sort—all creep into him one by one. He forgets his goal and loses himself in this mad business for acquiring name and fame. I think I can never do this sort of thing.’

‘Never, Swamiji, it is just alien to your nature.’ Sastriji said to me after Siva had gone away from the office: ‘As a matter of fact, Swamiji errs on the other side—he makes himself too freely accessible: he is too outspoken and is able to keep no secrets. He is indeed child-like.’

GOVERNOR-GENERALSHIP Vs. SANYASA

‘Jinnah is reported dead, Swamiji.’ Someone brought the news. Siva was pacing up and down opposite the Diamond Jubilee Hall. Sastriji was near.

'Now, there will be much competition for his post. This will breed hatred, ill-will, quarrels!'

'Surely, Swamiji, everywhere there is jealousy and power politics.'

'It is a nuisance to hold these high posts, I think. Your life is in constant danger. So many others covet the job. They try to instigate goondas against you. Why all this trouble, fear and worry? The best thing is to take to seclusion on the banks of the Ganges: that is my opinion. There we should do Japa and Dhyana. What do you say?'

'Yes, Swamiji: but how many people have the wisdom to feel so with all their heart?'

POWER OF MAYA

'It is very difficult. After many lives of Satsang and Japa only such taste comes. Maya is so powerful. Somebody sits on the banks of the Ganges and does Japa. After some time he gets tired of it and thinks that 'eat, drink and be merry' is the greatest philosophy. Maya does not allow him to realise that there can be real joy outside the senses. They are afraid of renunciation. They are afraid of Sadhana. And, even when they take to Sadhana, they expect immediate results.

'Madhusudana Saraswati, who has written an inspiring and inspired commentary on the Gita, was initiated by his Guru in Gayatri and was asked to do Purascharana. He did so: but nothing happened. His Guru asked him to go on with the Purascharana. After 18 Purascharanas he got the Lord's Darshan. He was learned, saintly, endowed with Deivi Sampath—yet he had to do so much of Japa. Then he realised that the 18 Purascharanas washed away the sins of 18 Brahmahatyas which he had done in his previous births. Then alone was he fit for His Darshan.

'Such should be every Sadhak's patience. But nowadays, even a determination to lead a life of renunciation throughout the life is a great thing.'

Siva did Kirtan for the peace of Mr. Jinnah's soul.

FRANKNESS

Sri A. described during the Satsang the magic influence that Siva's pen and personality had brought about in his case. He confessed before a large audience that he had tasted wine, that he was a meat-eater and that he had almost succumbed to the wiles of a girl. He changed upon some of Siva's inspiring words which once for all turned him to the spiritual path. He took blood out of his own hand and offered it in fire with a firm resolve to give up his evil habits. Even that was not enough to put a stop to the deep-rooted evils. He then sat before the picture of his Lord Sivananda—meditated—prayed mentally for strength to conquer the evils. The impossible had been achieved within those few supreme moments of his life: devotion to the lotus feet of the Lord and the Guru had been firmly implanted in his heart.

'This frankness is a great virtue. It will take a Sadhaka much near to God. What most Sadhakas lack is this sterling quality. Without fear of criticism, without

feeling shy to confess one's own defects in public,....boldly spoke out his past life. Everyone should cultivate this divine virtue,' Siva told us when he came into the office after the Satsang.

14TH SEPTEMBER, 1948

NOT ONLY IN NAME

Sri Sankaranarayana Iyer of Nagpur came in and prostrated to Siva.

'OM Namō Narayanaya: what has happened now? You want to leave today?'

'I am leaving tomorrow, Swamiji.'

'When you go back, you must make a firm resolve to spread the message of divine life. You must become a dynamic worker in the divine field.'

'With your holy blessings, Swamiji.'

Turning to us, Siva said:

'He belongs to the family of Appayya Dikshitar. It is not a joke to belong to this great saint's line. (To Sri S.) You should show by your own actions that you are worthy of this descent. There is no use merely claiming ancestry to a spiritual hero: you should deserve it.'

'Yes, Swamiji, I shall try my best.'

'Study Sanskrit—then Gita, Upanishads and Appayya Dikshita's works also. Then start spreading his message. Be humble and simple. Some people go on tomtoming their ancestry to earn their livelihood. When people see you, they should at once recognise that Appayya Dikshita's blood runs through your veins. You should possess such exemplary character. Nothing is impossible. If you try, God's grace will also come and you will shine as a true descendent of Appayya.'

15TH SEPTEMBER, 1948

NO MUKTI FOR ME

'Sastriji, I think I will never attain Mukti. You see, worldly people are attached to their wife, children, family, property, etc. But, I am attached to service, dissemination of spiritual knowledge. Even if the thought of running away into the forest comes to me, it leaves me the next instant: for, the desire in me to work, work and work, till this body lasts: and to serve the Sadhaks in every way I can—they smother such a desire for seclusion in a trice. What can I do? I think will never get out of this chakra. I will be born again and again in this world, every time to serve the aspirants,' said Siva to Sastriji, during a conversation on birthdays, their significance, the goal of life, etc. Today is Sastriji's birthday.

'But, Swamiji, this thought very rarely comes to even saints. They are concerned only about themselves: and they think that even answering aspirants' letters, or writing books on spiritual matters based on their own experiences, etc., are

against their own salvation. The spirit of service that literally possesses you is rarely found in any one else.'

'But, what about my Mukti?....Achchaji, I should be content to wait till I have served you all to my satisfaction and till you have all attained Mukti. Yes, that is right: I do not want to get Mukti myself till everyone leading the divine life gets salvation. Till then I shall take any number of births and join the Divine Life Society.'

PROPAGANDA IN EUROPE

Menon was gazing at the infinite expanse of azure Unknowable: and trying to unravel the mysteries that it contains.

Siva called him: 'OM' Namo Narayanaya, Balan Swamiji.'

'I am telling Sastriji that I love to do intense work, intense Seva. A little bit of seclusion, meditation and Sadhana is also necessary. See, Lord Jesus did Sadhana in seclusion for thirty years: then he came out and worked intensely for a few years—that was enough to thrill the entire world. In seclusion you gain inner Adhyatmic strength to revolutionize the entire world—and to do the work of a life-time within a couple of years.

'That is the sort of work that I want you to do in Europe. You should go there and thrill the entire West in a couple of years: a lightning trip to the West. Dr. Atreya has written recently that Europe is more ready for the message of Vedanta than even India, America and England. Europeans are more eager to receive this message and assimilate it. Will you do it?'

'Swamiji, with your blessing, and inspiration, anything can be done.'

'The most important thing is to tell the Europeans now to lead the divine life. Most of them nowadays run after occult powers. That is really not Yoga. They imagine that only one who is able to perform miracles is a Yogi. These powers when acquired turn one's head and magnify one's egoism—thus taking one away from God.'

'And, when you exhort them to lead the divine life, the idea should not be to ask them to run away from their avocations in life into the Himalayan jungles, there to sit and pray to God. You should tell them in plain language that God is ever within them and that if they do not find Him there, they are not likely to find Him anywhere else.'

'Set before them the examples of such illustrious personalities like Dr. T.M.P. Mahadevan. He is a learned philosopher. He is the Head of the Department of Philosophy in the Madras University. Besides, he is working day and night for the spiritual uplift of mankind, along with Swami Rajeswaranandaji and others. The wonderful point about him is that Dr. Mahadevan is still a Brahmachary. That gives him marvellous energy. He is ever immersed in philosophy, Advaita Vedanta. Recently he toured the Andhra districts with some Sanyasins and did wonderful service there. That should be the ideal for Europeans, too.'

'Marvellous ideas you have given me, Swamiji.'

'But....' suddenly Siva's expression turns grave: Balanji anxiously awaits what follows this 'but'.

'But, you have to be careful.'

'Yes, Swamiji, with your blessings....'

'....careful lest you should get absorbed in the West. That is what happens in many cases. The Indians try to imitate the Westerners: and Western culture swallows them. Yesterday I received a letter from an American lady who says she was born to a Yogi from India.'

'But, Swamiji, so long as you are here to inspire us from within, I have no fear.'

'That is why I always insist that those who do social work should once in a way run away to places like Rishikesh: work and seclusion should go hand in hand. You should not 'establish' yourself in Europe. Do intense work for a couple of years: then fly back to India for seclusion and Sadhana. Then again you can go.'

16TH SEPTEMBER, 1948

SEAT OF DISEASES

'OM Namo Narayanaya,' Siva greeted Shivadayalji.

Shivadayalji was heavily blanketed and was wearing a woollen cap, too.

'You are not feeling well?'

'No, Swamiji, I am not feeling well for the past two days. Today I have a headache and pain in the body, etc.'

Quickly Siva interrupted him, and turning to Dr. Miss Kamala Korke, said:

'Doctorji, this man's heart has come between his lungs. What to do for him? Kindly prescribe something to cure him.' (To S.D.) 'If you are sick, you should approach a doctor.' The entire party—for, this happened just after the evening Satsang was over—had a hearty laugh.

S.D. was a little non-plussed. Siva relieved him by saying:

'Beloved Yogiji, throw away that woollen cap first. That is the first medicine. Then the blanket also. These things only produce fever.'

S.D. instantly obeyed: as he was himself a good Sadhaka and a fairly advanced student of Raja Yoga, he at once understood that Siva had gone to the root of the problem and in his own humorous way, pointed out that diseases are rooted in the mind: when the mind is sickly, the body follows suit—and the only way to get rid of disease is to think and feel healthy thoughts.

PENDULANANDA

Brahmachary Jayaramji has come. He was a young and enthusiastic Sadhak who came all the way from a foreign land to get a knowledge of Yoga and Vedanta. After staying for a few days in the Ashram he left for Vasishta Guha to remain in seclusion and meditate. He now feels that for active Sadhaks with a special gift

for organisation meditation in seclusion is vegetation. His hands have begun to itch for work: and often he thinks of Siva and his dynamic Ashram.

Today he has come to the Ashram on his way to the Post Office on some work. Whenever he goes to Rishikesh he stays for a little while at the Ashram and looks round his friends in the Ashram and also has Swamiji's Darshan.

When he bowed to Siva, Siva remarked with a mischievous smile: 'Pendulananda' (one who moves to and fro like a pendulum without being able to determine which way to throw his entire weight.)

Then he began to discuss with J. the significance of his dances on the Silver Jubilee day, to enquire about Swami Purushotthamanandaji's health, etc. When we were about to run off to the kitchen for Bhiksha, Siva asked me: 'Have you understood?' referring to that pregnant word into which Siva had condensed a world of meaning.

Dedicate yourself to a noble cause, if you are of the active, serving nature. There, try to introspect, to find out your own defects and to eradicate them. Study Gita and compare your own state of mind with that of the Gita-ideal of a Karma Yogi, and try to perfect yourself while yet serving humanity. How can I afford to miss such a precious word from His lips?

A.1 FOR THE HEART

The now enthusiastic Ramachandra Iyer bowed to Siva, sat at his feet and said: 'I will now sing the 'Song of Immanence of Ram', Swamiji.'

Siva listened to the song. R. has a sweet, musical voice. He sings the Maha Mantra beautifully: especially in Brahmamuhurtha the entire locality will be brought to life to his Maha Mantra Kirtan.

When he finished the song, Siva said: 'Fair. That is my certificate....(to us)....I have got several categories—fair, fairly good, good, very good, marvellous. His recitation is fair. But, Premanandaji has reached the 'marvellous' stage.'

I pondered over this riddle: for, Premanandaji cannot claim to have that sweet musical voice—though, strangely enough, when he sings this 'Song of Immanence of Ram' as also the 'Nama Ramayan', there is a distinct sweetness in his voice.

A look at Gurudev's smiling face dispelled the perplexity. Siva's criterion for judging the standard in these cases is the heart. Real sweetness issues from the heart. However good the voice may be, if the song does not proceed from the heart, Siva awards it the fair certificate: when the voice is good and the heart is also there, he takes the greatest delight in that song and admires it as marvellous.

PROPHET OF RENASCENT ISLAM

Sri Duncan Greenlees' book 'Gospel of Islam' has been received by Siva from the Theosophical Publishing House, Madras, for being reviewed in the columns of the 'Divine Life'. Sri Haridasji, who had prepared the review, had pointed out that the world today badly needed the unifying force of Islam, with its belief in One God, etc.

'The Prophet's teachings are as sublime and worthy of our admiration and following as the teachings of any other Seer or saint in any other religion. The Prophet taught love, tolerance, understanding and unity. But, strangely enough, under the very banner of the Prophet the people are killing their brethren.

'The teachings of all the Seers are misunderstood by the generations which come after them, and join their creed. They twist the teachings to suit their own whims and fancies. Here starts misunderstandings.

'Truth alone triumphs; not falsehood. Love alone conquers; not hatred. I wish all the followers of the Prophet all over the world re-read the Quaran and understand its true import in the proper light. Any religion that degenerates into the level of the animals, adopts the jungle law, and yields to falsehood, hatred, and Adharma, is bound to crash. A Prophet of Renascent Islam will then come to revive the spirit of the Prophet!'

COUNTER-ATTACK

I had recorded Siva's remarks about his own Mukti: and there was a mild breeze over it in the office. Some of us were discussing the significance of his mystic utterance.

Quietly, Siva slipped into our midst, and explained:

'What is there in Mukti? My nature is to serve, serve and to serve forever! I do not long for Mukti. Even great saints and seers who have realised the Supreme and thus liberated themselves from the wheel of birth and death long to come back to the earth-plane—as they often do—to serve the suffering humanity and to assist struggling souls on the path to God. I will insist on taking birth after birth to serve you all: and to help aspirants march forward to the Goal.'

'Swamiji, even the gods will be jealous of you, then.'

'That is the point. I will defeat Maya in her own realm. She must cry before Brahma himself that she is undone and that aspirants have started to progress rapidly on the path; and the slumberers have been awakened. Then Brahma out of fright should give me Mukti.'

'Brilliant idea, Swamiji. Who can understand the glory of service except yourself—the very embodiment of the spirit of service?'

17TH SEPTEMBER, 1948

BATTLEFIELD PRATYAHARA

Sri Raman Nambiar and Rajagopalji proved a good channel for Siva's wisdom to flow to you and me, this morning.

The Forest University class was over and there was a discussion about Raja Yoga and Karma Yoga. These two Sadhaks were handy.

'Only those who have not understood properly what Pratyahara means will want to run away to forests and caves. They will live there for some time: and then

when they see some people, they will be greatly upset. When they go into some towns, they will feel something strange.'

'Then, what is Pratyahara, Swamiji?' ventured Raman Nambiar.

'You should go on doing service. That is the greatest purifier. At the same time you should be mindful of the purpose of service—the goal of life. Once every hour for a couple of minutes you should close your eyes and mentally repeat His Name and meditate. You should feel that you are Akartha, Abhoktha, Sakshi, Satchidananda Atma. Keep a notebook by your side. Write a few mantras in it: keep a copy of the Gita or other scriptural texts. Read a few lines occasionally. Constantly try to concentrate your mind on the work on hand: and when you meditate withdraw the mind from this work also and direct all its rays on the Ishtam. Practise and go on practising this. You will soon attain success—Ekagrata. You will be able to withdraw the senses completely—Pratyahara. Afterwards even if you are in the middle of a battle-field, you will not be disturbed. That is real Pratyahara.'

The disciples bowed in veneration.

SIVA IS ALL

'Panchakshara is the greatest Mantra. Oh, what else do you need? When once you have got Upadesh of Panchakshara, you need not run after any other saint or Sadhu for Upadesh.'

'Swamiji, we only longed to get that assurance from a great Maharshi like you.'

'Go on repeating that. The Lord will bestow all prosperity on you. All your troubles and difficulties will vanish.'

'We are greatly blessed to have such an Ashirvad from Swamiji.'

'Do a lot of Japa of this great Mantra. Do not think that this Mantra or that Mantra is superior to the Panchakshari for the purpose of getting this or that object. For everything the Panchakshari alone will do. It is the panacea for all ills. Mantra Japa is not like curry or soup—brinjal soup is more tasty than ladies-finger curry.'

All of us had a hearty laugh over the humorous remark.

'Swamiji, we are worshipping Lord Rama also.'

'That is very good. Worship and pray to Rama, Krishna, Devi, Narayana, or any other God. See oneness everywhere. Siva Himself is all these. And, Panchakshara is the Omnipotent Mantra. Lord Siva is easily propitiated, and He bestows all prosperity on His Bhaktas.'

The three old ladies—relatives of Swami Paramanandaji in his Poorvashram—greatly enlightened, listen on with rapt attention.

'There was an illiterate villager once upon a time,' continued Siva. 'He did not know Rudram and Chamakam: but was anxious to repeat them. He found an easy way of doing it: and went on repeating NAMACHAMA and doing Abhisheka—because he found that there were a lot of Namas and Chamas in Rudram and

Chamakam respectively. One day, a pundit saw this: scolded him and asked him to repeat Rudram and Chamakam. The Pundit was at once laid up with a fell disease and was unable to rise. Lord Siva appeared in his dream and said: 'I was greatly pleased with my devotee's Abhisheki; why have you interfered with it?' The pundit at once ran to the devotee and prostrated before him: 'Oh, devotee, kindly go on with your own NAMACHAMA Abhisheka. The Lord is highly pleased with that. I am only an ignorant man: I have now realised that the Lord needs only the heart. I beg your pardon—and went away. The devotee continued as before.'

'O, Bhagavan, it is a wonderful illustration. We can never forget this story and your invaluable blessings.'

'I will tell you another story.' All attention everywhere. 'Another Tamil devotee, an illiterate non-Brahmin, went on doing Japa of the Panchakshara as 'Namachivaya'. With the help of this Mantra he would just walk over the waters of a river as if it were hard ground. One Brahmin noticed this, and thought: if this man is able to do this miracle with the repetition of this Mantra wrongly, what could he achieve if he repeats it properly. So, he requested him to repeat Namahsivaya. The illiterate man had great respect for the Brahmin: so, he adopted this pronunciation. Lo, when he wanted to cross the river, he found that he was sinking in the water. He ran back in fright: then thought over the matter: 'Why is this?; previously I never felt any difficulty.' The Lord from within prompted him to repeat the Mantra with faith and Bhav in his own way. He did so and crossed the river.

'The Lord wants only your heart. Give it in toto to Him. You will enjoy worldly prosperity and will eventually get Moksha also.'

They all bowed to Siva and gave him an offering of parched rice, which Siva accepted with profound delight. He sang a Nondichindu song also describing how a Bhakta devoutly offers to the Lord parched rice and fruits.

THE CLUE: MELTING HEART

Dr. Miss...has come in to take leave of Siva as she is returning today. Siva had a long talk with her on her hospital work, etc. He was all admiration for her skill, service and qualifications. She is an expert in surgery. Suddenly, Siva exclaimed, with a smile: 'Then, you must have a hard heart! Some people—like our Paramanandaji—can never become surgeons in their life. P. will faint if he sees one drop of blood.'

In this, Oh my Siva, there is the clue to thy renunciation. Like Buddha's, your heart should have melted at the suffering of the sick. The loving heart of a mother that you have would have paralysed your hand holding the surgeon's knife. Thy keen vision should have pierced the flesh, the wound, the worn-out body, and perceived the Cause of Suffering: these Sacred Lessons learnt direct from the most holy of scriptures—the Book of Life—should have implanted themselves firmly and deeply in thy heart—have I not seen that even a baby's wise remark literally seizes you till your own inner self weaves around it the highest wisdom?

Manan and Nididhyasan on these lessons has obviously left you in Rishikesh in seclusion, in hard and strenuous Tapasya. Glory to Siva.

When Dr....was leaving, Siva rose from his seat and with folded palms said: 'Please come again when you commence your private practice.'

A SILENT SADHAK

When the doctor had left, Siva said: 'Oh, Sridharaswamiji, this doctor is a very good Sadhak. Very rarely she wrote to me. But, silently she has been doing wonderful Sadhana. She has been very regular in Mantra writing. Look at these volumes of Mantra writing books! And, she has been quietly maintaining the spiritual diary. How humbly she places these diaries on my table! She has a very good heart also. Even during her stay here she has done good work here and has saved Suresh's life.' Such are Siva's disciples.

THE ETERNAL PRESENT

Swami Shanmuganandaji joined Siva even while he was working in the Army: full of dispassion and discrimination, devotion and faith, he was more other-worldly than worldly. He was leading the household life with the constant yearning in the heart to renounce it at the earliest moment. The job, family, everything in the world was like coals of fire to him.

He resigned and joined Siva's mission. Soon he was initiated into Sanyas: for even in the Army he was considered more as a Pujari and Sadhu than as an Army-clerk.

Someone brought to the notice of Siva that an ordinance had been promulgated which might make it necessary for all ex-Servicemen to rejoin Military Service. Siva remarked:

'Sanyasins are, of course, exempt. They have renounced the world. They have enrolled themselves for the Supreme Adhyatmic battle. They are determined to rout out the internal enemies, million-fold more formidable than many battalions of the external army—Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, ignorance—with the aid of the Divine Atmic Bomb.'

'Of course, Sanyasins will be exempted from the operation of the Ordinance, Swamiji.'

'So, Shanmuganandaji has been saved, I think. He is a pious soul full of devotion to the Lord. So, He saved him....in time.'

O, Lord Sivananda! It is you who saved him from the unpleasant task of going against his own conscience: for you gave him Sanyas last Skanda Sashti day, even disregarding several objections voiced by others at initiating him so early.

Shanmuganandaji has also told me how he was mysteriously helped by someone even during his army career, and how he would be posted to places and jobs which would allow the fullest scope for the development of his devotion to him. That someone is indeed Sivananda.

WHAT CAN A BEGGAR RENOUNCE?

Rajagopalji was introduced to Siva as an expert in embroidery. The ever-appreciative Siva was listening to the adventures of Rajagopalji who renounced a lucrative military job (he was earning about Rs. 400), renounced his family, property and all for practising Yoga at the lotus feet of Siva.

‘Is that so? Everyone here has been a great Tyagi, I think. Everyone is a Buddha. Renouncing great positions, good pay, vast properties, good family. Oh, marvellous. What do these worldly people know about renunciation? Where else in the world can you find such youngsters with such burning Vairagya and Mumukshutwa, who have renounced worldly good fortunes to lead the life of Nivritti?’

FIT TO BECOME PREMIERS

‘And,’ continued Siva, as we all just looked on wonderstruck, ‘even if some of the youngsters go back to the world, I think they can be given only the job of Prime Ministers or Governors.’

True: and that is the efficiency which the young Sadhaka acquires under Siva’s tutorship. Waste not a second: for that second will never be given back to you. That is Siva’s stern advice to one and all. Put your heart and soul into any work you do: and when you have done it, detach yourself completely and identify yourself with the Atma who is Akarta, Abhokta, Sakshi—that is the golden advice he gives to all Sadhaks. These lessons are worth even the world leaders’ learning.

APARIGRAHA

Sri Atmaramji is accompanying Dr. K. till Hardwar and will come back tomorrow. He came to take leave of Siva.

‘Have you arranged for the tonga?’ began Siva and went through the entire process of verifying that every detail with regard to the arrangements for their safe departure had been attended to.

‘Oh, Padmanabha Swami, kindly give Atmaramji whatever money he wants for his trip to Hardwar.’

‘Swamiji, I have already taken money from the Secretary,’ assured Atmaramji.

‘That is very good. Even if the guest offers your train fare and expenses, you should not take.’

True spirit of a Yoga—Aparigraha in action.

ANY SERVICE?

In the evening R.L. came to the Ashram: he was leaving for Delhi today.

He had previously taken 200 copies of ‘Bhakti Yoga’: today he is taking several sets of ‘Mind, Its Mysteries and Control’, Parts I and II. He was waiting in the office with his big packet of books. Siva came and the leave-taking ceremony was well in hand.

Finally, Sri R.L. asked Siva: ‘Can I be of any service to you in Delhi?’

‘What service? Know thyself and be free. That is the greatest service you can do to me.’

A HUNDREDFOLD, WELL SHAKEN AND PRESSED DOWN

‘Padmanabha Swami, pay for the bread-wallah.’ Siva sat down on his chair after a breathless quarter hour of helping a stray bread-vendor to dispose of his burden. I was myself one of the beneficiaries, and a specially blessed one. Everyone who met Siva’s eyes got his share: several others were served in absentia, too. In all nearly fifty loaves of bread were served to all. I thought Siva’s hands were ‘free’ only when it came to a question of distributing offerings brought by devotees: but, no, even when the ‘Prasad’ (for that is the term used for all that he gives) involves expenditure, his hands do not shrink.

‘Swamiji, that visitor from Ambala has paid off the entire amount of the bill,’ replied Padmanabhan.

‘Who? Dwaraka Singji?’

P. nodded assent: Siva was silent.

This Dwaraka Singji was one of the persons who were blessed by Siva with the bread-Prasad: he was practically the last person to receive it. Immediately after giving a loaf to Dwarakaji, Siva came into the office. Before P. could take the money to the bread-vendor, Dwarakaji had enquired about the amount to be paid, and had sent away the vendor.

I was rather upset at Siva’s silence. What? Not a remark in regard to this remarkable event? And, even when D.ji came in to have Darshan, not a word was exchanged between the two about the incident.

‘The gift of one loaf paid off the cost of fifty loaves, Swamiji,’ I quietly ventured a comment.

‘How?’ was just an impassioned query, with his eyes half looking at me and half at the letters on the table.

‘Swamiji, Dwaraka Singji may be a noble soul, and may have a charitable temperament. But he would not have known that we owe some money to that bread-vendor if Swamiji had not offered a loaf to Dwarakaji, too. Otherwise, he might have simply ignored the bread-vendor sitting on the road. And, Swamiji’s all-giving nature seems to be infectious, too, especially with pure, noble souls. That is what should have prompted him to pay off the bread-vendor immediately and without ostentation.’

Siva merely smiled. I continued:

‘Swamiji, I think that is the secret of Swamiji’s great and unequalled achievement in building up such a huge organisation in so short a time. From the very start Swamiji has gone on giving and giving freely, with a loving heart. Each gift, even of a small pamphlet costing a couple of annas, of almonds and raisins worth half a rupee, has invited a thousandfold return.’

Again Siva smiled. It is all news to him. The sun does not know that he shines, for he has never seen darkness.

'Perhaps you are right. Yes, yes. See Dwarakaji has taken a good consignment of books today. I gave him on the first day he met me, a couple of books free, as a gift.'

'We should not give with any motive,' continued Siva, 'or with the expectation of a return. I give because I cannot help giving. Everything is His: and He Himself directs the gift from within, to deserving persons and causes. Always glorify Him.'

Yes: I will. When I glorify God, I glorify my own God—Siva.

18TH SEPTEMBER, 1948

PRECEPT THROUGH PRACTICE

Today's subject for the Forest University class was 'Practical Sadhana'. Sridharji delivered an inspiring discourse on the subject of 'Conscience' with his characteristic eloquence, soul-force, and sparkling wisdom. Inter alia, he had told us that a fully developed conscience which had been guarded against perversion, misuse, disuse, abuse, etc., is the surest guide which an aspirant to Self-realisation could have, as it represents in the court-hall of mind, its (conscience's) absent royal master (the chosen ideal of the aspirant, viz., Self-realisation through Nivritti Marga), in an ambassadorial capacity, raising his voice of protest whenever anything is said, thought of or done contrary to the interests of his Master.

After Siva's inspiring Kirtan which invariably concludes the class for the day, we dispersed.

Outside the Bhajan Hall, someone of the gathering raised the topic of wars, and the possibility of a war in which India might be involved—the discussion leading to the topic of conscription, etc. Siva, innocent of politics, exclaimed:

'Then all the young men will be recruited to the Army?'

Sridharji then explained the implications of conscription in detail.

Siva (with a mixed expression of pity and contempt): 'It is a great pity. Every young man will become military-minded: and the conduct of such young men, even after the war will be tinged with brutality, arrogance and materialistic ambitions and passions. India's spiritual heritage will be jeopardised. No, no: India should stick to her spirituality.'

Siva's conscience or background of thought is established in divine life: and all ideas and ideals are evaluated on this touchstone.

Incidentally, in Sridharji, too, this virtue is highly developed. In fact, I have not seen any other 'Sadhaka' who can approach a 'Siddha' in the matter of possessing the keenest intellect, coupled with a fully developed vigilant conscience: and in allowing the very experiences of his soul, the strength of conviction gained through careful exercise of the withdrawn-limbs of his mind on the field of

introspection, intense Antaranga Sadhana and Tapasya, express themselves through his highly inspiring and impressive discourses.

DIRECT REALISATION OF BRAHMAN

‘True, Swamiji, I have heard that said before. I have read this in the scriptures, too. But I want to have the direct experience. I must actually realise Brahman. Otherwise, how am I to know that what the Upanishads declare is truth?’ replied Sri Satya Sandan, a young Yogi-enthusiast who wished to know the direct road to Moksha. Siva had told him ‘The direct path is Jnana Yoga. Practise it. Read the scriptures. Realise Aham Brahmasmi.’ I have myself never heard Siva reply in this manner to anyone: he usually adopts the step-by-step method, and preaches Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, and the Yoga of Synthesis. There is something behind this I thought: and looked up.

‘You will have to sit quiet and meditate. Go on meditating on the true import of the Mahavakya till you actually realise the Truth.’

‘But, Swamiji, I want to guard myself against falling into the snares of hallucinations—and this Aham Brahmasmi assertion might also be a hallucination.’

‘That is the trouble. What the great seers and sages have said cannot be false. But, why does man not realise the Truth easily? The scriptures say that there are three kinds of obstructions to the perception of this Truth. First is Mala (impurities), second is Vikshepa (oscillation of the mind), and the third is Avarana (veil of ignorance). Introspect and find out which of these you have got. If you find you have Mala—Kama, Krodha, Lobha, —you will have to eradicate it through the practice of Karma Yoga, or the Yoga of Selfless Service. If you have only got Vikshepa, you have to practise Upasana to steady the mind. If you have only Avarana, you will have to practise Nididhyasana or constant dwelling on the import of the Mahavakyas, till the Truth flashes within you.’

‘Swamiji, I am not interested in all these. I only want direct realisation of Brahman.’

‘That is like a clerk wanting to become a Commissioner. He has to work hard, get quick promotions, pass stage after stage, examination after examination: and then only can he aspire to become a Commissioner. Can a Matriculate at once become an I.C.S. officer? He has to graduate in the University: then he has to work hard and get through the I.C.S. examination: only then can he become an I.C.S. officer.

‘Similarly, you have first to acquire the Sadhana Chatushtaya Sampath....’

‘What is that, Swamiji?’

‘You have not even heard of that! Viveka or discrimination between the Real and the unreal; Vairagya or dispassion towards worldly objects; then Shad Sampath—Sama, Dama, Titiksha, Uparathi and Sraddha and Samadana—and Mumukshutwa or a burning desire for liberation. Then you should approach someone and learn the Truth from him. That is what Lord Krishna has also said

in the Gita: 'Tad Viddhi Pranipatena Pariprasnena Sevaya Upadekshyanti te Jnanam Jnaninah Tatwadarshinah.'

'Yes, Swamiji, I have read this.'

'No use merely reading it: you should put into practice what you know. You do not want to develop divine virtues. But, you want direct realisation of Brahman at once....silence....this is all no good. Oji! Please approach some good Mahatma, live with him, serve him and learn. Do not try to become Swayam Siddha Mahatma, Swayamprakashananda!'

'May I stay with you, Swamiji?'

'As you like. But here all the aspirants are persons who have a clear grasp of the task before them. So, they engage themselves in the practice of the Yoga of Synthesis. They combine nicely work, worship, study, Yoga, etc. If you can also fall in line with them, you can stay. Or, seek some good Mahatma; serve him and learn to meditate.'

20TH SEPTEMBER, 1948

SAMBHAR IN THE HIMALAYAS

Sri Sankaranarayana has returned to the Ashram from a visit to several places of seclusion, away from Rishikesh. Siva asked him, with maternal affection:

'Are there any shops on the way?'

'Swamiji, the Sadhu whom we met gave us some roties to take with us: and when we went we had taken some fruits, etc., from here itself.'

'And, there?'

'There, Swamiji? We had a sumptuous meal.'

'What food?'

'Sambhar, rice, roti, ghee—a pucca Madrassi dinner, Swamiji.'

Everyone present expressed mild surprise.

'There is a cow also, Swamiji. So, we got good milk.'

'That is the secret. Wherever you go, there you will find Sambhar, iddaly and coffee. The body of even a Jnani needs certain things. You cannot run away from them. The secret of renunciation is renunciation of attachment. Prakriti has her play: so long as her instruments—the body and mind—are there. The Jnani dissociates himself from the Koshas, identifies himself with the Akarta and Abhokta Atman.

'That is also the secret of Karma Yoga. We also work here. But we have found out the secret process by which we are able to convert work into worship.'

A spell of silence—the calm before the storm.

WHY RENOUNCE?

'If we had known this trick before, we need not even have come here.'

Everyone looks at the others: general bewilderment: what a strange thing to say.

THE SOLUTION

Siva at once realised the cause of the consternation.

'But, if we had not come here, away from the bondage of family and relations, properties and possessions, etc., we could not have found out the secret.'

We all felt a bit relieved.

'Renunciation is absolutely necessary. Once you recognise Maya and her mischief, and pierce through the veil, find out the inner antidote to Maya's poisons—then you are able to live under all circumstances, unaffected.'

GOD vs. BHAKTAS

A batch of visitors has arrived.

Siva was asking several Ashramites to attend to the several affairs connected with their lodging, etc.

Someone said that the Sadhak who had the key of a particular room was meditating in his room.

'What meditation is this? You must first fulfil your duties and then meditate. He should have kept the keys outside and then shut himself up. Look how many people are inconvenienced. How can God be pleased by meditation, when you keep His devotees waiting outside?'

SERVE HUMANITY

Sri Rajagopala Iyer who has come from South India, was narrating to Siva the activities of Sri Ram Ram Ram, an old school-mate of Siva, who is now a retired surgeon: a widely travelled man with a number of foreign degrees and a lot of money.

'Swamiji, nowadays he has more or less retired.'

'What is there in retirement now? He has established some hospital or clinic for the sake of the suffering humanity?'

'No, Swamiji: he has done a lot of service while he was in the Army.'

'But, none of a permanent value. He must now do something which will make his name immortal. He has earned a lot. He must now invest a portion of that money in charity. The idea of doing something substantially good to humanity never strikes many people.'

'Please ask him on my behalf to construct a ward in the local hospital in his name and provide for a few beds also. This will be a great blessing to humanity.'

'He can himself serve there so long as he wishes: even after his life-time the ward will ever proclaim his name and philanthropy. What is the use of money unless every pie is directed to some good cause?'

Then the talk turned to his personal affairs.

'He spends a lot of money. But he himself leads a very simple life.'

'H'm? That is marvellous and unique—that he has kept up Indian simplicity even after his European tours and luxurious life,' complimented Siva.

'He has a cook, Swamiji. But in those parts, the cooks hardly stay on, Swamiji.'

Siva's nature at once sprang forth.

'He should pay the cook well—and he should give the cook the same food as he takes, if not even better. Then no cook will ever leave him. It all depends upon the treatment; you must make the servants feel they are members of the family.'

That is exactly what Siva has been doing all his life—in Malaya and in the Himalaya.

21ST SEPTEMBER, 1948

ALL RELIGIONS ARE ONE

Sri Rajagopala Iyer was talking to Siva about the proselytising missions. Siva summed up:

'What is in this? A Christian comes, gives you a Bible and converts you into Christianity: a Mohamadan gives you a copy of the Quran and changes you into a Mohamadan: a Hindu has his Gita for the same purpose.'

What a fund of wisdom.

'Truth is one: all the scriptures expound this Truth though in different words. What purpose can ever be served by these proselytisers? They only change man's external cloak, a few of his habits. Can they ever go near the Atman, the Eternal Sakshi? Only dull-witted people engage themselves in such missions. Wise men will only seek to strengthen the individual's faith in his own religion.'

THE IDEAL ASHRAM

Two gentlemen from Bihar prostrate to Siva. They have come in search of a young man who had suddenly disappeared from his home. They had been to Hardwar, Rishikesh. And, at both places they had been directed to Sivananda Ashram. They represented their 'case' to Siva.

'No: Maharaj, he has not come here.'

'Swamiji, we have searched for him in Brindavan, Mathura, Banaras, etc. We do not know what to do.'

'Maharaj, it is possible to find out a missing boy by searching like this: go home and pray for him. He will knock about here and there and ultimately come back to the house.'

A letter was on Siva's table from Sri T.A. Rama Row of Madras enquiring about another boy who had also disappeared like this.

When a boy leaves home with a spiritual aspiration at heart, his mind naturally seeks solace. Whether the Vairagya is real or momentary, he needs peace, solace and proper guidance. It seems, from the number of letters, enquiries and interviews that Siva has to answer, that the youth of India has found out that Siva's abode alone can give them all that they need.

SAVED BY MERE SIGHT

Siva was returning from his walk up to the Mandir, in the evening. As he came near the Yajnasala, one of the small children belonging to the family of Sri Panna Lalji, who were playing on the roof of the Yajnasala rooms, slipped off the terrace and fell right into one of the empty packing cases placed near the wall of the Yajnasala. Siva called out to the parents of the child. They ran down and found that the child had almost swooned. Siva reached the spot and gazed at the child for a moment. The parents took the child into their hands and called it by its name. Lo, the child cried for a couple of minutes, and jumped out of their hands to run about again.

22ND SEPTEMBER, 1948

THE ASSURANCE

Sri T.R. Bhagat of New Delhi, an apparently genuine Sadhak has written to Siva asking several questions on Sadhana. Siva clears all his doubts without leaving one loose-end, adds his own precious advice, ending up with:

'I have accepted you as my beloved disciple. I shall serve you nicely. Be true, earnest and diligent in your Sadhan.'

The cream, the essence—meditation on which alone is sufficient to bestow Moksha on a Sadhaka.

'Be true': what a precious piece of instruction. How few are really true in their Sadhana, and do not practise Yoga merely for the sake of exhibition.

'Earnest': Yoga is not for the Sadhaka who takes to it half-heartedly.

'Diligent': the third most important preliminary qualification. Not only earnestness, but diligent application is also wanted.

With all this exacting instruction is mixed the most encouraging assurance:

'I have accepted you as my beloved disciple.'

'Beloved': what more does one want? —and....

'I shall serve you nicely': that is unique—Guru serving his disciples. A sage, a Brahma-Nishta, a living God, at your service and waiting for you to turn to him.

THE INNER RULER

The clock struck five. It was drizzling—after a heavy downpour.

'Wake up: get out of bed: quick, run,' said someone from within.

I rose. What is this hallucination? I peeped out of the room half-heartedly—I had slight head-ache, too, due to biliousness. It was still drizzling.

'No, there won't be the morning class today,' I thought. The aching head sought the pillow.

'Do not let the mind have its own way. Run out of the room. If you find there is no class, go to the temple and meditate.' Irresistible command.

I rubbed my eyes. Peeped out again: is it Siva?

Yes: it is Siva, my Redeemer—no, not from outside, but from within.

I ran up.

Twice Siva glanced at me—perhaps to make sure that I had obeyed.

TOO OLD AT TWENTY-FIVE

Sri Aravamudan did not attend. Siva met him on his way back to his Kutir.

'Why did you not come?'

'I was a bit lazy this morning, Swamiji.'

'Very well: if you are lazy enough at 25 not to be able to check it and come up to the Bhajan Hall—at 50 you will want a palanquin and four coolies to transport you.'

I was convinced that it was Siva who had awakened me in the morning.

VEDANTIN?

Siva was talking about the glory of Kirtan and Bhakti. Swami X came in his view.

'But, you are a Vedantin? Are you not?'

Swami X was silent.

'Ohji, so long as the necessity for food exists, Vedantic indifference should not be assumed. When that need stops, then one can say 'I am Brahman' and leave off every other Sadhana.

'But some Vedantins deceive themselves and others, and say—this is body-Dharma and go on eating.

'What a pity: when they get angry, they will say it is Mano-Dharma. When they lose their temper and belabour someone, they will say it is Hand-Dharma—it is Indra who did it, not I, the Akarta Atman.'

'Vedantic realisation,' Siva continued, 'should come by itself when the heart is purified through the practice of Karma Yoga and steadied through devotion.'

NON-COMMUNALIST

The food bell is given.

'Vishnuji,' called Siva. 'Take Sri John D'Cruz with you and see that he is accommodated in the Panghat. Is he also taking his food in the dining hall?'

'Yes, Swamiji.'

'That is right. In this Ashram there should be no communal feeling: no caste or creed distinctions. Christian, Mohamadan, Parsee—all should move amicably together, eat together, pray together, without any distinction whatsoever.'

SONGS FROM STRANGE QUARTERS

The evening Satsang had just commenced.

I had just finished reciting the Gita Dynana Slokas. I heard a sweet humming of a melodious tune. I held my breath and listened. Yes, it is Siva. My thoughts flew back to Lord Krishna's days when the love-mad Gopis would sit enraptured in their houses enjoying the exclusive privilege of receiving Lord Krishna's Murali-Dhwanis. Vishnuji, sitting by my side, was eager to know what had happened to me: I continued reading the Gita.

SIVA'S ECSTATIC KIRTAN

Satsang was almost over. Siva sang the following Kirtan for a full half-hour. Repeating several lines over and over again....each repetition ringing with more and more intense ecstatic fervour....the notes emanating from Siva piercing into the very hearts of the devotees assembled—I cannot explain what it was.

Ananda Thene	Brahmananda Thene
Thene Thene	Thene Thene
Thene Thene	Thene Madhuve
Thene Thene	Thene Honey-ye
Celestial Honey-ye	Divya Madhuve
Ananda Thene	Brahmananda Thene
Adwaita Thene	Anubhava Thene
Chinmaya Thene	Chinmatra Thene
Chinmaya Thene	Chidghana Thene
Nirakara Thene	Nirvishesha Thene
Sankara Anubhava Thene	Dattanubhava Thene
Sivoham Thene	Soham Thene
Soham Soham Thene	Sivoham Thene
Sivoham Thene	Swaroopoham Thene
Ananda Thene	Brahmananda Thene

OBEISANCE TO HONEY

All of us were in an entirely different plane for quite a long time after this music.

In the office, in bed—everywhere I could hear Siva's ecstatic music. Why this 'Thene' song today—'Thene' in Tamil means 'honey'? I mused.

The solution was not long in being arrived at. Instead of sugar, Siva should have used honey today—as an anti-diabetic measure. And, Siva lives in Sahaja Samadhi: he sees Brahman in all and all in Brahman. Every object, every person, every word inspires from within only thoughts of Brahman and Brahmic Bliss. Wherever he is, in the bathroom, the water-closet, on the banks of the Ganges, in the office, in the temple, on the road—this one consciousness alone is his constant companion.

Oh, honey! Prostrations unto thee! I am grateful to you, for through your grace we all enjoyed Siva's ecstatic Kirtan today. Glory to thee.

23RD SEPTEMBER, 1948

SIVA IS WORSHIPPED

Sri P.S. Natesa Iyer performed Pada Puja to Siva this morning. Vishnudevji had delightfully decorated the whole of the Verandah outside Siva's Kutir, and a couch for Siva, too.

Siva came in after his bath and quietly sat on a wooden plank placed on the floor. No amount of persuasion would make him occupy the decorated chair. 'The simpler, the better,' was his only reply. When the Archana was being performed with Sivananda Ashtottarasatanama Stotram with faith and devotion, Siva sat on gazing at the Ganges and the Himalayas in front, entirely detaching himself from his physical sheath. His inner consciousness had identified itself with the Cosmic Consciousness, the Para Brahman. Blessed indeed is Sri Natesa Iyer for, by worshipping Siva, he had in truth worshipped Para Brahman Himself.

WHAT A GURU

'Narayanaswamiji and Venkatesanandaji will take their food here, with me,' Siva told Sri Govindaswamiji.

And, the leaves were spread. 'Where is Narayanaswamiji?' He had left for his bath, etc.

'Venkatesanandaji, sit down here by my side.'

What a Guru is my Siva! He has not the slightest trace of Gurudom in him. It does not even strike him that it is out of place for him to sit with his own disciples and eat. I prayed to Siva mentally for a way out.

'Come on, won't you sit down?'

'Swamiji, I shall first serve and then take food.'

Granted!

As soon as he finished his meal, he went into the kitchen, assured himself that there was food enough for all of us, and would not leave the kitchen till he was certain that we would take our food there.

OUR DESIRE GRANTED

All the time Sri Vishnuji's eyes and mind were riveted on the chair decorated for Siva.

'Wait.' Siva walked towards the chair. 'I shall sit on this for a few minutes at least to satisfy Vishnuji. How nicely he has decorated this chair!' He sat on it.

'This is all mere show. All this Puja and 'Vada Payasam' (some of the special food preparations which always go with such occasions) only increase one's vanity. These things have started to invade me also: I am in the danger zone. What do you say?'

What can we say? Can Maya, or vanity, ever approach Siva who is Satchidananda and the very incarnation of humility and egolessness?

Then Siva indulged in a little innocent fun concerning the Archana Mantras: 'The pundit who composed these have consulted me: I would then have given many more!'

All the time Siva, too, had taken a keen interest in the proceedings as though the Puja was done to someone else, he himself being one of the participants in the worship.

EVEN A CHILD DESERVES CONSIDERATION

During the evening Kirtan, Sri Venkateswarji's child got up from beside his mother and was walking towards the men's group. Siva at once understood the purpose of the child's movements and flashed his torch in such a way that the child could at once see whether his father was among those seated there or not. What a consideration this mighty sage shows even to a small child. Siva sees God in all, and relieving the child's anxiety is to him more important than meditation.

OLD ACQUAINTANCE

'OM Namō Narayanaya, Torrenton Advocate Saheb,' greeting Siva even before Sri Amir Chadji of Torrenton had entered the office.

'You first met me when I was in Rishikesh,' Siva kindled the Advocate's memory.

'Yes, Swamiji, that was in 1924.'

'You are having a good practice now? How is your family, children? How is your health?' so on Siva showered his loving enquiries on the visitor, and got the one reply: 'Everything is all right and everyone is keeping quite fit, only by thy grace, Maharaj.' And, insisted on again and again placing his head at the feet of Siva.

'What is it, Maharaj-ji! You have retired from active life. Now, you should spend all your time in Sadhana. Take Sanyas.'

'Swamiji, what shall I say? Even Moha for the family does not leave me. How can I embrace Sanyas now? By thy grace only I should get Vairagya.'

'You previously told me that you were doing some Upasana?' kindled Siva the memory of the Advocate's past Sadhana.

'Yes, Swamiji, long long ago, I was inspired by your book on Japa Yoga Sadhana. From the very minute I perused the book, I took to the repetition of Gayatri Mantra. Another Swamiji whom I met also greatly encouraged me in this: he said that your word should be taken as gospel truth, as God's commands. I performed six Purascharanas of the Gayatri Mantra, too.'

'Six Purascharanas? Wonderful, you should have long ago attained Chitta Suddhi. You are then already a Sanyasi. Gayatri is the greatest of all Mantras. And, even one Purascharana is difficult to perform: it is a wonder how you were able to perform six Purascharanas.'

'But, Swamiji, the impurities inside were perhaps too much for even six Purascharanas.'

'That is a great achievement, indeed. Even now, you should go on repeating the Gayatri Mantra. You should not give it up till you achieve the goal, God-realisation.'

'Surely, I will, Swamiji.'

Siva later arranged for Amirchand's food, etc. Amirchandiji left. Then, Siva said: 'This Advocate met me in 1924 and gave me five rupees. That was just after I had come to Rishikesh. Living on Bhiksha, on dry roti and dhal, was all new to me. As soon as I got the money, I ran to a shop and ate Jilebi to my heart's content.'

This brought to my mind a passage from Siva's writings:

'For the first time I received Rs. 5 from him (Pundit Chand Narain Harkuli) for my milk and I printed the leaflet 'Brahma Vidya' out of this money through Messrs. G.A. Natesan and Co., Madras.'

The transition from the Siva who met Advocate Amir Chandji to the Siva who met Pundit Chand Narainji is beautifully, inspiringly sketched by Sri Sridharji (Swami Chidanandaji in his book 'Light Fountain'. Through what austerities, through how many crucibles this gold Siva has passed himself through before he completely transformed himself into the priceless mystic metal which reflects God in all His glory (into Divinity Itself) is graphically portrayed here.

24TH SEPTEMBER, 1948

SUPREME CONTENTMENT

A devotee had suggested that Sri Chakra Puja with all the formalities and rituals should be performed in the Ashram,....for the sake of wealth. He felt that the income of the Ashram was quite inadequate for the turnout of work, and for the full manifestation of Siva's own inner dynamism.

'Sri Chakra worship is, no doubt, good,' replied Siva. 'As we worship Siva, Krishna, Rama, we may also do formal Puja to Devi, too. But, not for the sake of money. Why, we are already getting enough money even without these Pujas!'

‘But, Swamiji, the expenditure always exceeds the income. And, if we had lakhs even then the expenditure will also increase, but Swamiji’s Satsankalpa will all be fulfilled.’

WHERE IS LORD SIVA

‘Worship should always be simple, with Bhav, devotion, unhindered by unnecessary rules, rituals and formalities. It should be such that one can perform the Puja after a mere washing of hands and feet.’

‘Swamiji, I have heard it said that Sri Vidya Upasaka’s life has been completely transformed after his initiation, and his financial position greatly improved.’

‘Cannot Lord Siva give us all wealth? Cannot Lord Rama give us, or Lord Krishna? Why, Lord Siva has been so much agitated through the powerful Rudri chants at the Viswanath Mandir that he has run away from Kailas and Banaras and taken His abode at the Ashram temple. Devi worship is good. But, do not do it with a desire to increase our wealth. If the Lord so desires, He will fill the Ashram with gold. Kubera himself is already in charge of our finances: because we are doing His work.’

PEACE

At the close of tonight’s Satsang, Siva did Kirtan for the peace of the departed soul of Sri K. Narayana Iyengar of Palamcotta, Tinnevely, news about whose departure had been received in the afternoon.

‘We shall do Kirtan for the departed soul of K. Narayana Iyengar of Tinnevely. Sri Narayana Iyengar was a very good soul, pious, devoted and sincere. He was here a few days ago: and he went to Kedarnath and Badrinath this year. He has rendered great service to the cause of divine life. He took with him books and Ayurvedic Pharmacy products. He wanted to popularise them. He had established a Press in Tinnevely also. More than anything else, he has been trying to introduce these books in the Board Schools in the Tinnevely district. He was a very noble soul, with good spiritual Samskaras. He had withstood severe shocks in his life: and had preserved his equanimity in the face of trials and tribulations of family life. After all,....body is not immortal. Narayana Iyengar’s soul would surely progress towards the Eternal. He will surely become immortal. Kalenatmani Vindathi. It is all a question of time. So, let us pray for the peace of his soul.’

Every kind of emotion was perceptible in Siva during this short speech. Admiration, sympathy, compassion, courage, and the firm conviction that the Atma, the real Self, is undying.

Nothing is dearer to Siva than a devotee of the Lord. It is for the devotees’ sake that he lives, breathes, eats and above all, works ceaselessly and tirelessly. May our Siva live long to protect us.

25TH SEPTEMBER, 1948

PLUS ONE

An old South Indian couple were on a visit to Rishikesh. They had stayed in the Ashram for a few days, and were leaving for South India. After a trip to Lakshmanjhula, they came into the office and prostrated before Siva.

'How do you like these places? Did you enjoy your trip to Lakshmanjhula? Did you see all the places?'

'Yes, Swamiji, wherever I go in Rishikesh, I find immense peace of mind. I have never enjoyed this peace before. This Ashram is full of peace and bliss. There is no place like this anywhere in India. When I think of the happiness that we derived here, my mind yearns to settle down here itself.'

'What about your family?'

'I have no one else,' replied the lady. 'Only we two. He has also retired long ago. We lead a lonely life. There is no hindrance. We can easily come and settle down here. He has already transferred his pension papers to Dehra Dun. We shall go to South India only to wind up the family affairs, and then come here once for all.'

'H'm, there is no one else for you?'

'No, Swamiji, only we two.'

'But, you have forgotten the third member of your family—God. He is your constant companion. You can never be absolutely alone. God is always with you.'

EGOISM: SACRED AND SECULAR

In the course of a conversation one of the visitors referred to an old acquaintance of Siva, and said: 'He has now fifteen cars, Swamiji, and he is rolling in wealth.'

Quick came the reply: 'What good is all this? Only to increase his vanity.' Turning to us: 'The other form is: I have performed six lakhs of OM Namahsivaya Japa.'

All these Abhimanas have to be ruthlessly shunned.

MY LORD CALLS

I have heard it said by many Sadhu-contemporaries of Siva in his Swarg Ashram days, that even if he had shut himself up in his Kutir engrossed in spiritual practices, Siva could at once be brought to his heels at the least sign of suffering in the neighbourhood. To him God was more profoundly manifest in the afflicted patient outside than anywhere within the four walls of his own Kutir.

Blessed are you, my eyes, for you have witnessed the veracity of this statement.

Siva was deeply engaged in conversation with his European devotees, in Ramashram.

'What?'....The wail of a mother....The Lord's Call....Siva at once lost all interest in the conversation. Thither he rushed....as indeed the cow will run at the bellow of her calf.

He knelt before the patient. At once the patient felt great relief. She stopped crying. She explained her condition. Labour pains, was Siva's quick diagnosis.

'Get Sridharji quickly....Run.' One Ashramite had been despatched. 'Fetch a tonga immediately....' There goes another. A third to the kitchen.

After some initial treatment, the lady was at once despatched to the Rishikesh Hospital. The husband of the lady had obviously enough money with him. But Siva's solicitude is blind to these uncomfortable (only to him!) facts. Padmanabhanji came running with a ten-rupee note which Siva—as though in duty bound—handed to the husband. The tonga had arrived.

All within ten minutes. And, the lady was in the hospital within an hour of Siva hearing the weeping sound!

She delivered a child a few minutes after admission to the hospital.

26TH SEPTEMBER, 1948

WATCH, BROTHER, AND LEARN

I had gone to Viswanath Ghat for a bath in the morning. I turned towards Siva's Kutir. There he was, preparing for his bath. I hesitated to enter into the water, as he was downstream. I waited, and feasted my eyes on Siva.

Siva had his bath, offered his oblations. He poured water over his head with the Kamandalu also. Then he worshipped the Ganges with flowers. And, lastly he offered Prasad (Naivedya) which the fortunate fish rushed to receive.

Siva has stuck to his own principles: he has adhered to the routine he set for himself when he was an aspirant-Sadhu in Swarg Ashram. He does not neglect even a tiny detail. How foolish are we that we soon assume Siddhahood for our own ignorant selves and act as though there is no more Sadhana for us to do.

MAN vs. MONEY

John D'Cruz was hesitating to ask for a copy of the book, 'The Diamond Jubilee Volume'. He had no money on hand. A very diligent and earnest Sadhak, yet God had placed him in very poor circumstances.

Siva quickly perceived his own inner hunger for perusing this wonderful volume. 'Padmanabhanji, bring a copy of the D.J. Volume for D'Cruzji.'

J.D. was beside himself with joy: modestly he asked Siva: 'May I have this volume, Swamiji? It is such a costly and precious book!'

'Of course, it is for you, my dear D'Cruzji. The book is not worth anything to me in terms of money. You are more valuable than money, to me. And, if the book elevates you, I am much more satisfied than if you had paid me a hundred rupees in return for this book.'

No other institution, no other saint has gone to this extent to help Sadhaks on their march to the goal. Siva has given up his all in the service of Bhaktas.

SIVA AS SABHAPATHY

A meeting had been convened of the Muni-ki-reti residents to observe the Thanksgiving Day in commemoration of the victory over Hyderabad—His Excellency Sri C. Rajagopalachari had specially requested that special prayers be offered in all Mutts and Mandirs.

Sri Ram Ram Ram Sastriji formally requested Siva to occupy the chair. Another resident of the locality seconded it. Siva smiled and said: 'I third it. And, I occupy the chair with gratitude to you all.' And made everyone laugh at these formalities which convey no meaning to one who has realised That which is beyond Time and Space. Sabhapathy, is, incidentally one of the names of Lord Siva and should anyone then propose that Siva should be Sabhapathy?

TIME IS FLEETING

Swami Ram was requested to recite some Bhajans. First, his own throat had to be cleared: then the harmonium had to be tuned: pulling a knob, pushing another, adjusting here and there—it all took more than ten minutes for the Kirtanist to get attuned to this Jada-instrument. 'Rama, Rama,' remarked Siva. 'How much time do these people waste. All in merely tuning. What is there? Bhajan should be ready on the lips all the time: and the moment you are asked to sing, you should pour out His name.' During the gatherings which Siva addresses, even as he gets up to talk, he will be roaring OM.

DIVINE SOLICITUDE

An old lady was coming up to attend the Satsang. As the meeting was held on the roof of the building adjacent to the Ashram Annakshetra, we had improvised a step with a small table, to make it easier for people to ascend to the roof. The old lady was trying to look for a way to get upon the roof. Siva at once got up from his seat and with great solicitude guided the old lady to the place of the Satsang.

PERFECT ORGANISATION

Even while the Kirtan, Bhajan, etc., were in progress, Siva called Vishnudevji and asked: 'Is the Prasad ready?'

'Yes, Swamiji.'

'Then collect the Arati, Panchapatra, and water for Naivedya, now itself.'

'Yes, Swamiji, I shall bring at once.'

'How many ladus will come for each?'

'Perhaps only one, Swamiji.' There was only half a bucketful of Prasad.

'That is no good. It will not be enough. Go and bring Rs. 10 worth of sweets straightaway from the shop.'

We ran to the shop, on this sweet errand.

TRANSMISSION FASTER THAN RADIO

The meeting had passed a resolution conveying the nation's gratitude to the national leaders and military commanders over the efficient action in Hyderabad.

Sri Lakshmanji had suggested that this resolution should be telegraphed to Delhi and Hyderabad, and also published in the papers. The Sabhapathy's turn arrived.

'Let us do Kirtan. Kirtan is a method of transmission of our thought-messages far quickly than any other means, even the radio. You have to go to the Post Office with the telegram tomorrow, and it will take a day for the telegram to reach Delhi. Here and now, you can send the message through Kirtan of the Lord's name. It will reach Lt. General Rajendrasingji, it will reach the Nehru Government, and it will also reach the Supreme Government.'

I EAT THROUGH ALL

Siva was distributing Prasad. Laddus were rationed to two per head. Gradually, Siva lost control. And, soon the bucket was almost emptied. When he found that everyone was really satisfied, he said:

'Look at the satisfaction that they have now. That is indeed the most important point. What is the use of giving one laddu or two laddus? When people come and sing the Lord's name and Prasad is distributed, people should go back fully satisfied. What a lop-sided economy it is to save expenditure in this respect!

'Ten years ago when the Society was much poorer, everyone who came went fully satisfied. Even the Ashramites used to say: 'We, workers, do not get so many conveniences: but, Swamiji gives milk and fruits to a stray stranger who walks in and says he is sick and when this man leaves, Swamiji gives him ten rupees also.'

(Incidentally, pointing out under what conditions and stress and austerities those undaunted workers carried on the mission during the thirties.)

'Now only these people have started saying: the auditor objects. I have always said that the auditor has nothing to do with a Sanyasin's accounts. Where is audit for us? Audit and budget may be necessary from one point of view. But from the Sanyasin's point of view nothing is necessary. I will go on spending. Let someone attach the buildings and the properties here. A Paramahansa Sanyasin should be prepared to tie round his head his own loin cloth and vice versa and walk away.'

MY KUTIR IN SWARG ASHRAM

'Padmanabhanji shows me an account. In August we have given 2500 rupees worth of books alone free, against a sale of 1800-rupee worth of books. I do not care. All are benefited by the books. Let knowledge go round. If we cannot run this Ashram, we will go away: my Kutir is reserved in Swarg Ashram. I will go somewhere else and start once again.'

Perhaps in one who has realised the Absolute, even renunciation reaches the Absolute point!

27TH SEPTEMBER, 1948

JUDGE NOT

'Narayanaswamiji! You know there is one Brahmachari who has today come from South India? It appears he knows a lot about cement-work. He met a Sadhu on

his way and got initiation from him into Brahmacharya. He appears to be a decent young man. Let him remain here. I have told him that he will have to work also; and he has readily agreed.'

Due to several reasons, it had been decided to restrict admission of Sadhaks into the ashram. Therefore, everyone present when Siva said the above felt uneasy perhaps at the thought that the young Brahmachary may not be admitted by the Ashram Committee.

Siva at once read this feeling on every face.

'You cannot say at the very first sight whether a Sadhak will turn out to be good or not. Paramanandaji also came like this only; but later he proved to be a dynamic selfless worker. Several others have come and they have left also, because they had neither the zeal to work, nor the aspiration to tread the spiritual path. My policy has always been this—let the doors of the Ashram be open to one and all. The undesirable will either go away of their own accord, or be sent away by some one or other in the Ashram. It is all His business.'

OINTMENT FOR THE EYE: EYE-DROPS FOR THE WOUND

'Aravamudan! Take this letter carefully to Premanandaji and get the correct address written on the envelope. Take this also and enclose Prasad in the cover.'

A. picked up the letters.

'Be careful. In your hurry, do not act like the Calcutta lawyer.'

We all looked up to Siva inquisitively.

'You see: this lawyer was in a hurry to go to the Court. He took the medicine chest: there were many bottles—and he put the eye-lotion on an injury on his leg and applied the ointment meant for wounds to the eye.'

AGGRESSION HERE TOO

One hardly expects even the word 'aggression' to be used in the vicinity of Ananda Kutir, the Abode of Bliss where the Shanta Satchidanandamurthy, the incarnation of Ahimsa, lives and moves about. Yet, perhaps what occasioned the usage was this:

Sri Haridasji (Mr. Henry van Zeyst) was returning from a long evening walk. He met Siva on the way. They both at once fell into a discussion on the benefits of walking, which led the talk on to exercise, Asans, Pranayam, etc. Siva saw his chance there: at once grasped it.

'Haridasji, walking is no doubt good. It is refreshing: and especially when this is undertaken in jungle paths, alone, walking inspires the inner soul, and gives rise to sublime ideas.

'Yet, we should not minimise the importance of Asans and Pranayama. They are equally important. Five minutes of Sarvangasan and what an amount of nourishment the thyroid gland gets! Uddiyana, Nauli, Halasan and Paschimottanasan—the entire abdominal region is whipped into action! Just try a few mild Asans tomorrow: then you will at once know their benefits.'

'Pranayama also helps concentration. Bhastrika and Sukh-Purvak are enough....like this....(Siva on the road itself started demonstration of Bhastrika, no time to lose in catching the fish). It invigorates all nerves! Sukh-Purvak steadies the mind.'

Haridasji thus got his initiation into Hatha Yoga.

28TH SEPTEMBER, 1948

SUBTLE WAYS OF THE MIND

'OM Namō Narayanaya, Masterji Maharaj! You are not taking any notes in Vedanta. You know all these things?' Master S. again.

Sivanarayanji came to the rescue: 'Swamiji, he is already well-read in Vedanta, Gita, etc.'

'Then come, tell me what are the Shad Lingas?'

Sri Swami Krishnanandaji had just this morning explained them, in Vedanta class.

Silence.

'That is it. Even if you know the Vedantic truths, if something presents itself, even let it be the mere terminology, you should take notes. All ideas, thoughts, and lessons are useful.'

'I shall do so from tomorrow, Swamiji.'

'Why not today? A little vanity, I think. The feeling: 'I am a master, an old learned man; I cannot become a student now.' That is the idea, isn't it?'

'No, no, Swamiji. Mainly, I am interested in Bhakti. And, I am not so fond of acquiring a mere verbal knowledge in Vedanta which I will not be able to use.'

'No, no, no. That is just a trick of the mind. If you direct your searchlight of Vichara, you will find out the thief. Otherwise, he will simply dupe you. You should not take the mind at its face-value. But you do not care to dive deeper into its contents. You only graze on the top. If you go deeper and analyse minutely, you will find that an external misleading cloak for preserving its vanity, is made to look like a valid reason for not taking notes.'

Much food for thought.

KEEP IT UNDER THE BED

As he moved a few yards away, Siva saw through the window of S.'s room a few pickle bottles just near the window.

'Satvic achar or Rajasic chillie-walah?' enquired Siva humorously.

'Swamiji, only two of these jars contain lemon-pickles: that, too, without any chillies. The other jars are empty.'

'No, no. It is all right. Chillies and pickles are necessary for the body.'

S. got a little upset: as he professed to be very particular about Satvic and Rajasic foods, and was very fond of the three Slokas in the Gita where the Lord has delineated these. He ran inside the room and started showing Siva the contents of the jars, one by one.

'This is only empty, Swamiji.'

'Yes, ready to receive a good inspiring pickle tomorrow!'

This made everyone laugh.

'But only keep all the jars away from the window,' Siva continued. 'People should not see for they will get a wrong impression. They will think: 'What is this Sadhu, eating pungent achars and other delicacies?' So, keep the jars underneath the bed, so that they will be out of others' sight.'

There was irony in Siva's words. He said, in effect....Give up evil in all its forms and in all circumstances. Do not hide anything: for the Antaryamin knows everything. Never pose to be a Yogi....how often do Sadhaks fall a victim to this snare.

THE SADHANA THAT HARDENS

A letter was on Siva's table: a great (?) European Yogi had written to Siva requesting him to invite him to India. This was needed to obtain a passport.

'What a big show of themselves do these so-called saints make. Flying from this country to that country: everywhere they go, parties, receptions and farewell parties, again. It is not?'

'Yes, Swamiji, we have seen many of these move about in regal comforts.'

A mischievous smile adorned Siva's lips: we were getting ready to receive something very interesting.

'Some of them should be received with a unique honour. Instead of flags and festoons adorning the reception entrance, people should hang old shoes and broomsticks.'

Srimathi Liliane Shamash visibly enjoyed the joke.

'What do you say?' Siva turned to her. 'How would you like such a reception? I am sure you would be greatly upset: you will feel shocked. Won't you?'

'I am not sure, Swamiji: I have not tried it.'

'We should not wait for the thing to happen actually. We should train ourselves. I have done so. I have beaten myself with shoes severely. This I used to do especially on Birthdays—just after returning to my Kutir after the meetings where people will praise me, glorify me, deify me, I will go into my Kutir and beat myself nicely with a pair of shoes: 'What are you? You wretched flesh-blood-excreta-made body? Do you want garlands? Can you not wear torn clothes? Do you think that you are great? Do you want to be prostrated to? Now, take these garlands.'

Blood raced through everyone's veins. Faces were red. Srimathi Liliane blushed. This great saint whom we all revere as God incarnate on earth, this Seer, God-

realised sage, beating himself with shoes. Even we, the worms, insects that should have considered it a great blessing to roll over the dust of Siva's lotus feet, even that puny we would not do this.

Siva wanted to relieve us of discomfiture.

'Suka Deva was tested by Janaka like this. He was a great Jnani. When he went to Janaka for instruction, he was made to wait outside the palace uncared for, without food, without shelter and without any honour. Then he was attended upon by the ladies of the court and the Maharanis. In these ways Janaka tested Suka Deva's tranquillity of mind. Suka was above all these things. He had preserved his equanimity all through. Such should be a Sadhaka.

'I have heard this said of St. Francis of Assisi also. He used to call his body 'Mr. Ass'. What a tremendous Vairagya they all had.

'Even this occasional shoe-beating is not enough for me. I should give this body a dose of this hardening-medicine at least once a week.'

No one else dared to take any part in the discussion. I did not know what would happen next: for sometimes Siva gets seized by such ideas of Sanyasa, Vairagya, Sadhana, etc. Gradually they pervade his entire being: then, he would turn his fiery eyes towards us....but, with this strange medicine of which Siva was so fond.

30TH SEPTEMBER, 1948

ON CHARITY

'Very well. But, who loses? Not we. But only he loses the Lord's blessings,' brushed aside Siva, a suggestion to approach afresh a devotee for the purpose of getting a book printed. Siva was also told that this devotee had expressed his displeasure at the Society not immediately utilising a donation which he had made for the purpose for which it was intended: and, as a result of this, he had stopped further contributions to the funds of the Society.

'Charity should be unconditional,' Siva continued. 'Especially in the case of a spiritual institution where the organisers are trustworthy selfless servants of humanity, the donor should not bind the workers with all sorts of conditions. These people in charge of the institution know where funds are needed urgently. For instance, if money is urgently needed by us to maintain the Sadhaks, then we should use it for that purpose. It would then be foolish to starve the workers saying that there is no balance in the Ashram Maintenance Fund. If the Building Fund has money, and if this money is not urgently required there, any wise organiser will divert this money to the kitchen.

'For me the printing of books is the greatest necessity. All other works have a secondary priority. Dissemination of spiritual knowledge on the widest possible scale is my one thought. Construction, water scheme, and every other work can wait. The world looks to such Societies and Ashrams as ours for guidance. Even if we go and take food from the Kshetra, we should go on with publication of books

and leaflets. The donor will be greatly benefited by such unconditional charity: he would have served, through his money, the whole world. Even if the money goes to feed some Sadhus and Sadhaks, the donor is greatly blessed.'

'Few people realise this. Others have the banker's mentality. This money for this: that money for that. This blocks their way to the goal: this narrows their heart, clouds their intellect: this leads them to the vilification of Mahatmas, and their own downfall.'

'For whose sake is he giving charity? Not for our sake. The Lord will provide us with sufficient funds to carry on His work. I have the power to bring about a shower of gold in the Ashram. I will not do it. The householders should have an opportunity of doing charity and being purified of their bad Karmas. Only through charity and the like will they purify their heart and mind, expand and evolve. Everyone should realise this.'

WATCH: THINK: NOTE

Siva was very busy attending to the despatch of free books. He suddenly stopped and looked up.

'From the time I got out of the morning class I have been going on thinking of writing a few poems, but I do not find time. I am doing this work: but my mind is still working on the poems. Even when I was taking my milk, I was busy within sifting the points for the poems. Only when I finish the poems will my mind know rest.'

What a perfection of Ekagrata! It is hardly possible for us to think of one thing for such a long time, and protect it from being swallowed up by other worldly thoughts, especially eating, drinking, scandals and such others. Then I remembered that true devotion of Mumukshutva is compared to a lady ever thinking of her paramour even while being engaged in household duties.

'Are you all keeping a note-book to record your thoughts?' Siva asked us. 'First of all you should note down in this book all the new points that you learn in the class. Then there are parallel ideas that might strike you: or ideas arising out of those expressed by others in the class. These may be new, novel and unknown to others. These should at once be noted down. Are you keeping such notebooks?'

Some of us nodded assent—others preferred to maintain a Vedantic balance and an unaffected steady posture.

HEAD EVER ABOVE THE CLOUDS

'There is one special advantage in this. First you will hear some good points. Then you will go on thinking about them. These will give rise to other good points in you. When you start noting them down, they will grow. This will become a habit with you. You will always dwell on sublime thoughts. The mind will refuse to come down, even if invited to. This is Vedantic Sravan-Manan-Nididhyasan.'

'Side by side with this, you should keep another note-book for introspection. That is intended to eradicate the negative qualities in you. Killing out the evil on the

one hand; giving birth to divine thoughts and feelings on the other. Rapid progress is possibly only then.'

'When one good thought arises in the mind: say, the importance of truth, you must dwell on the glory of truth, the lives of great men who have adhered to truth, the nature of truth, the pitfalls and snares on the path of truth, the obstacles that have to be overcome, the subtle ways of the mind which deceives you and takes you along a side-track to falsehood—then dive into the mind and find out in what form falsehood lurks in your own mind, in gross or subtle form. Drive it out from there. Record the evil tendencies that you note in yourself.'

NO TIME FOR EVIL

'If a man does this, he will soon find out the easy road to constant introspection. He will ever live an inner life. There will be no time for his mind to externalise. He will never think of others. He will have no evil thoughts. Lust, anger, greed, etc., will die a natural death. He will not care if anyone spoke ill of him, if someone refused to give him milk or food, or if anyone criticised him. There will be no time for his mind to think of all these.'

MOST IMPORTANT SADHANA

This led Siva to his favourite topic. 'Evil should not have time to dwell in your mind. What if someone refused to give you milk, to give you food? What if someone scolded you? Always repeat: I am not this body; I am not this mind; I am the Eternal Immortal Satchidananda Atman.

'Bear insult and injury. If someone slaps you on your cheeks, you should not even mind it: you should not even be aware of it, so to say. This is very difficult. But, this is most important. When the other man is scolding you, your mind should be engaged in Vichara. After a while this man will realise: What is this, I have been scolding him several times; he does not get irritated, he does not retort: there must be something in him, which I should learn. Then he will fall at your feet and apologise. You have conquered.'

INDEPENDENCE OR EGOISM?

'R. has gone away today, because someone ill-treated him. Who is the loser? Surely R. himself.

'These people have a peculiar idea of independence. True independence is an inner life, free from the sovereignty of Kama, Krodha, etc., under whose sway most men labour. What do you gain when you run away? Here his egoism, arrogance and vanity were one cubit long: after a few years of this independence, they will be several yards long. There will be none to point out his mistakes: no one to enable him to practise patience, endurance and adaptability. You should all daily read my articles 'Most Important Sadhana' and 'Adaptability'. How can Devi Sampatti be cultivated without adaptability, without your learning your own defects and trying to eradicate them?

'You should identify yourselves with the Society and the mission. You should work heart and soul for the Cause. Then only will your heart be quickly purified. This is also work: and the work that you did in your previous office was also work.

But there is a vast difference between the two. There it was for remuneration: there you were watching the clock. Here the only remuneration is Moksha, Jnana. The highest reward presupposes the greatest exertion, too. All the time you should introspect and eradicate your egoism.'

'Some people foolishly think: 'I have renounced much wealth. I have resigned a good job, I had plenty of landed property. These people are treating me like a servant.' When you have renounced the world, when you have embraced the Nivritti Marga, where is property, where is job, where is position? The only and the greatest property and position you have is renunciation. Do not boast. This will only fatten your egoism. Be humble. You must astound everyone by your humility.'

'For a few years many aspirants are humble and obedient. My nature is to train every aspirant to develop all his faculties and become a dynamic worker. I teach them every kind of work and try to mould them into perfect leaders. They take undue advantage of this. When they have learnt a little bit of Gita, Upanishads, etc. when they can deliver some lectures, when they know how to run an Ashram, they run away and wish to start independent Ashrams.

'What is the big idea? They want to be garlanded. They want to be respected. They do not want anyone to point out their errors. They want to be treated as Mahants. But, think for a while. Here is an institution which has been created out of the hard labour of many over a long period. Work for this: you will be respected everywhere, in all the Branches. There is a ready field for work. You can do tremendous service. If you start off independently, you will have to do all the organising work yourself and begin from the beginning.'

'Even till the very last one should be vigilant against this egoism. It raises its head in various forms. Man is often deceived and side-tracked. Every aspirant should be vigilant. Every aspirant should welcome insults and injuries. Everyone should learn to adapt himself, humiliate himself, learn to introspect constantly and thus evolve rapidly.'

YOGI JOHN D'CRUZ

'Take care of the Society; the Society will take care of you. Do you understand what this means?' asked Siva when John D'Cruz came in for his Darshan.

'Yes, Swamiji. I do understand. Because the work is divine, when I dedicate myself to the work, God will take care of me.'

'Exactly. I will direct you and guide you. I will make you into a pucca Yogi. Do just as I tell you.'

'Yes, Swamiji. I am always ready to do so.' John's faith in Siva is simply amazing.

JOHN SWEPT OFF HIS FEET

Blessed John D'Cruz!

'I will now tell you the secret. As soon as you go to Saharanpur, get into touch with a few students and a few teachers. Teach the students Asans. Do you know the technique of Asans?'

‘Yes, Swamiji, I know the important ones.’

‘That is enough. Start with these. Teach the students and the teachers also. Distribute the leaflets and pamphlets widely. Spread the knowledge of Yoga everywhere. Hold morning classes and evening Kirtan classes. Read a few passages from the books. Thus you will be able to create an interest in people for the books themselves. Book their orders for books and send here. Enrol members for the Society and the Magazine. That way you will be taking care of the Society also. And, surely the Society will take care of you.’

‘Become a Yoga teacher in your own district first. Become the sovereign of Saharanpur. The entire district should be under your control. When you have established yourself here, then you should move out in the neighbourhood, and establish Divine Life centres there also. You should take the divine life message from door to door. That is the secret. Later on people will come to your feet and learn. Do not cringe before the big people. Do your work silently among the common men: send some Magazines, pamphlets and books to the big people of the locality. They will come to your house! The secret is you should be humble and dignified.’

‘Capture the hearts of all through service and love. Invite all to your meetings—Mohamadans and Christians, everyone should have free access to your centre. You should have equal vision.’

‘Whenever you have doubts to be cleared: or whenever you feel like resorting to seclusion and practising meditation for replenishing yourself with spiritual energy, come here. Stay here for a few days. Then go back to work with redoubled vigour. You will become the king of several districts.’

‘Jai ho ji! May God bless you!’

The secret of organization—in simple words.

CHECK THAT IMPULSE

Swami X had got a little annoyed at an aspirant’s attitude. This lady had been so much upset over a relative’s death that she had expressed great grief in her letter. The cool Vedanti in the young Swami revolted against this. And,....in a reply, he had chided her mildly and pointed out that instead of wasting her thoughts on the dead relative, she could well utilise it in God-thought.

Siva would not agree even to this. He said: ‘No, no. There should not be one word which will hurt a devotee’s feelings. There should not be one negative suggestion. Always dwell on positive thoughts and ideas. Encourage everyone. If you are vigilant, you will always find some point in everyone with the help of which you can persuade the aspirant to ignore the weak points. Every word must be sweet, even if the aspirant is completely wrong in his stand.’

‘When you write a letter under a sudden impulse, leave it there: when the impulse has died out, read the letter again. You will surely like to alter it.’

NO REGRETS

'Similarly in the case of conversation also. Never give vent to the first impulse. When you are agitated, leave the place. Do not talk. Don't be foolish and say something which you will later regret. If you give vent to the first impulse, then later on you will go on your knees and apologise. Make it a habit not to use offending words. Never give offence to anyone. You will never regret. You will be loved by all.'

Sound advice to all.

FRENCH LEAVE?

'OM Namo Narayanaya! When did you come? Are you all right?'

The French Sadhu whom Siva greeted in this manner, replied: 'I am very sorry, Swamiji, that I left without telling you. I apologise for this misconduct. I went to Badrinath and am just returning.'

'Oh, it is all right. This is called French leave here. As you are yourself a Frenchman, you are quite right to take this leave!'

Not a word of reproach: but humour in everything. The Frenchman was greatly non-plussed on seeing that not only was his shortcoming ignored, but Siva treated it so light-heartedly.

SECRET OF BUSINESS EXPANSION

'Maharaj, if you had come to the Mandir, attended the Pradosh Puja and sung the Lord's name, you would have greatly enjoyed it yourself, got the Pradosh Prasad and received the Lord's blessings also. You are always engrossed in Jilebi and tea-making. For one hour if you forego this, your business also will greatly increase. One hour's Satsang means incalculable benefit to you. Your business also will expand enormously due to the Lord's grace.' A short sermon to the shop-keeper who met Siva on his way back to his Kutir from the temple. Siva has a way of tempting all to share his devotion to Him.



OCTOBER, 1948

2ND OCTOBER, 1948

INBORN LAZINESS

On our way back from the morning class, Siva noticed that a young boy had spat just outside his room underneath the Yajnasala.

‘Who has cleaned his teeth here?’ queried Siva, with a smile, as usual. ‘If one is capable of doing this in this season he will probably pass urine within the room in winter when the cold wind blows.’

The boy came out of the room and bowed to Siva.

‘Laziness is the inborn nature of every man. This boy is not to blame. It is human nature. But, my dear young man, we are here only to conquer our nature. It must be your second-nature to keep everything neat and clean and to develop good habits, hygienic habits. This is the age for it, too.’

CONSIDERATION FOR THE AGED

Someone then pointed out to Siva that another aged Sadhaka was also irregular in this respect.

‘But, that is a different case. He is aged. He has done a lot of work for the Society, too. Even now he is rendering yeoman service to the cause. Such people must be excused.’

With his usual winsome smile, Siva added: ‘Perhaps I should also be exempted and placed in the same category. For instance, my bowels are very often loose; yet, I have good control. That is because this has become my habit, my second nature.’

ALL DAYS ARE ALIKE FOR THE TIMELESS SAGE

As we moved a little farther, Siva suddenly remembered about Appayya Jayanthi which is celebrated every year at Ananda Kutir.

‘Oh, Venkateswarji, when is Appayya Jayanthi this year?’

‘Swamiji, it is already over—on the 19th September.’

‘Is that so? But, you did not tell us at all. Everyone forgot all about it. All right: it does not matter. We shall celebrate it on the next full-moon day. Narayanaswamiji, please note it in your diary. Only then will we remember it without fail. We shall read some of Appayya’s works, his commentary on the Sutras, and there can also be discourses on his life, etc.’

This is an indirect mockery of time by one who has transcended Time, Space and Causation. Celebrations of Jayantis, etc., are for those who still need a rap in the knuckles to rouse them to the true purpose of life, which the great ones have exemplified in their own life. All days are the same: each day is as important as

the other. If only we can make every morning a Jayanthi to remind ourselves of our goal, the progress will be greatly accelerated.

(I might here link this up with an evening incident. After the evening Satsang had concluded, Siva was distributing Prasad. To Swami Satchidanandaji, he offered a second helping of the Prasad: 'It is your birthday: take more.' As he turned to another Sadhak: 'Is it your birthday also?' 'No, Swamiji,' came the honest reply. Siva turned to a third: 'Today is indeed your birthday: what is there, today is everyone's birthday: every day is your birthday.')

DOCTOR'S DILEMMA

Let us follow Siva further down, I resume the morning narrative. Pannalalji's family are going to the Viswanath Ghat for their bath. 'OM Namō Narayanaya. Did the doctor come and see the child last night?' One of the children in the family was sick.

'No, Swamiji. But the child is improving by your grace alone.'

'Oh, Venugopaldaswamiji, you did not go to Vanaprastha Hermitage last night?'

'No, Swamiji: I will go now, Swamiji.'

'Of course, you can go now. But I had asked you to attend to that baby last night itself. And you had agreed, too. You have neglected your duty. It is either laziness or neglect. It is through these that you miss such golden opportunities of rendering service.'

'If I had known that you would not go, then I would myself have gone and attended to the child. This service is greater than all meditation and study. By serving the sick, you directly put yourself in tune with the Infinite. You develop the heart which is the only way to realise the Supreme.'

'I thought that I need not go at night, Swamiji. So, I neglected it.'

'When I say: Go immediately, you should not mind whether it is midnight or midday and attend to the patient. Do not think I am finding fault with you: it is for your good only. By such frequent self-analysis, you should try to improve and make yourself perfect. Om Namō Narayanaya, Jai ho ji.'

NO, NOT EVEN YOUR WIFE

'The essential qualification for a Sadhu is that he should adapt himself to all conditions and circumstances, causing no inconvenience to others. His is the duty to serve: not to worry others. Very few sadhus know what they are and what they should be.'

'This morning an old Sadhu from Swarg Ashram came here. He was there when I was there, too. He is aged 80 now. Today they did not prepare roti here. There was only rice and Sambhar. But, the Sadhu would not take. He wanted only roti. It seems rice will produce wind. If you allow him, he will lecture to you for half an hour on the evil effects of rice-eating. But he will refuse to be reminded that a very large population in India and the world lives on rice alone.'

'This is all that he has understood of Sadhana during all these thirty years of Sadhu life. Rice should not be taken: roti alone is good for health and meditation. All their life these people will waste on this one thought of the right food and the wrong food. What is there if one day you do not get your food to your own liking? Even your own wife will not tolerate you for a day if you are so particular about what food you should have.'

'It is the special duty of a Sadhu not to cause any inconvenience to householders. We are not to be a burden on householders, but to be of some service to them. When will the Sadhu understand this?'

HOME AFFAIRS

'And, the worst part of it all is—this Sadhu who is adamant in his longing for the roti will not be given anything except rice here! I had to go about here and there asking this man and that cook to prepare a few parottas for the Sadhu.'

'The Sadhu has his own specifications for the parotta, too: It must be extra-thick: this is a convenient method of escaping criticism that he is a glutton. Instead of taking twenty parottas of the usual size, he will now only take six of the abnormal size.'

'If I merely tell someone here, nothing will be done. Some cook or some worker will just look up to me with his mind somewhere else, and then forget all about it when he sees my back! And, a few have got the mentality that their will should be done. So, my worry is all the more. I have to sit by the side of the cook and see that the Sadhu is given the parottas.'

NOT IN A THOUSAND LIVES

'Some Sadhaks here also have that impression that they are living in an Ashram and that one consideration ought to be sufficient to open out the gates of Kaivalya to them. I assure you: even if they live many hundreds of their lives near the greatest saint in the world, they will not improve even a bit. They must themselves exert. Each one must think for himself, act for himself. There have been some Sadhaks here whom I myself trust and put in charge of the affairs of the Ashram: then I myself used to dread to approach them. If, for instance, I go to them and ask them to prepare a little more of what they give me for my food in order that I may give the extra quantity to some one else, I would be refused. What I do on those occasions is to reduce my own consumption and distribute this to the others.'

'If a Sadhaka gets real Samadhi in a hundred births, that is a very great achievement. God is Perfect: and unless and until all the evil qualities are eradicated and divine qualities acquired to the degree of perfection, there will be no Samadhi.'

A glimpse of the heart of Sivananda. From the above we have an idea of the nature of an ideal Sadhu, how Siva lovingly serves even one who does not rise to this ideal, and the supreme embodiment of patience and consideration that Siva is in the matter of training his own disciples who are given the fullest freedom to evolve in their own way even if it meant trying Siva's patience severely.

Siva now turned to Sri Rajagopalan who had during the University class in the morning asked for methods of shutting out extraneous thoughts during meditation.

'Meditation is only the seventh Anga of Yoga. Without first attending to the preliminaries you want to get established in the seventh limb! Is this possible? First get established in Yama and Niyama. This alone is sufficient work for several lives.'

'Study Gita. Find out if you have developed one hundredth part of one virtue which the Lord has prescribed for all Sadhakas. If you have done even this, you have deserved the human birth. This eradication of evil qualities and cultivation of good ones is such a difficult task that there is no use treating it lightly.'

'Anyone can write articles. Any one can solve others' difficulties, so long as the solution is not applied to one's own self. You can turn out tremendous work. But, these are all faculties. Even singing Kirtan melodiously and inspiringly is the development of a faculty that God has given you. Do not mistake this for the acquisition of Sadhu-qualities. They are entirely different. It is extremely difficult to develop one quality which is necessary in a Sadhu.'

'Yet, I am not discouraging you all. Go on introspecting and eradicating the evil qualities one by one. You will soon find yourself in the region of perfection.'

'First get rid of gross impurities. Anger: how many are an easy victim to the grossest form of anger. This fighting nature is inborn in everyone. A Sadhu should completely eradicate this evil. This evil quality has no place in him. Someone here abused him: and R. has gone away. Even if he was an undesirable person, we should not abuse him. That is why the greatest sages prescribed Maitri, Karuna, Muditha and Upeksha for a Sadhu or a Sadhaka. Friendship towards equals, sympathy towards inferiors, admiration and respect towards superiors and indifference toward undesirable persons. When you take Sanyas, you take the vow: Abhayam Sarva Bhutebhyah. Even an ant should not be afraid of you. You give Abhaya (the guarantee of fearlessness) to all. Even the worst of men should not be afraid of you.'

'Without these qualities, there is only Rupantara-Bheda in a Sadhu. The garb has been changed: but the nature has remained the same. Try to improve yourselves little by little. Be on the alert. So long as you are on the right path, there is no fear: you are sure to reach the goal.'

A rare occasion on which Siva the Jagad Guru raises the Finger of Admonition. The Finger belongs to the Hand of Siva the Loving Mother: and it is raised only when that love expresses itself as stern guidance.

3RD OCTOBER, 1948

REGISTRAR AT THE ASHRAM

Today has been a very important day in the annals of the history of the Society. The Sub-Registrar of Dehra Dun came to the Ashram for reverently getting the

revised Trust Deed of the Divine Life Trust Society registered and signed by Siva. A retired Judge (Sri Gauri Prasadji of Swarg Ashram) was also with us. At the conclusion of the signing ceremony, Gauri Prasadji suggested that if the Registrar found any difficulty in declaring that 'Swami Sivananda is personally known' to him, he (the Judge) would help him. Instantly came the Registrar's reply: 'I should consider myself unfit to call myself a human being if I could not declare that I personally know Swamiji. Why? The whole world knows him! Can anyone ever afford to deny knowledge of Swamiji?'

The moment the Sub-Registrar came in, he found himself in a valley on every side Siva's fragrant love enchanting him and enveloping him. He found, not the dismayed respect that greets him in other places, but a brotherly, nay Atmic, love which knows no bounds.

AGE-OLD RELATIONSHIP

As we were going in a car to Rishikesh for the completion of the actual ceremony, the Sub-Registrar revealed himself.

'Even in my College days I felt myself drawn to Swamiji's books. They were my constant companions. I went through my LL.B course: and even after I got into the U.P. Service, these books have served to guide me, my daily activities, and to cheer me up, in short, to breathe new life into me.'

'I have had a great yearning all the time to come to Rishikesh and have Swamiji's Darshan. Today has been that glorious day: it is a red-letter day in my life. I consider myself most fortunate to have had Swamiji's Darshan today. Not the Ganga Snan, nor a visit to the holy place as such, nor even the comfortable and enjoyable stay in the Ashram: but, this alone do I consider a great blessing—Swamiji's holy Darshan and his blessings.'

'Looking from that angle, I consider even my present appointment a great gift from God: for it was that that enabled me to make the Saint's personal acquaintance.'

At the Viswanath Bagh, too, the Sub-Registrar could not but feel that he had already been assimilated into divine life: he was one of us, one with Siva. The parting had all the pathos in it: and the 'stranger' Sub-Registrar left us, really and sincerely a disciple of Siva. As the Judge Saheb humorously remarked: 'You came to register a document of the Society: but your name has already been entered in the registers of the Divine Life Society and Swamiji has already registered you as a divine life.' This is true to the very letter. And, when he left, he had been blessed by Siva with the gift of some of the books, food enough for his soul.

4TH OCTOBER, 1948

TYPEWRITING SCHOOL?

'What a poor opinion of Rishikesh Sadhus do these people have!' remarked Siva after a few modern men and women had peeped into the office, made their appearance felt, and left the place.

They threw a glance at the entire office as soon as they entered: they just could not resist Siva's magnetic personality which compelled them to bow their heads to him: and then they busied themselves watching with keen interest the clatter of typewriters. A gentle lady moved nearer one of the typewriters, gazed intently at the Sadhu adorning the machine's front—'What a curious sight!' she must have thought.

She then moved towards Siva and asked: 'Do you teach these people typewriting here?'

Siva, obviously in the fullest sympathy with the proud visitor who had perhaps no idea that typewriters could be found in Sadhus' hermitages, said: 'No, no. They are all expert typists. They have all been holding high positions in the Government and commercial offices, renounced their jobs and joined this Ashram. They are all past masters in the art.'

Their curiosity satisfied, they turned to the door.

'Maharaj! Please wait. I will give you something to read.'

The visitors turned back in surprise: 'You will give me books also?' They looked at one another. The gentleman, a pure aristocrat unadulterated by an iota of divine qualities, commanded a Sadhak: 'Then, bring the books quickly: we want to go.' Vishnudevji handed him with a few leaflets and books. With another (this time more sincere) bow to Siva the party left.

Siva then turned to us and said: 'They think that Sadhus would be illiterate, good-for-nothing people living on neem-leaves. What a poor conception of this glorious institution they have!'

THE BULL-INMATE PASSES AWAY

'Swamiji, you have built that Kutir on the very bank of the Ganges. What a nice shed! Is it for meditation purposes? But, in rainy season it will be washed away by the Ganges!' wondered a visitor seated in the Viswanath Ghat, gazing as he was towards Siva's Kutir beyond which, on the shores of the Ganges stood a small 'Kutir', a humble thatched shed.

'No, no. It is not a Kutir in the sense that you take it to be. It is indeed a Kutir, yes, and it at present houses an invalid. I shall explain it to you.'

Siva and the visitor went to the 'Kutir'. What was there inside? An old, emaciated bull in dying condition.

'My God,' exclaimed the visitor. He thought of finding a meditating Sadhak there.

'Yes, you have said it. It is your own God inside the Kutir. It is not meant to be a Kutir for a Sadhak to meditate in: but a Kutir to house an embodiment of God. Don't you see our God in the bull, too?'

Two Ashramites were there tending to the bull. Like a regular Ashramite this bull was treated. Food, drink, shelter, all comforts, and all attention. And, Siva was particular in his daily visits. It was fortunate enough to have dropped its body just at the foot of his Kutir. The astonished visitor was beside himself when he noticed

all this. 'This for a poor beast, that an emaciated one, which we would long ago have driven out of the house as useless (after having made the best use of its youth).' Not so with Siva: the bull which had served the divine cause was just as useful and as much an object of his affection and attention as a human being who shares the good fortune.

The bull breathed its last this evening: and under Siva's directions, was consigned to mother Ganges (as a Sanyasin is) with Maha Mantra Kirtan.

KESARI YOGA

'Ayiye Maharaj,' greeted Siva, in this characteristic style, the visitor who stepped inside the office. The newcomer prostrated before Siva and took his seat on the bench.

Siva then gave him a copy of the latest issue of 'The Divine Life' magazine and a collection of messages.

'You are coming here after a long time.'

'Yes, Swamiji, after eight years.'

'Have you seen the temple, Bhajan Hall, and Kaivalya Guha?' asked Siva.

'Yes, Swamiji, I am just coming from the hillock after having the Dharsan of the various buildings, temple, Akhanda Kirtan Hall and the Mahatmas living there. I am simply amazed at the wonderful work you have turned out in such a short time. No one has even during his entire life-time done such excellent work as you have done. Sitting on the bank of the Ganga, in the Himalayas in this small Kutir, you have simply thrilled the whole world. Swamiji Maharaj, you have got Kesari Yoga which is one of the best Yogas according to astrology.'

'What is Kesari Yoga?'

'Kesari Yoge Jato Dhanavan Swakulaadhipo: Grama Pura Nagara Kartha Sahasramaseshu Jeevitam—One who is born in Kesari Yoga becomes rich, the leader of his race, becomes the creator of villages, town, cities, etc., and lives for a thousand months. This is the fruit of Kesari Yoga. When I think of the development in this Sivananda Nagar I am convinced that the effect of Kesari Yoga is fully demonstrated in your case. Your reputation and glory is something marvellous. Wherever we go, we hear of your wonderful work. Everywhere, your books are read.'

7TH OCTOBER, 1948

VIGILANT VIGILANT VIGILANT EVER

'I told you the other day itself that these account books will be spoilt by rain. They thought that sun had come: so, there would be no rains.'

'It is the wind that spoils it, Swamiji. If the wind is not there, water does not come in. It is the wind that misdirects the rain.'

‘All right,’ said Siva, smiling, ‘send a petition to Vayu not to blow when it is raining, and thus spoil our papers. Very well, you can now go on keeping the account books and papers in a careless manner.’

By now, the Ashramite had realised the point. ‘No, Swamiji, I did not mean that. I shall have the books and papers removed from near the verandah.’

‘You see: you should always be careful. Some people think there will be no snakes and scorpions in summer. Instead if you are always careful, and take a lantern, you will be safe. As soon as the work is over, the hands should automatically bolt the doors and windows and move the account books and papers to safe places.

Oh, rain! We are grateful to you for you have enabled this torrential wisdom to be poured out to us. Siva’s message of eternal vigilance. How many aspirants often fall a victim to the temptation of considering themselves beyond the reach of Maya’s long arms and in a complacent mood voluntarily walk into her clutches. Even in sunny days (of spiritual glory) Siva would like us to securely bolt the door with Viveka and Vairagya, so that the rain of passions wafted hither and thither by the wind of circumstances might not spoil the record of our divine accounts built up slowly and steadily through many years of hard labour. Even in sunny days Siva would like us to go about with the lantern of wisdom and Mumukshutwa in order not to be stung by the scorpion of lust or bitten by the serpent of egoism.

FALSE ECONOMY

‘I am always careful regarding the very minutest details,’ continued Siva. ‘Several people here used to ask me to send large consignments of books through people who go to the same city from here. Sometimes N., with his keen interest in economy, would suggest getting our books from Calcutta or other places by goods train. What would happen to them? When they reach here, half of them would be soaked in oil, the other half would smell of jaggery.’

‘The other day Pannalal’s friend asked me if I had some books, etc. for him to carry to Pannalalji. I actually had a big parcel of books: but I would not send it through him. He might himself forget it at the railway station, or in the carriage. He might forget to deliver it immediately he reaches Amritsar. And then, he might send the parcel through someone, and thus the books might go astray and never reach the person at all. All this to save a few rupees. I do not allow it at all. Even at the cost of a few extra rupees, I send the books direct to the persons intended and thus ensure proper delivery.’

8TH OCTOBER, 1948

THE EASY CLOAK

‘OM Namo Narayanaya, Master Saheb. You are not attending the class nowadays? You do not feel it interesting, I think. And, these boards here—they are yet to be painted. I see them in the same condition for the past so many days.’

'Swamiji, I like always to be in a meditative mood, engrossed in Brahma-Chintan. This study and the lectures and hearing of so many different subjects confuses me. I want to be established in Brahman alone. This work is sometimes a hindrance, too. They all distract my mind.' S.D. had just returned from a Brahma Chintan class which he had attended, not in the Ashram.

Siva walked a few steps away: then, when he was just in front of S.D.'s room, said: 'Then why not throw away all these watches and clocks? They are no hindrances to your Brahma-Chintan?' S.D. had no answer for this.

Through this simple remark Siva had pointed out to all of us, how easily we dupe ourselves and mistake the Preyas for the Sreyas. We often wilfully distort the facts about true Sadhana: look at things from a wrong angle and deceive ourselves and others.

TAMARIND-CURE

An aged Madrassi Sadhu guest was sick. He had been provided with all comforts, a room, medicines and 'diet' etc. It was about 11 a.m. and a light aroma from the kitchen which was near the room attracted him out of his Kutir. Venugopalji was requesting him to take rest in the room and not to stir out too much.

Siva was in the office: so was Dr. Sundari who is on a visit to the Ashram. They both heard what was going on outside.

V. came into the office to take Siva's instructions regarding the Sadhu's diet.

'Give him whatever he asks for.'

V. was surprised. This, to a patient who has been down with fever for the past four days?

'Swamiji, he is feeling restless just at present, because he wants to eat all sorts of things.'

Dr. Sundari took her eyes off the book she had in hand and fixed them on Siva curiously awaiting Siva's reactions.

'If you give him good Sambhar, he will be all right.'

People around laughed.

'I am not joking,' continued Siva: 'He is a Madrassi Sadhu. He has long been deprived of his favourite tamarind. When the mind gets its satisfaction, the fever will also subside.'

Dr. Sundari agreed with the wisdom of Siva.

CENT PER CENT PURE IS CENT PER CENT FALSEHOOD

Siva was examining, with Dr. Sundari, some chemicals in the dispensary. 'Is this good stuff?' asked Siva of Venugopalji, pointing to a bottle.

'Yes, Swamiji, it is written on the bottle itself 'Cent Per Cent Pure.'

'H'm? Cent per cent pure is cent per cent falsehood.'

What a mystic utterance! Nothing is pure to perfection, to the absolute degree. Only God or Brahman is cent per cent pure, rather purity itself. All else is tainted by Maya or ignorance. Therefore, to say that an object is cent per cent pure is to utter a cent per cent falsehood.

TRANSCENDENTAL EDUCATIONIST

None to approach Siva in this respect.

Sri T.K. Srinivasan, M.A., of Pudukotaah, had written to Siva that he had been appointed professor in the Rajah's College there and had asked for his blessings. Siva wrote out the letter in his own hand:

Sri Professor Srinivasan, M.A.,

OM Namo Narayanaya.

Glorious Immortal Atman.

Adorations and salutations.

Tat Twam Asi.

Thy kind letter and flowers.

Immensely delight to know you have become a Professor now. It is all Lord's Grace.

In your class, in the end always talk kindly to the students on the importance of spiritual life, ethical life, ethical discipline, study of Gita, or religious books, service of poor and country and the sick with Atma Bhav or Narayan Bhav. Give a slight, spiritual colouring in your lectures, a little link with Lord, and Adhyatmic matters.

Professors are certainly responsible for the spiritual moulding of students. Make them Adhyatmic soldiers to fight bravely in the battle of life. You can do that. You are spiritually inclined. You are already treading the path of Truth. You are full of spiritual Samskaras.

May Lord bless you with health, long life, peace, prosperity and Kaivalya. May you shine as a dynamic Yogi. May you be filled with knowledge and power to raise the students ethically and spiritually.

With regards, Prem and OM,

—Sivananda

The letter more than amply explains itself.

MY 'SADANGU'

One particularly remarkable feature in the above letter is the 'salutations' portion. Even if the letter proper contains just three lines of 'what happened to that' business, it is invariably prefixed with all these: OM Namo Narayanaya, Glorious Immortal Atman, Adorations and Salutations, Tat Twam Asi, Hari OM, etc.

What a curious combination, one wonders. First a Saguna Mantra: then a sudden leap into the Absolute, again, a merciless slaughter of the little ego which is compelled to lie prostrate on the ground, then the lion roars the Mahavakya. First, Siva engenders in himself the Narayana Bhav towards the addressee. Then awakens the addressee to his own real Swarupa, incidentally meditating himself on the nature of the Atman. Then, Siva's humility overpowers him: incidentally teaching the addressee also to be humble. Then....an electric current passes through every nerve-fibre of the addressee—Tat Twam Asi. And, it provides a daily repetition for Siva himself. As many letters are written this way, so much of Japa is done, of these great Saguna and Nirguna Mantras: so often has the writer humbled himself and prostrated to the living and walking Narayanas.

SIVA DINES WITH HIS DISCIPLES

The heading would have made you exclaim, especially if you have had the knowledge of orthodox Sanyasin Mutts, 'Unthinkable'.

The 8th of each month had been declared to be a gala-day at Ananda Kutir, the monthly birthdate of Gurudev. Swami Sankaranandaji and Swami Visweswaranandaji conspired to make history. They requested Siva to take his food in the Dining Hall today. To everyone's surprise, Siva readily agreed.

NOR WILL I

The bell had gone. Leaves were spread. The dining hall was already full. A place had been reserved for Siva. The office block remained vacant. Along with Siva was an Engineer from Dehra Dun who had just come. The Engineer's party consisted of a few more boys and girls, too. The Swami posted at the gate of the dining hall politely requested the Engineer to wait for the second batch: 'There is no place in this.'

'Nor will there be place for me in this. I shall also take food in the second batch with Engineer Saheb.'

The Swami raised himself on his toes to see where this remark came from.

Siva was standing behind the Engineer group. If the Engineer is not given a place to sit, Siva, too, would not sit. Then the Engineer's group was asked to occupy the 'Secretariat Block'.

GURU KIRTAN

After the meals were over, Siva sang beautifully the Guru Stothra 'Brahmanandam Paramasukhadam'. Then others began, too—in the manner adopted at Feasts.

A subtle truth is hidden in this. We were celebrating this as our Guru Jayanthi: and we were thinking that we were paying our homage to our Gurudev. And, in the midst of all this, Siva himself started singing the Guru Stothra.

This visible name and form Sivananda sings the glory of that nameless and formless Truth 'Sivananda', the Guru of all. So, Siva feels justified, even from the layman's point of view, to sit with Sivananda's disciples on Sivananda's birthday.

Incidentally, I might mention that I have noticed Siva faithfully following the Kirtan Dhvani: 'Guru Majaraj Guru Jai Jai, Sivananda Sat Guru Jai Jai'. The Sa-Upadhika Sivananda singing the name of the Nirupadhika Sivananda.

It is difficult for us even to understand this: words, too, fail to describe Siva's glory. So, let us meditate on Him.

JNANA YAJNA FUND

As soon as the Engineer entered the office, Siva greeted Him: 'Avoji, Engineer Saheb, Om Namō Narayanaaya.'

The stalwart Engineer bowed to Siva: then shouted at his children: 'You better go up, see the Mandir and then come back.'

When they had been despatched, he placed a hundred-rupee note at Siva's feet: 'This is for your grand Jnana Yajna, Swamiji.'

At once Siva called out to Padmanabhanji in Tamil: 'Bring a lot of books for him.'

After handing over a lot of books to him, Siva said: 'Take your food here itself. Oh, Vishnuji, arrange for their food immediately.'

'Swamiji,' pleaded the Engineer, 'do not bother about this food. I would like to receive from you some other kind of food—food for my soul. I am still a Grihastha. And, I would like to have from you Upadesha as to how I can lead a perfect Grihasthi life.'

'Do Japa. Read Gita. Have some Vratas. Observe moderation in everything. Do Kirtan with all your children.'

'I am already doing Japa and am reading Ramayan. As you have ordered me to do so, I will read Gita also.'

Visibly pleased, Siva exclaimed: 'Oh! You have already got the key to Moksha. You have only to open it. God's grace is also with you in full measure.'

Afterwards, the Engineer purchased a number of gramophone records, books, photographs, etc. Handing a picture of Siva to each of his little children, the Engineer said: 'Swamiji, these are all your future disciples.' What devotion. And, he is from the aristocracy.

PERFECT MEMORY

'Swamiji, you might not recognise me,' started a Sadhu as he met Siva near the dispensary.

'Oho, how can I forget you? I met you twelve years ago in Naimissaranya: is it not?'

How can he deny? Tongue-tied with amazement, he simply kept quiet. Siva turned to me: 'That was long ago and I had gone to Naimissaranya on a lecture-tour. And, when I was to lecture at Lakhimpore, this Swami was also there.'

The Sadhu had to brush up his memory.

'He was eager to lecture,' continued Siva: 'and, I took great interest in him and made him deliver a short lecture.' Turning to the Sadhu: 'You remember that?'

Still dazed, he replied: 'Yes, Swamiji. What a wonderful memory you have got!'

Both came in. Then, Siva asked Vishnudevji to give the Sadhu a copy of the Magazine, leaflets, etc. And, he asked him to take the Sadhu and show him round. The guileless Sadhu expressed wonderment at the meteoric growth of the Ashram: he had seen it long ago when it had hardly a couple of rooms.

In the meantime, a few smart gentlemen had walked in. With an air of that bureaucratic superiority, one of them said: 'Swamiji, we came to have your Darshan here. I am an information officer. I had my friends at Hardwar....'

'Oh, yes, you have previously come here: I remember.'

'Yes, Swamiji, that was long ago when I was working in a newspaper office in Lahore.'

'Oh yes: you saw me in Lahore also.' Then he mentioned a few names one of which was the information officer's!

11TH OCTOBER, 1948

THE CHILD KNOWS

In the Bhajan Hall, the Kanyakas (young girls) were being worshipped in the traditional fashion. It was a sight to see Siva himself doing the 'Arati' to these children, placing reverently flowers on their heads and singing hymns in praise of the Mother whose embodiments they are.

A small baby was also in the group. An Ashramite tried to cajole this baby to eat a pinch of 'Halva' from his hands. The child stoutly refused the offer, and actually brushed the proffered hand aside. Only from her own sister she would accept it.

A little while later, when all of us had forgotten about this incident, Siva was enquiring of each child what she wanted. And, the baby's turn came. Siva knelt before the baby and took a pinch of Halva, smiled at it and took his hand near its mouth, which automatically opened for the Prasad.

MY NIRVIKALPA SAMADHI

In the afternoon we had performed the Ayudha Puja by assembling the typewriters, cameras, movie equipment and projectors, etc., near the Diamond Jubilee Hall. Siva also joined us in the worship. After the function was over, Siva stood near the entrance visibly admiring the grand array of machines.

'Very impressive, is it not?' Siva was seen saying to Srimathi Liliane: 'A hundred typewriters here means Nirvikalpa Samadhi to me.'

Oh, Lord. What a queer Samadhi is this. Siva's realisation consists only of more and more service to humanity. His inner zeal for service manifests itself in the expansion of the organisation. A kow-peen-wallah Sadhu who recorded his thoughts on the inside of used envelopes in 1930 is not in command of an office

with ten typewriters rattling his messages fifteen hours a day each. Hundred? Of course, what is impossible for God?

12TH OCTOBER, 1948

MODERN RAMANUJA

‘This will create a Samskara in them: and it may take deeper root now itself or at least in the next birth. Let them all hear the great Mantras. Why make a great fuss about it: say that the initiation will cost the Sadhaka a couple of thousands of rupees, great austerities, etc.?’ said Siva as we were leaving the Bhajan Hall after this morning’s Vijayadasami celebrations. Suddenly Suva took it into his head to repeat, for all those assembled to follow, the Mahavakhyas, Sri Vidya Mantra, Navavarna Mantra of Durga and many others. Siva had introduced this ‘initiation’ that anyone who had a liking for any one of the Mantras may treat it as a sacred initiation ceremony and start repeating the Mantra.

Exactly what Ramanuja did: shouting the Ashtakshara from the top of a temple tower.

ASWAMEDHA SACRIFICE

The Sastriji who was in charge of the ritual Durga Puja gave us all the Prasad, Palika, and sprinkled the Kalasa-water on us all. Siva called out everyone around to receive the holy Prasad.

‘This is equal to one Aswamedha Sacrifice nowadays. This is the greatest ritualistic Yajna that can be performed in these days,’ remarked Siva.

Friends! Take this as gospel-truth. For, as the trusted messenger of God, Narada, says in his Bhakti Sutras, these great ones (like our Siva) alone give Sastra its authority: in other words, they are the progenitors of Sastra, and whatever they say is the truth. The moment the above words came out of Siva’s sacred lips, Durga Puja, in our eyes, assumed the role of Aswamedha Yajna.

NO ELECTRIC-SHOCKISM BUT EVOLUTIONISM

Three pieces of westernised Indian civilisation walked in. In the proud arrogance which the late bureaucracy had left as a scar on the body of this great nation, they forgot even to bow to the great sage.

Of course, respect they had for Siva: for they had brought with them a basketful of fruits, as an offering: only folding the palms and bowing the head in reverence were all unknown to them, by nature.

But, Siva quickly taught them: by his own example. One looked at the other, as Siva folded his palms and welcomed them: and decided the best way is to reciprocate it.

‘You are coming from....?’

‘Yes, Swamiji.’

‘You talk Tamil like a Mangalorian.’

'Maybe you are right. We have been living away from our own province for quite a long time now: and so have almost forgotten our mother-tongue.' The accent, diction, and delivery of English were chaste.

Siva asked Vishnuji to bring tea and fruits.

'Oh, no, don't bother.' The young lady exhibited a bit of 'manners'. Nor did she mind when it was brought.

Siva then initiated a mild discussion about the language, accents, education, tours of countries, etc.

'We are just coming from Dehra Dun. We went there to see a relative of ours. Accidentally, we dropped in at the School there: and to our astonishment we found that the Principal there was one of our cousins. Our family is so large, in fact, that wherever we go, we find we have a cousin.'

'You might claim me as a cousin, also.' Siva gave a hearty laugh as he said this. 'In fact, the whole world consists of your cousins. All are your cousins only. We are all children of the same God.'

The young lady looked up, somewhat taken aback at this remark.

And, the discussion went on: all about the world. And, Siva soon found out that the elder lady was doing some social service through an organisation.

'Please give me your prospectus. You see: many young girls come to me for advice. For instance, yesterday one young girl from Dehra Dun came to me with her mother. She wanted to prosecute her studies in America: to get foreign degrees and then to become a preacher in philosophy. She does not want to marry. She is of a pushing nature, very good in demeanour and of good character. But the conservative mother stands in her way. She is impatient: and in such cases I thought that if there was a good women's organisation it might take charge of the girls, look after them till they are able to stand on their own legs. S.B. can be sent to America and she will be very useful to the country, too. And this organisation should also build an Ashram for ladies. At present there are no good Ashrams exclusively for ladies. This is a great necessity.'

They all sat spell-bound. Siva later asked V. to entertain them with gramophone records.

Then the gentleman was gradually drawn out of himself: when Siva found there was a little space, he thrust his wisdom-sword deep into this officer. The latent desire in this young officer to learn about Yoga was at once roused up by Siva.

'Yoga does not mean you should run away from home. Real renunciation means renunciation of the ego and the desires. We must have spiritually educated men and women in this land. This education of arts and sciences will take you nowhere. You see: I have started a Forest University here. Yoga, Vedanta, Karma, Bhakti and Hatha Yogas are all taught here. But very few people would want to join this University for some considerable time to come: no doubt after a real spiritual awakening in India this would become one of the biggest Universities:

but it is run on a modest scale, because young men now are eager to become I.C.S. officers.

'What is there in this ICS? Only slavery. You should desire to become free. That can only be done through the practice of Yoga. You should try to learn Gita, Upanishads, etc.

'But, Swamiji, we are unable to understand the A.B.C. of these.'

'For your sake only I have written these in short poems, in simple books. The essence of all philosophies is contained in the Gita. What you do not find in the Gita, you cannot find anywhere else. Gita is a universal scripture for all times.

'You should practise Sadhana. Only when you are young can you do all this. After sixty or seventy, when all the senses have worn out, you will want God. When you can hear nothing, you will thirst for Bhagavatha Katha: when the eye-sight has failed, you will want to look at good pictures of God or go to temples. Now is the time. Do not lose this.' And, turning to the elder lady, he said:

'Social service is very good. But unless it has a spiritual background it will not satisfy your soul. Even after hundred years of social service, you will feel dissatisfied. Practice of Yoga will make you perfect: and it will give you the key to making all social service really a divine service.'

Then Siva asked Radha to sing some English songs. Thus was a slight interest created in the trio for Sadhana. Siva at once gave the spiritual diary, presented many books and pamphlets—there they were fully convinced of Siva's doctrines. I was watching the whole process with irrepressible amazement.

As they were leaving (after having been shown round the temple, Guha, etc.) Siva bowed and said: 'Do come again and stay here for some time. I will teach you how to sing all these songs. (He presented a copy of the Inspiring Songs and Kirtans.) I will also teach you Asana, Pranayama, etc.'

Now, they actually prostrated before Siva!

Enrolled!!

All this life-transformation within the short span of a half-hour. Imperceptibly, without making them feel self-conscious. Siva had taken to the very core of their unbelieving heart, the message of divine life, of Sadhana, of the Lord's name and of the glory of selfless service.

DAUGHTER PARTS FROM FATHER

'She has a tender heart. She is very pious also. And, what is more: in spite of her education and her service in the hospital for twenty years, she still preserves her modesty. See: she will not travel alone,' Siva remarked as Dr. Sundari had taken leave of him to return to her place.

As she stood before Siva, tears welling up in her eyes, with a lump in her throat, she presented the spectacle of a daughter leaving her dearly loved father.

13TH OCTOBER, 1948

ROOT TO BRANCH: ALL SAME

It started raining today early in the morning. Everyone thought there would be no morning class. The Ashramite deputed to ring the bell thought there was no use doing so: no one to start the class: no lecturers: nor any students.

Siva was in the Bhajan Hall, all alone.

Sri Araamudan was walking majestically along with a small bucket in his hand: when he noticed Siva, at once he put away the bucket and bowed.

'No class, today?' queried Siva.

'I am just now coming out of the Bhajan Hall, Swamiji. No one has come this morning.'

Quickly, two or three students were collected. They started Kirtan. Some more joined: and the professors also came in.

LAZINESS

Siva had kept silent over the incident, till he came into the office. Quietly he introduced the topic, intending to instruct.

'I looked out of my Kutir at 5 a.m. It was raining. Then, I waited a little. The rain stopped. Then, I went to the Bhajan Hall to find none there. Everyone thought that I could not come. Then when they all saw me, they started gathering. It is all due to inborn laziness.

'Even if one man went there, he should start doing Kirtan. The story is told of Swami Ramakrishnanandaji who founded the Madras Ramakrishna Mission that he would deliver his lectures at the appointed time and place whether there were people to listen to him or not. It is because he had such indomitable will that his Satsankalpa is working even now.'

HEAD AND HEART

On Siva's way back from the Bhajan Hall, S.D. met him and had a few words regarding the attitude towards him of his room-mate, who was disturbing his books and belongings, upsetting his clothes, etc.

'Masterji, you are daily reading Brahma Sutras and Vedanta. If at the same time, you develop a heart of love also, if he be the smallest worthy a pice, he would very carefully clean it and then hand it over to me. We should learn these principles.'

SIVA'S ESTATE

A visitor evinced a keen interest in a bulky volume on Siva's table.

'This is my Address Book,' said Siva, 'in which I note down the addresses of all those who come into the divine life fold: editors of journals, professors, headmasters of schools, European and American Sadhakas, etc. It serves me a lot. Whenever a new book is published, it is this book that helps me to send it to

various persons who will be benefited by it. These twenty-five years I have gone on maintaining this register. This is the fifth volume.

‘Writing addresses of all Sadhakas is to me a greater form of Sadhana than meditation. This is a form of meditation in which not only we, but others, are also benefited. Meditation is necessary: but, along with that, service also is necessary.

‘Sadhakas there are all over the world who correspond with me regularly. To them a book or a pamphlet or a leaflet sent occasionally will act as a tonic. It will rouse them up to greater effort. I am always fond of reading. And, I advocate reading of spiritual books to everyone. Do not think that it is a waste of time. You keep a thermometer to measure the degree of the cave-dweller’s meditation: no doubt, with the help of Asans, Pranayam, etc., they will try to keep up the meditative mood. But there will be a certain amount of Tamas: and the meditation will not be so vigorous as it would be if they occasionally read a good book: this will rouse up sublime thoughts in them. Nobody should renounce books: no one should give up study of religious books. This is very important. You should no doubt read the Gita, Upanishads, etc., daily: but even these alone will not do, though they contain the essence of all Yogas. They will become stale and monotonous. Besides these, you should study all religious literature that you come across. It is this register that gives such spiritual food to thousands of Sadhakas’.

Apart from Siva’s point of view of helping the individual Sadhaks in their onward march to the goal, we can readily see how very useful such an Address Book is to a huge organisation. In fact, the Address Book is the foundation on which the Divine Life Society has been built. It is Siva’s unceasing endeavour to keep track of everyone who has come into contact with him that has enabled his message to spread throughout the world today. In this the Address Book has acted as a proof of Siva’s patient perseverance: this principle he has kept these twenty-five years: and this ‘ceremony’ he has performed day in and day out for quarter of a century. It is his estate which he has looked after with great care.

INSPECTOR-GENERAL

Not only this: everyday before the packets containing the precious treasure of Siva’s books leave the office, Siva would insist on his checking the addressed himself. New-comers to the Ashram not yet acquainted with certain names of persons and towns are apt to make mistakes. A lot of postage is wasted: more than this, time! And, the risk involved in these packets being lost in transit. All these are obviated by Siva himself perusing the packets.

‘All these are necessary for the organisation,’ Siva would say. ‘And, what is more: when I read the address and handle the packets myself (I feel that I am myself personally handling the books to the addressee. I also read the name of the addressee (Lord’s name) thus it becomes a Japa-Sadhana also.’

Siva does not behave like a few other God-realised souls who neglect to give a proper shape to their noble work. He has seen to it that the mission is firmly established in his own life-time thus enabling thousands of aspiring souls to be benefited.

JNANA YAJNA

Even in building this organisation, however, Siva has the only motive of spreading the knowledge of divine life throughout the world. He does not aim at enriching the organisation with massive structures or properties or estates.

Just imagine this for a moment: the amount which the free gifts of books to Sadhakas by Siva far exceeds the sale proceeds during the same period. One who is commercially interested in building the organisation would have seldom resorted to this: he would naturally have considered the money-value of it all. But, to Siva it is just the other way: he takes the Jnana Yajna value of it. Thousands of aspirants are benefited by the books. What does it matter if we lose financially. God will give up. But, Siva's mission is to spread spiritual knowledge as widely as possible.

But the Westerners find in this a novel approach. Writes Janis Blazgis of Germany:

'I am much obliged to you for your suggestive books: 'Yoga in Daily Life' and 'Psychic Influence' which I received on 5th September. Indeed I am full of joy for such a rich present, because for a long time I have been thirsting for spiritual food, for practical guide books. Above all, I am deeply surprised in receiving from your Divine Life Society so useful books without any payment from my side. Here, in Europe, nobody will do so.'

Of course, nobody with a material outlook on life will do so: but Siva has the only aim of satisfying the aspirants' spiritual hunger. These books are to him not valued in rupees, annas and pies but in terms of 'spiritual food' for appeasing the hunger of Sadhaks.

14TH OCTOBER, 1948

ASANS ADVERTISEMENT

There were a few visitors, some of them aged, whom Siva wanted to interest in Yoga Asana practice. Quietly he started a sweet Kirtan: the Mittai Kirtan (in Hindi, Mittai means sweet-meats).

As a hint at the Thars, he started with the Mattai Kirtan, as the sweet-meat vendor on the road would sing:

Paisa Paisa Mitta Hai

Garam Garam Mittai Hai

Thaja Thaja Mittai Hai

(The tune is the same as: 'God is Truth, Govinda')

The song started with Sirasasan: Vishnuji demonstrated the Asan and Siva sang its glory.

King of Asans

Sirasasan

Jawahar roj

Kartha Hai

Gandhiji Liked it much

Then Sarvangasan:

Thyroid gland ko Achcha Hai

Long life dene Vala Hai

Then again he reverted to his Mittai song:

Achcha Achcha Mittai Hai

Helath-Waia Mittai Hai

Dr. J.R. Sood slipped into the group: he has a physique equal to that of Siva himself. Seeing him do Sirasasan and Sarvangasan, others (old and young) joined. In a few minutes everyone present had girded up their loins.

From there the party came down to the terrace opposite the Diamond Jubilee Hall. Padmanabhanji was ready with the still and movie cameras. Miss Annabella ran about here and there finding out her mother's dress for an Asan demonstration. And, Srimathi Liliane first performed alongside Siva himself all the Asans. Then came a group drill, with Dr. Sood in the middle. Siva stood on one side giving the 'commands':

OM

OM

OM

This corresponds to the 1 2 3. At the third OM everyone will be steady in the particular Asan: 'click' —there they are 'immortalised'.

Siva gazed at Dr. Sood's massive frame: a flash, an idea!

'Come on: Doctor Saheb. We shall both wrestle!'

Dr. Sood is a very old child of Siva: and he was au fait with Siva's divine simplicity. The doctor was ready. They stood facing each other: Siva stroked his thighs, in the manner of professional wrestlers and they joined hands. The 'wrestling' continued for quite a few minutes: Siva in a masterly way applied the scissor-cross to Dr. Sood who gave in.

In such a jolly way Siva taught us that every form of exercise had its own benefits provided the motive in every case was the maintenance of perfect health to serve humanity, to do Sadhana for God-realisation.

SIVA! THOU ART RUDRA!

A boy had come all the way from South India just to see Siva. Fasting, the tedium of the journey overwhelmed him and he fainted when his object had been fulfilled.

The world slowly vanished before his eyes: a storm raged in his brain and he fell flat beside the chair on which he was sitting.

Siva who had completely identified himself with the boy was moved out of his chair by the storm: and he was instantly by the side of the boy, fanning him with tender affection.

'Run out immediately,' Vji was told: 'Fetch water at once.' Vji ran out.

'How many times have I told the people here to keep a bucket of water always ready at hand? What sort of people these are? I have to go on telling them: but there is none to hear me here.'

Not when you insult him on his face, not when you commit heinous crimes: not when you wreck his work: not when you scandalise him: not when you throw dung on his face or pelt stones at him: no, not even if you threaten to thrust a dagger into his breast will Siva show the least sign of annoyance or irritability—Service of the Lord in the sick, if you are negligent in this one respect, there the Rudra in Siva manifests himself. We had from Siva's own lips on this occasion, a glimpse of his own early life, his departure from India and arrival in Malaya, when he, too, felt similarly exhausted. I have detailed this in my book, 'Gurudev Sivananda'.

We thought the boy had fits: but Siva was sure that it was nothing but exhaustion. Soon milk was brought, water, etc., and Siva went on fanning the boy with his own hands and the boy recovered soon after, to tell his story.

CALLED

The boy belongs to Pattamadai. When he was on the banks of a canal near Pattamadai, Kanadiankanal, he heard someone whisper into his ears 'Hardwar'. From that time his mind was in a whirl: he did not have conscious control over his actions: and as though driven by an automation, he took away Rs. 70 from the purse of his father who was away: and entrained for Hardwar. At Hardwar he saw the same man whom he had seen in the vision, obstructing the way: but he evaded him and came to Ananda Kutir, the blissful abode of Siva.

Siva had a heart-to-heart talk with him after he had taken his Ganges-bath and refreshed himself with a good meal. The boy had by this time completely recovered, not only from the exhaustion, but from the effect of the hallucination he had. And, he revealed that he had to answer an examination in a couple of months: and so wanted to go back immediately.

But Siva persuaded him to stay at Ananda Kutir for a couple of days more. 'Having come here, do Japa on Ganges-bank for at least a couple of days. All this has been for your good only: you have had Ganges bath, and you will do Japa on the banks of the sacred river, too.'

And, the boy had no money to go back. He asked Siva to loan him Rs. 80: readily Siva agreed (to loan to a stranger) and further assured the boy that his father need repay the amount only if he can do so without upsetting the family budget in any way. This is a subtle way of doing charity: for the middle class people would feign reluctance to accept charity, as they would consider it beneath their dignity to do so: and the best way to help them out of their own self-made cage is to offer it as a loan and assure them that we do not expect repayment.

DESTINY vs. FREE-WILL

Siva was paying a glowing tribute to Sri Swami Sivaswarupji's musical talents, Bhav, powers of entertainment, devotion, etc.

‘Swamiji, if you wish you can become a big Katha Vachak: you can build a big Ashram and work wonders. Start doing Kirtan and Katha: then slowly go about on Kirtan Prachar. So many will be thirsting to hear you: you will begin to have many admirers—and gradually a huge organisation will come to be built around you. You have the Kesari Yoga. If you only make a little effort Kesari Yoga will be yours.’

‘No, no Swamiji,’ replied Sivaswarupji: ‘Kesari Yoga is only for you.’ This has reference to Sivaswarupji’s prediction that Siva alone had Kesari Yoga or the luck of building up huge organisations and work miracles.

‘I am of a different type altogether.’ Sivaswarupji concluded.

‘No, Swamiji, you have made a mistake. There is Kesari Yoga for you also: but you have not utilised it.’

‘It is not so, Swamiji. I do not have the Sahana Shakti (power of endurance) that you have. I cannot tolerate criticism. I do not like to be spoken ill of: nor to be scandalised. I want always to be quiet and I avoid the thick of the battle of life. Physically also, I am always ill.’

I could at once see that Sivaswarupji was a seasoned and well-developed Sadhu. He has correctly analysed and found out the one superhuman, nay superdivine quality in Siva. Superdivine because it is said in the scriptures that even Lord Siva got upset when Rishi Bhrigu insulted Him.

Then Siva explained the secret of his own success.

‘I always keep the body in working order. Maharaji, I am not satisfied with walking even: I run for a few minutes daily. I cannot but practise Asans and Pranayam for at least a few minutes daily. These keep my body fit: in spite of several chronic ailments that reside in the body.’

‘When you compare me to the other Mahants of several other Ashrams, I am nothing before their learning. Compared to their vast erudition, I am like a shop-keeper compared to a Limited Company.’

‘But, it is only God’s Grace that has enabled me to spread the message of divine life so widely today. It is this God’s Grace that has instilled in me the spirit of service. When Sadhus and Sanyasins and devotees of the Lord come to see them, the Mahants will put on saintly airs and remain on their Gaddis: but I will clean their shoes. When a patient is lying sick on the roadside, the Mahant will not even look at him: I will carry him on my shoulders, nurse him and clean his bed-pan. When a needy man comes to my Ashram, I will at once give him some money to satisfy his needs: the Mahant will not even look at him. It is all due to God’s Grace.’

Then Sivaswarupji recollected many past incidents (he has been with Siva since the latter’s advent into Rishikesh.)

‘I remember, Swamiji,’ he said: ‘When you used to serve in Kalikananda Giri’s dispensary and established it as a pucca hospital. I remember how those days you used to sleep on a damp verandah without even a blanket underneath. The Kutir

was a dilapidated one and it was renovated several years later. Who could have endured all that and still served like you?’

And, Siva himself recollected an incident which happened during his Swarg Ashram days.

He had been invited by Maharani Sri Sri Sri Devi to her palace. Siva went there: he sang his inspiring Kirtans and stirred their hearts and infused joy in them all. ‘Then the Maharani was trying to persuade me to stay in the palace itself. I did not like the idea: so I quietly slipped out with just two pieces of cloth. It was winter. I wended my way along the Ganges-canal to Meerut, and thence to Rishikesh. On the way at Parikshitgarh I received a money order from Sri Satyanandaji asking me to take a photograph of myself for being printed in a book. I returned to Meerut. On my way back again I could not reach Parikshitgarh before sunset. It was dark: and I noticed a few small huts near the roadside. It had been raining all the time: and I was simply soaked in the rain. I found a cot lying outside and without much ado I made myself comfortable on it. Soon someone woke me up and sympathetically told me that that place was not suitable for human beings to sleep (it was perhaps a cattle-shed) and offered to put me up in a cottage, filled with straw. I slept there in the night and ran back to Rishikesh the next day.’

16TH OCTOBER, 1948

GO ON WITH IT

Dr. Sood has a genuine difficulty: the very recognition of this difficulty raises him high in the esteem of fellow-Sadhaks, for hundreds of even Sadhakas are oblivious of any such difficulty.

‘Swamiji, this time I want to learn from you the practical method of self-surrender. You have told me several times to surrender myself to the Lord, and to take everything as His will. I do so. But some terrible occurrence shakes the faith: after some time I regain my faith, to lose it again in another calamity. That creates a lot of mental restlessness. Swamiji, kindly let me know the secret which will enable me to get established in Atma-Nivedan.’

‘Practice!’ replied Siva, then kept silent for a considerable time. There was a studied suspense when Dr. Sood and all of us around were deep in thought: ‘Repeat the surrender frequently. Pity yourself when you betray faithlessness. Try to live always in Him, by constant remembrance and Japa. Try to check the impulse to swerve from the faith, before it can arise. Gradually, it will vanish altogether: you will be established in total self-surrender.’

MR. A B C DEE

Sri T.A. Sankara Sastri calls himself T.A.S. Sastry in his letter. This amused Siva, who wrote:

‘Kindly always use your full name: abandon this modern craze to shorten it, dropping out the most essential part. Even if you go on signing your full name a

hundred times, you repeat your own name a hundred times, that will tantamount to Japa. Sankara! T.A.S. Sastri has just the same significance as A.B.C. DEE! Whereas T.A. Sankara Sastri is an elevating name.'

Then Siva said smilingly:

'I told Sri M. Srinivasan so. He was signing himself as M.S. Vasani. I pointed out to him that Srinivisan is the Lord's name, sacred and elevating. And, by cutting it shorter, it loses all its glory. He at once caught up with the idea. But there are even now many V. Iyers and N. Iyers and B. Menons, who have yet to learn the glory of the name that their parents have bestowed upon them.

'Our ancients were very wise. They called the children by Lord's names, so that simply by calling out the children they would have several times repeated the Lord's name. But modern wise men would run away from a most pleasant form of Sadhana, too. What a pity. They want to run away from God.'

21ST OCTOBER, 1948

NO CONDEMNATION

In a letter I had used slightly strong language discouraging a type of postal tuition in Yoga. Siva would not pass it.

'A Vedantin never condemns. Please take out the offending line.'

All indeed is Brahman: nothing deserves our condemnation, because everyone and everything will evolve into the Absolute in course of time.

UNBEARABLE

A very enthusiastic devotee (who has had some connections with some Sanyasins of another mission who had initiated him) came up with a big question: 'Can you, Swamiji, find out through your divine vision, the course of my Jiva in previous births, and tell me in what stage of evolution I am, what forces are obstructing my progress, and what I should do now?'

Siva sat immobile for a few minutes: closed his eyes: opened them: then smiled broadly: the visitor looked up anxiously: but Siva kept quiet again!

The visitor probed again.

'Maharaj, if I tell you of your past births, you will be frightened. So, go on with your Sadhana. Japa, Kirtan, meditation, etc., and try to evolve into Godhead.'

The poor visitor missed Siva's first warning sentence: and went on insisting his question. Siva laughed: and said:

'I cannot relate your past lives, Maharaj. You can seek someone else.

(When the visitor was about to leave....)

But, I can tell you that you can derive no useful purpose by this quest. Apply yourself to Sadhana. You will realise in due course.'

AID TO SEVA

I had gone to Siva's Kutir for a cup of curd. Presently Siva himself was there.

'You are taking some medicine?'

'Yes, Swamiji, and that has to be taken with the curd.'

Someone interrupted and informed Siva that I had not been taking the regular food for a few days past.

'No, no no. That is no good. You will have to do tremendous work. And, that needs a lot of energy. Eat well: do not have too many restrictions.' Then, with his characteristic bewitching smile, he added: 'I do not know how these young men have developed the baby-stomach. You must be able to digest even stones at this age. Look at me. I may have diarrhoea: but I will take some medicine for that and go on eating my normal food. I will never yield to the threats of the doctors. I want to serve: and these restrictions are hindrances to service.'

'These restrictions are necessary in the beginning to acquire control over the palate. Then, when you know how to convert all your energy into Ojas and to utilise it in the proper channels, you can and you should acquire all the energy you can.'

DEAD? THEN, OFFER TO GANGES

Siva was on his morning rounds. An aged Sadhu was sick, and Siva was in front of the Sadhu's Kutir. A companion of this Sadhu informed Siva of the latter's condition and suggested that the patient's Poorvashram relatives should be contacted.

'No, no. He himself would not like that. What has he got to do with those people? He is dead to them. What does it matter if he gives up this body now? We shall consign his body to the Ganges.'

The compassion companion was mystified.

And, yet, Siva himself is taking the greatest interest in the quick recovery of the patient.

Siva quickly relieved the companion's misery.

'After all, the body has to perish one day. We should always look to the welfare of the inner Atman. The Atman is imperishable. Contact with the erstwhile relatives will spoil the purity of the soul. A last-minute attachment might create impressions which might bring about a re-birth.'

So, Siva suggested that the relatives should not come: the soul is saved thereby. If the element-compounded body dies, it can be offered to the Ganges with Maha Mantra Kirtan.

After a few minutes' silence, Siva added: 'Do not worry yourselves. He will be all right soon.'

No wonder: the aged Sadhu is perfectly all right now.

SANKOCHANANDAJI: *His Disease and Siva's Cure*

'OM Namō Narayanaya, Sankochanandaji Maharaj. You are taking your Bhiksha here nowadays?'

'No, Swamiji, I prefer to go to the Kshetra. It gives me a good exercise also.'

Siva at once understood that S. was fighting shy (hence the name Sankochanandaji) of taking his Bhiksha in the Ashram. When S. had left, Siva turned to us.

'See: in S.'s case we have failed. Why does he feel shy to come and sit in the dining hall? Because our behaviour towards him has not been cordial and courteous. He is an old and venerable Sadhu who has led the Sanyas life for the past thirty years. Their very presence in the Ashram adds to its dignity.

'You should not think that everyone should do the same type of work that you do. Sweeping with the broom alone is not Karma Yoga. God has bestowed various faculties on different people. These should be utilised in the best manner in His service. S. can sing beautifully and thrill the audience with his Bhajans and Kirtans. Can you do it, Balan Swamiji?'

'No, Swamiji.'

'At the same time, S. cannot write the thrilling articles and notes that you can. Each one has got a special virtue and qualification. You should, therefore, not have the same yardstick for all.'

'Even the mere fact that he is a good Sanyasin of long standing should be sufficient to inspire us. One man should take tea to his Kutir: another should give him some fruits and milk: a third one should go with food. Then, he will understand that he is loved here by all. Then he will come into our kitchen of his own accord and take food.'

We resolved to act up to this immediately.

YOU SEE GOD IN ME! I SEE GOD IN YOU!

A Bhakta from Nilakanth, who is a scavenger by birth, has come. He is sitting outside the Diamond Jubilee Hall just opposite the window to the left of Siva, through which and through the window of his eyes, he is drinking the divine form of Siva. Quickly Siva glanced at him and at once invited him to come in.

Rapid instructions: fruits and milk were brought. Siva offered them to the Nilakanth devotee, who rolled himself on the dust of Siva's feet, uttering 'Siva, Siva'. He sees his own Ishtam (Mahadeva) in Siva. He prostrates to him again and again: then, he started circumambulating around Siva.

It was a feast to our hungry eyes: this Siva Lila. Quickly Siva too started going round the Nilakanth devotee. One goes on repeating 'Sadasiva', the other 'Radhesyam'. Then they feel at each other's feet. The Nilakanth devotee, himself the very embodiment of humility was greatly embarrassed and astonished. He soon realised that Siva was humility itself.

ANATHARAKSHAKA SIVANANDA

It was nearing 11 a.m. Siva asked Vishnuji to bring some fruits in a bag. After the 11 a.m. closing Kirtan, Siva was leaving the office with the bag. When I inquisitively looked up, he remarked:

‘Almasthanandaji wants to see me and desires that I should be with him and talk to him for at least fifteen minutes a day. I am going to his Kutir now, with these fruits.’

What! Everyone here had declared that A. was out of his senses, perhaps out of advancing age. The natural contempt which old age evokes in hot-blooded youth has thus been aggravated by the odd behaviour of A.: no one cared to attend on the old man. Clad in dirty rags, unkempt hair, unshaven beard, uncared-for, A. was roaming about friendless and helpless. Siva, the All-merciful Siva, who sees his own Self in everyone, rushes to the aid of the old Sadhu. Surely God is Anatharakshaka.

MAN, SUPERMAN, SUPERDIVINE

The evening Satsang is in progress. Little Radha quietly creeps into the Bhajan Hall. She had run up the hillock all alone, even without a lantern in the dark night. The highly cultured millionaire’s daughter would not disturb the quiet atmosphere. Yet, the inner urge is irresistible. She knelt before Siva and made her obeisance. Siva opened his eyes.

‘What is the matter, Radha? Why have you come alone in dark?’

The pent-up emotions burst forth into torrential tears.

‘Mummy is in a dying condition, Swamiji,’ sobbed Radha.

‘What!’ exclaimed Siva, deeply moved. The Human Heart!

Siva sank into a profound silence. The heavens stood still. Stillness. A strange thrill in the atmosphere as the sage flew into the Beyond. The tragedy of a sorrowful premonition which had afflicted every heart, melted away in the radiation of the Yogi’s Bliss. The Superman Siva emerged out of the Man Siva.

‘Come: let us go. Do not cry, Radha. Everything will be all right.’

As they were leaving the Hall, Siva asked Vishnuji to do mental Japa of the Mrityunjaya Mantra.

‘Sridhar Swamiji! Please prepare a dose of the stimulant mixture. Also get the smelling salts ready.’

With baby Radha at his heels Siva rushed down.

As he neared the Diamond Jubilee Hall, Siva called out to me from a distance. This was strange. I jumped out.

‘Yes, Swamiji.’

‘Sridhara Swamiji is in the dispensary. Get the medicines. Quick.’ The swift Siva had, before uttering the last of these few words, gone away towards Ram Ashram where the Shamash family were staying. Such was the speed.

With the smelling salts I ran to Ram Ashram to find Siva sitting by the bedside of Srimathi Liliane.

‘Shampoo her feet with liniment turpentine.’

I applied myself to the task.

Then one by one, the stimulant mixture, grape-juice, etc., arrived and Srimathi Liliane completely recovered.

Mr. Shamash then explained that she had fainted away: and her pulse and heart beating had almost stopped. The children were greatly upset: and in utter distress the little one ran up. And, said Mr. Shamash: ‘She might have passed away, Swamiji. But, five minutes ago, she began to breathe normally. Just before you arrived here, she awoke, as from a sleep.’

A few minutes later, Srimathiji was her normal self once again.

The Superdivine Siva had willed life into her.

25TH OCTOBER, 1948

YOUTH AMONG YOUTH

Swami Visweswaranandaji announced in the office that a small batch of Doon School students had arrived at the Ashram. A few moments later marched in smartly uniformed students of all sizes headed by the imposing personality of the stalwart teacher.

Even a very important and urgent message which was lying on his table could not hold Siva’s attention.

In great joy, Siva greeted the Youth. Here and there several Sevaks rushed to provide the students with tea and light refreshments. After speaking a word individually to each student (and, the freedom which the young students at once take, as though unconsciously, with Siva whom they consider as one of their own!) Siva led them all out of the Diamond Jubilee Hall.

‘Do you know the drill?’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘But do you know the Upanishadic Drill?’

‘What?’: the boys looked at one another and ultimately at the teacher with a querying forehead, as if to ask: ‘Do you?’ The teacher and the taught, all were eager to be taught by the Great Teacher.

The boys were quickly arrayed in two rows.

‘OM TAT SAT’ came the Command from Siva. The boys instinctively stood to attention as Siva himself did so. Now starts the drill.

‘Mathru Devo Bhava’

Palms folded at the chest in salutation.

'Pithru Devo Bhava'

Both hands raised above, vertically.

'Archarya Devo Bhava'

Hands brought down in one swing along with a nice folding at the hip

As in Padahasthasan and Suryanamaskar.

'Atithi Devo Bhava'

Palms folded at the chest in salutation.

Attention.

'OM Tat Sat'

Then Siva explained the significance of this drill. 'This is the Upanishadic Drill. The words of command are great utterances of sages in the Upanishads. 'May your mother be your God. May your father be your God. May your teacher be your God. (Here, the escorting teacher bowed to Siva with a visible sign of gratitude for pleading his case.) May your guest be your God. These Bhavanas are roused up when you repeat these sentences. Slowly your inner nature is divinised.'

Then: 'Bhaitak' exercise.

'SITA': Fists clenched, fore-arms bent at the elbow and raised, then the entire body lowered assuming a 'sitting on the heels' position.

'RAM': Normal standing position, but with clenched fists, ready for another round.

'OM TAT SAT': Attention.

After a few such exercises with 'Sita-Ram' and 'Radhe-Shyam'. Siva led the students in a march, with the marching tune:

'Bhum Bhum Bhum Bhum Mahadeva

Hara Hara Hara Hara Sadasiva

Then Radha (Miss Rose Farida Shamash) did delightful Kirtan and sang and lectured to the students on the essence of Yoga.

Afterwards, Siva let the students demonstrate their class drills. Quickly, a carpet was spread on the terrace opposite the Diamond Jubilee Hall. Here Siva taught the boys Yoga Asanas and explained their usefulness.

Siva then encouraged the boys to sing. One boy sang nice songs. There was then an elocution competition. One of the bright students explained in simple language how spiritual institutions like the Divine Life Society were the crying need of the hour: 'The Divine Life Society propagates the teachings of the greatest living sage, Swami Sivanandaji. His teachings are published in numerous books, pamphlets and leaflets. The magazine also contains his precious writings. The unique feature in these is the very practical message that Swamiji has for

mankind. If all people listened to Swamiji's call, then and then alone will there be peace in the world.'

The students then formed themselves in two groups and requested Siva to suggest a proposition on which they could debate.

The proposition suggested was—*Divine Life is necessary*.

This put to test the boys' creative faculties. It was wonderful how beautifully the boys spoke 'for' and 'against' the proposition.

Standing in the sun, Siva distributed the Prize-books to the boys who took part in these competitions. The boys and the teacher were then served with tea and fruits and given a hearty send-off.

Siva was highly pleased: for within a brief spell of half an hour he had sown the seed of divine life in the hearts of those intelligent boys—the future citizens of this glorious land. He also presented a lot of books to the teacher for the use of the School Library.

27TH OCTOBER, 1948

SIVA SANKALPA

Early in the morning as the University class was in progress, I suddenly felt a writhing pain in the stomach. Except a queer sense of discipline instilled by Siva's own stern example on such occasions, nothing could have prevented me from stretching myself in the nearest corner.

When the class broke up, it was yet dark: and Siva could not have even marked the slight trace of this inner feeling which might have escaped the control. I quietly slid into a corner behind the Bhajan Hall pillar, to escape notice.

'Vishnuji, do you know Nauli?'

'Yes, Swamiji.'

'What about Rajagopal?'

'I know, Swamiji: but I cannot do that,' replied Rajagopalji.

Siva gave a hearty laugh. 'Then what knowledge is that?'

What a grand truth in it! We know theoretically and intellectually hundreds of things: but never realise that we have to do them if we wish to KNOW them really.

From behind the pillar I was peeping at Siva's majestic form rocking with laughter.

'Can you do Nauli?' Siva's gaze turned towards me.

'Yes, Swamiji.'

'Oh Vji, come: let us see how you do it.'

Vishnuji demonstrated. Then came my turn.

Inwardly I reflected: 'With this pain?' Yet, I could not bring myself to ignore the word or to bleat my inability. When I actually threw away the shirt and started to demonstrate Nauli, I found that my mind had been effectively taken away from the pain to the performance of Nauli. 'Very good,' was Siva's comment. Very good, thought I, too: for the pain which was till then progressively becoming worse disappeared mysteriously.

I am not a tenth as astonished as one might be: for this has nowadays become a natural thing in Ananda Kutir. Whatever Siva thinks or says comes to pass almost instantly.

Sankaranandaji suddenly became ill. In the evening when I was talking to Siva, I asked: 'How is it that he suddenly became so sick, Swamiji?'

'It is all right. He will be all right soon,' Siva blessed.

We could hardly believe our ears: for commonsense would have passed a counter-verdict. What do we know of Divine-Supersense? Siva left the office to go for a walk. I had to go up the hillock: on my way I met Sankaranandaji wrapped in a blanket almost completely well. At night he was able to resume his duties.

ONE SURVIVOR IN A SCORE

A couple of days ago when I visited Hardwar, Sri Gopal Dasji of Lahore, now in Dehra Dun, related to me the following account:

'Sri Vimlaji was one of the twenty people in her Mohalla at Jammu, who were all affected by the epidemic of cholera. Of the twenty, only Sri Vimlaji survived. The death-roll was terrible. Vimlaji's case was also very serious. But she somehow survived miraculously. I should say that it is all due to Swami Sivanandaji's blessings.' Vimlaji has great faith in Siva.

30TH OCTOBER, 1948

WHAT A BEAUTY

A delightful panoramic view of humanity.

One family of seven members of graded years—from a middle-aged lady of perhaps 45 to an urchin of perhaps five years: but all of them 'big' and literally so. Beautifully attired (both sexes) with all the items of make-up that go to the decoration of modern humanity in the cities, the ladies shone in their own glory: but the 'largeness' of their features was frightful.

After they left, Siva said, with a broad smile adorning his face:

'What is this beauty? If the features are not in proper proportion, if a limb or a muscle is overgrown, everything looks ugly. Even the artificial make-up only makes the figure more ugly. I think the Rakshasis of Ravana's court should have looked like this. What is there in this physical beauty? The Atman is sexless and therefore it is the Beauty of beauties. All else is ugly.'



NOVEMBER, 1948

1ST NOVEMBER, 1948

JADA SADHANA

The morning University class was over. Sridhara Swamiji's most illuminating lecture on the vital need of humility and egolessness in Sadhana and of increasing the Satwa-content in the Sadhaka had left the students athinking.

'Don't you feel, Sridhara Swamiji,' began Siva with a mischievous smile, 'that besides being of invaluable help to many others, these lectures help to clarify your own ideas and your own evolution?'

'Yes, Swamiji,' admitted Sridhara Swamiji.

'Previously, you were saying that you would not lecture until you attained God-realisation!' said Siva with a broad smile. Sridhara Swamiji had no reply.

'See of what great service your talks are now. Your talks for half an hour and Krishnanandaji's talk for half an hour—this one hour benefits how many people! Besides, your own thoughts are clarified. And, while you prepared for the talks you intensely dwell on the topics. At the same time, it provides a good opportunity for you yourself to introspect, too!

'This persistent raising up of thought-forms is more helpful in Sadhana than even the mere repetition of a Mantra. You go on repeating 'Om Namah Shivaya'. It is, no doubt, very good: but soon the mind lapses into a Jada State. It becomes a Jada Sadhana. Whereas, if you keep the thought-forms before you there is a positive awareness. You should keep a couple of Slokas from the Gita and meditate on the significance and import. What the Lord teaches, how one should put the teachings into practice, what are the obstacles, how to remove them, etc., etc. This way you can have a very good meditation. In the beginning and at the conclusion of this meditation, you can have Japan and Kirtan. That will then become a wonderful Sadhana, unrivalled in its glory.

'No change is necessary: there is no need to go away from here. This itself is the best place for this kind of Sadhana. Some work is necessary: along with it meditation also. Then it becomes dynamic Sadhana.'

LOKAH TAT ANUVARTHATHE

Mohanji came in with a small bunch of neem-leaves. Each one of us took a few leaves from it. As the bunch approached each of us, Siva smiled and asked: 'You also belong to the neem-leaf eating society?'

'In Swarg Ashram when I was there I started this neem-leaf eating. And, soon I found that all the Sadhus had commenced this!'

(Surely, surely: that is what Lord Krishna said in the Gita: and that is the motive He revealed, which kept Him active.)

'Neem leaf is very good. It purifies the blood. It is very good antiseptic. It strengthens the teeth also. But do not take too much. It will heat your system. Just two or three leaves will do.'

ACHINTYA SHAKTI

Swami Vijnananandaji of Poornananda Ashram, Rishikesh, came with a tonga to take Siva to his Ashram. Today they are celebrating the Samadhi Anniversary of Swami Poornanandaji, and Swami Vijnananandaji wanted Siva to preside over the function.

On the way Siva made kind and loving enquiries about the Swamiji, his Gurubhais and the Ashram. He gleaned several facts relating to the Ashram activities and also the work of Swami Poornanandaji. Then the topic turned to P's writings: and Siva enquired if a biography of P. was available.

'Swamiji,' pleaded Vji, 'there are several manuscripts of Poornanandaji still unpublished. I have also written a biography of Swamiji's life. Except for a few small pamphlets we have not been able to print any major works. It is so very difficult. And, even if we print them, we do not know how to sell them. What are we to do, Swamiji? I do not know.'

'Have you seen our publication League?'

'Yes, Swamiji. But there is no comparison between us. You have infinite power. There is nothing that you cannot do by mere Sankalpa.'

'Poornanandaji himself should have done some work in this respect. He should himself have tried to publish some of his major works. Once a field is created, it is very easy. Even now, just collect his disciples together and find out ways and means of publishing the books. It will become very easy.'

We arrived at the Ashram.

ONE AMONG ALL

When we entered the meeting Pandal, Siva quietly sat behind the assembled Sadhus on the carpet. Requests and persuasion were of no avail: he had actually to be lifted to the chair. He went on saying: 'This is enough. You yourself take the chair. Or, let the secretary Saheb (of the Notified Area Committee) occupy the chair.'

VIVIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT

The wife of Sri Sukdevji (Vice-Principal of Gurukul-Kangri) sang two delightful prayer-songs.

Sri Swami Vijnananandaji requested Siva to speak and eulogised Siva as the Light of the Himalayas that shed its cosmic lustre throughout the universe.

Siva promised to treat the audience with nice kitchadie (a mixture of English, Sanskrit and Hindi) speech. He began his talk with an OM chant (rather an OM roar). The audience's voice was at first feeble. 'This is like Ekadashi! Khub Prem se Karo,' said Siva. Still, there was not any appreciable improvement. 'How many tons of roties have you consumed! And, yet, when it comes to singing the Lord's

names, how feeble the voice becomes. This is like 'murda' Kirtan.' This produced some change: but not to Siva's satisfaction. Siva is the master of graded tricks to arouse in anyone love for Kirtan. He turned to the ladies: 'People generally call you Abalas (weaker sex), but your Kirtan is greatly better than men's!' Again he roared OM: the miracle had been performed. The entire audience followed suit and the sky was rent with OM chanting.

THE PERORATION

Siva spoke of Swami Poornanandaji's qualities. 'He was a beautiful combination of Vairagya, Karma, Bhakti and Brahma Jnana. He embodied in himself the Yoga of Synthesis. He was not like some Vairagies who run away from work. Nor was he like some Sanyasin-social-workers who have no trace of Vairagya in them.

'His writings have a special charm. They have come out of his heart. They are the outpourings of his heart, that have sprouted forth from a direct realisation of the Absolute.'

'He was a perfect master and a strict disciplinarian. How nicely has he trained his disciples! Every one of his disciples is a standing proof of his glory. Swami Jnananandaji, Swami Vijnananandaji, Swami Achyutanandaji, Swami Mahanandaji—all are fortunate to have been trained by Swami Poornanandaji. They are all hard workers in the Ahyatmic field. They are full of divine virtues.

'Poornanandaji's writings are precious and voluminous. So are his inspiring letters. They should all be printed now. It is easily possible if all his disciples unite and work together. That was the secret of success in the case of Swami Vivekananda, Swami Dayananda and others. The eleven apostles joined together and spread Ramakrishna's Mission. Swami Poornanandaji also belongs to the class of lions of Vedanta, like Vivekananda and Ram Tirtha, etc. His disciples should now set to work spreading his mission.

'Unity is strength. The unique position that the Ramakrishna Mission has achieved now is all due to the combined effort of all the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. There is no institution like the Ramakrishna Mission: just look at the number of Branches all over the world it has got. How wonderfully has the mission grown. The secret of their success is united effort.'

Then he dwelt on the need for spiritual institutions. 'Spiritual institutions are the dire need of the hour today,' he declared.

Again he sang some Kirtans. From Saguna he turned to Nirguna also. 'The sweet names of the Lord will give you Moksha, peace and bliss. Now let us sing some Nirguna Kirtans also.'

'Jagat Kalpana; Jiva Kalpana; all is Kalpana; Deergha Swapna.'

The speech, interspersed with appropriate quotations from the Gita and the Upanishads was thrilling, inspiring and at once practical. Siva concluded with the benediction: 'May you all be happy. May God bless you with health, long life, peace, prosperity and Kaivalya.'

He was followed by a few others.

Swami Devanandaji commenced his lecture with words of profound reverence and admiration for Siva. 'From his Kutir on the bank of the Ganges, Swamiji has been able to influence the entire world; even as the sun from his abode in the horizon is able to shed his lustre to illumine the entire universe.'

Swami Vijnananandaji then entertained us to tea. Siva presented several of his books to the Ashram library and also distributed pamphlets and leaflets to the assembled devotees. As we were about to leave, Siva quickly walked inside and quietly slipped into the pockets of one of the Ashram authorities ten rupees as a love-offering.

The Secretary of the Notified Area Committee expressed his gratitude to Siva for the trouble the latter had taken to attend the function. 'I deem myself greatly blessed to have had Your Satsang and to have listened to your thrilling discourse.'

'Why? There was Punditji's lecture—it was truly a learned discourse, wasn't it?'

'But, Swamiji, no one can approach your holiness in thrilling oratory, both inspiring and practical.'

We started on foot. For, we had disposed of the tonga in which we went. Siva had told the tonga-walah: 'You can go. I will go when I like. You need not wait.' A Sanyasin or a Vedantin never likes to bind himself. This is a great lesson. For, ordinarily, people will plan, prepare, promise all sorts of things: and get worried.

From the bazaar we took another tonga and returned to the Ashram.

SILENT ELOQUENCE

Some construction questions were being discussed.

'Besides these massive structures that we are building, there should be several Virakta Kutirs away from the crowded places. We should choose a place somewhere in the jungles and construct small Kutirs, modest, simple, neat—with an eye on their utility. Nothing except a waterpot, a few books, a blanket, should be taken there. Those (like Krishnanandaji) who want to meditate for a while, away from the places of intense activity, should retire to these Kutirs. Food should be sent to them: they should have no anxiety on this score. Here they can practise intense meditation for some days, till they themselves feel inclined to work again.

'Then there should be a Dhyana Hall. This also should be a little away from the crowd. It should be perfectly clean and unfurnished, except for a couple of pictures, etc.; and absolute silence should prevail inside and outside the Hall. Anyone should go inside the Hall and sit in meditation.

'Then, similar to the present Bhajan Hall there should be another Bhajan Hall where devotees should go on singing Bhajans. Harmoniums, Tanpuras, Tablas, etc. will be kept there. If this is somewhere near the temple, the Yatris and visitors also will get inspiration from the Bhajan.

'This way, the entire locality will illustrate the various Yogas and the various stages of evolution. Those who come should, without a spoken word, be taught Yoga. They should be inspired by the mere sight of these buildings.

'We have already got the temple, the Akhanda Kirtan and the Yajnasala. All the Brahmacharis here should be made to offer Ahuties daily according to the Vedic rules. There should also be daily Havans of Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra, Maha Mantra etc.

'All these things will have a tremendous effect in the long run.'

Sri R. Thyagarajan of Murtaspur who was listening to these outpourings of Siva's soul at once placed at Siva's lotus feet Rs. 10 as an advance for the construction of one Virakta Kutir.

Siva's Will works out almost immediately.

2ND NOVEMBER, 1948

Siva was in the dispensary. I went there and informed him that Sri Pt. Suka Devji, Vice-Principal of the Gurukul-Kangri, one of the participants in yesterday's function at the Poornanand Ashram, had come to the Ashram with his wife and another.

'Has he? Good. I wanted to talk to him yesterday itself. And, also I thought if you had brought more copies of the magazine and some more books with you, I could have given him. It is good that he has himself come.' So saying, Siva came to the office and greeted the visitors.

Up sprang several Sadhaks from the office and returned within a few minutes with fruits, almonds, gramophone records, books, leaflets, etc. Sri Suk Devji was simply overwhelmed by Siva's love.

After a few words of greeting, Mrs. Suk Devji requested Siva to visit Kankhal and the Gurukul University.

'Last year I visited Gurukul.'

'Is it so, Swamiji?'

'And, after going through the buildings, I got up on the lecture platform and did many queer things. I delivered a lecture to a no-audience.' (Little do we mortals realise who your audience were!)

After a few minutes of gramophone records playing, Siva requested Sri Suk Devji and party to be shown round the Ashram.

'There is also a Yoga Museum here,' said Siva: 'I have made an attempt at picturing the principles of Yoga. Then there is the Yajnasala: something like the Yajnasala in Gurukul. We are also holding classes in the morning where

there are short talks on Karma, Bhakti, Vedant, Yoga, etc. It is all on a humble and simple scale.'

Just look at Siva's humility. If the criterion of a University's greatness is its vital need and its service in the uplift of Man, no other University in the whole world can approach the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University.³ It has got no parallels in the world. A founder of any other University (even though much inferior to this Forest University) will blow his own trumpet till the hearers become deaf and are thus incapacitated to listen to the simple call of the Supreme.

After going round the Ashram the visitors left for Hardwar.

7TH NOVEMBER, 1948

ALL THE WAY FROM ENGLAND

All the way from England came Dr. P.N. Rampal accompanied by Sri Krishnanlal Sharma (District Forest Officer) and Mrs. Sharma, who arrived a little while after Siva had left the office. Time at their disposal was limited: and they had to leave for Delhi the same evening. So, Sharmaji sent in a note to Siva. Within a couple of minutes, came Siva. Visibly moved and perceptibly surprised, the visitors prostrated at his feet. He took them to the office. In loving conversation, Dr. Rampal was immersed. Siva presented them with several books. At a mere wink from Siva several Sadhaks till then sitting quietly in their seats sprang forth, eager to serve. Dr. Rampal evinced keen interest in Siva's books. He bought a number of them.

If they were late for Siva's Darshan, they were rather too late for the noon meal. Siva took the visitors to the kitchen himself. There he mingled with the Ashramites and ensured that the visitors were comfortably seated and the giant worker Swami Visweswaranandaji at once busied himself with the preparation of food for the visitors. Then and then alone would Siva leave the dining hall. He had not taken his food till then. After food Dr. Rampal sat enraptured as the gramophone records sang delightful songs for him. He then visited the Mandir, etc. and left. His gratitude was profound: he promised to convert his office in England into a virtual D.L.S. Branch. Such is the miracle of Siva's love.

8TH NOVEMBER, 1948

DAY OF BLISS

Siva-Anandam! That is today!

³ The 'University' was converted into 'Academy' in 1958.

Earliest to arrive at the Siva Mandir was Siva himself. Today had been chosen as the auspicious day for the installation of the Kalasha in connection with the Ati Rudra Yajna.

We took bath and carried water to the Majdir, with the Maha Mantra Kirtan.

We found in the temple Siva himself sitting in front of Siva, immersed in Siva Anandam. I laid my head at His lotus feet.

The Kalasha was blessed for Siva quenched its thirst with Ganges water offered with his own holy hands.

The Puja started: and came to a close at 11 a.m.

Swami Visweswaranandaji had made elaborate arrangements to celebrate the monthly birthdate of Siva. Vishnuji had delightfully decorated the dining hall. We stepped in, to distribute Siva's Prasad to the inmates who, with Siva himself at their head, chanted the 15th Chapter of the Gita and the Maha Mantra. It was really a day of great festivity.

When the dinner was almost over, Siva sang a beautiful hymn. Others, too, followed. All had finished their meals. Some had left some vegetables, etc. on their leaf. Siva's eyes fell on these.

'Visweswaranandaji, please see that nothing is wasted. All that remains on the leaves should be collected and given to the cattle. Also, please send for the health officers (this is the only name by which Siva can refer to the scavenger) and feed them nicely.'

There is a wonderful philosophy and a lesson in psychology in this. Siva does not chastise those who have not consumed what they took nor those who served, nor does he instruct the management to reduce the quantity prepared—but goes straight to the core of the problem. 'There is no waste: everything has its own use, in the cosmic sense. The animals and the fish in the Ganga get their share.' What a great heart.

10TH NOVEMBER, 1948

I.C.S. AT ANANDA KUTIR

The morning 'closure' Kirtan was in progress at the office. Just after it had begun, Sri S.Y. Krishnaswami, I.C.S., Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, and Mrs. Krishnaswami quietly and modestly entered the Hall and sat down just behind Siva who was himself sitting on the floor.

Srimathi Kamala introduced herself to Siva. Siva presented them with some books and was talking to them. Then Siva requested them to take their food at the Ashram.

'Swamiji, to have your Darshan is a greater blessing than food. Your Darshan alone was what we sought to have here, and that is what we need more than food,' said Sri Krishnaswami.

'Just as Sri Vishwanath Prasad....(turning to us)....Please arrange for everything and take them round the Ashram, too.'

They informed Siva that they were proceeding from the Ashram to visit Mira Behn. Siva eulogised Mira Behn's work and asked me to take some books from him for the Pashulok Library, and a letter from Siva, and escort the couple to Pashulok Ashram.

While I was playing Siva's records, Srimathi Kamala sat enraptured listening to the sweet melody. She said that she had already got some of the records.

PERSONAL FREEDOM

At night Siva came into the office on his way to the Bhajan Hall. There was a message which was waiting for him: he desired to peruse it.

'Omkarswamiji, have you got my spectacles here?'

'Yes, Swamiji,' sprang up Swami Omkaranandaji and brought them.

'I cannot depend upon one pair of spectacles. See now: I have left the usual pair in the Kutir. If this had not been kept here, then this work would have suffered. When I used to go out of Rishikesh also I used to take three pairs of spectacles. If one broke the others will at once come into service. There will be no loss of time and there will be no impediment to the service.

'Even in the case of the purse, I observe the same rule. Whenever we travelled I should divide the money between those who accompany me. Swarupanandaji will have a purse: and Atmanandaji, too. If one purse is lost the other will be saved.

'This has another advantage, too. Those who travel with me do not have to ask me for money to purchase whatever they might like. Some people are shy: they may not like to ask for money. But I take care that they get the fullest freedom to eat what they like or to purchase what they like, and so I give them a purse.'

That is Siva's characteristic.

Few others are like that. Mahants or officers, when they take their attendants with them would not, on the other hand, like that the latter should share their conveniences and privileges. They would have their toast and tea: 'but let that fellow eat channa' would be their mentality.

11TH NOVEMBER, 1948

WAY TO WORLD PEACE

Sri Sreenivasadas Poddar had come to the Ashram just when we had finished the noon meal. Siva had also gone to his Kutir a few minutes back. Sri Poddar wanted to see Siva. An imposing personality.

I went to Siva's Kutir with a chit from Sri Poddar. After a strenuous morning (it should be remembered that Siva attends the morning class punctually at 5 a.m., and from that moment he is busily engaged in multifarious activities) Siva was reclining, gazing at the Himalayas, perhaps in silent contemplation of its majesty.

I showed him the chit and asked: 'May I bring him here, Swamiji?' for I felt that even we would have felt irksome to be called out like that.

Siva, on the contrary, at once jumped out and buttoned his alphi: 'I am coming, myself.'

'Sreenivasdas Poddar? Yes, yes: I have seen him before. He is a rich Marwari, full of ideas. He will always keep himself in contact with all the Mahatmas and always engage himself in schemes and plans. He also printed the Sankirtan pamphlet long ago.'

We reached the spot near the Viswanath Ghat where the Poddar-party were standing. After the usual greetings and Pranams, Sri Poddar introduced to Siva, his family.

'This boy, Swamiji, has been thoroughly influenced by your books. After reading your books, he has given up many evil habits like smoking. His life has been revolutionised. Your books have a tremendous influence over people.'

Then the topic turned to his own scheme. 'Swamiji, what is the way to ensure peace in the world? I have a plan, Swamiji. With your suggestions and help I hope to do a lot.'

'Where is the world, Maharaj? It is all a dream. Why do you worry yourself about a thing that does not exist?'

Sri Poddar was mildly surprised to receive this Vedantic reply. Siva continued: 'If we reform ourselves individually, the entire world will be reformed. Therefore, do Japa, Kirtan, Dhyan, and practise Yoga. Everything will be all right.'

12TH NOVEMBER, 1948

WORKING KNOWLEDGE OF ENGLISH

'Sivapremji, does Sri....know English? Shall I send him some English books?' queried Siva, referring to a big business magnate.

'Yes, Swamiji, he has a working knowledge of English. He may be able to read Swamiji's books.'

'What is working knowledge? Two men going Madras, tiffin ready Mayavaram?'

'Yes Swamiji, something like that.'

'There is a beautiful story. Do you know? I shall tell you. A station master of a small station in South India knew very little English: he had what you call a 'working knowledge'. One day an Inspector took him to task for delaying a train. The poor station master explained: 'One pointsman running that side, Sir; the other pointsman running this side, Sir: I-eyyyyyy ringing the bell, Sir.'

We burst into laughter. Sivapremji joined in it: for he has during his four-years' stay at Ananda Kutir picked up more than a working knowledge of Tamil, at least enough to understand the joke. The Tamil equivalent for 'I myself' is 'Naaney'.

And, this station master had taken the English pronoun and added the Tamil emphasis (the suffix of eyy). That is 'working knowledge'.

'Anyhow,' continued Siva, 'I shall send him some books. If he does not understand them, he will pass them on to his friends. That is enough for me.'

That is Jnana Yajna.

CHARITY BY FORCE

'Padmanabhaswamiji, please write to Durga Saranji for a good parcel of Khaja. Tell him that our family is very big and that he should send a good lot.'

I wondered within myself: 'Why should Swamiji ask for this sweetmeat?' Siva had 'heard' the thought.

'This is one kind of charity for them. And, this is my method of making people do charity. Even if they voluntarily do not give, I would take them by the ear and make them do some charity. Do you think we long for this sweetmeat? All sweetmeats are the same: they are all permutations and combinations of sugar, dhal and ghee. But this is one of the methods of enabling Durga Saranji to give, to evolve and to purify his heart.

And, I remember another occasion. It was about a year ago. Srimathi Kailasavathy of Lahore and her family were all here. Her sister, Srimathi Vimala one day came into the office with her son. This child had fever.

'Swamiji, please see what the matter is with this boy. He gives me a lot of trouble.' The tone was extraordinarily familiar. I was amazed; I sat up.

'Take him to the dispensary. Give him some medicine,' said Siva as though unconcernedly.

'No, Swamiji, please, you yourself examine and give some medicine.'

'My medicine is only this Prasad.' Siva handed her some Bhasma and Kumkum, perhaps to test her faith. Or, as a lesson to us?

'I am quite content, Swamiji: I know he will be all right.'

Then Siva examined the child medically and gave a prescription. While the mixture was being prepared

'Ohji, what about giving me a glass of your famous Dogra-tea?'

'Yes, Swamiji, I shall just now prepare and give you. Shall I go?'

'Not only for me. My family is very big. Don't you know? You will have to supply for all.'

At once she counted the number of Ashramites present in the office: 'Yes, Swamiji, I shall prepared tea for all of them.'

By this time, the medicine had also come: after a Pranam to Siva, she left.

Within an hour the tea arrived. After taking just a mouthful, Siva handed the rest of his glass to me. And, for all in the office there was tea. During the course of this

tea-party, Siva smiled and, understanding the cause of my silent wonder-ment, said: 'Such is a pure heart.'

That is the secret of such intimate familiarity with the Master.

The effect of this compulsory charity was miraculous and immediate: the child was completely all right within a few hours.

13TH NOVEMBER, 1948

PLANNED DAYS AGO

Radha's Birthday. (Radha is Srimathi Liliane Shamash's second daughter.)

With Siva the Birthday dawned several days ago. Saswatji had been sent to Dehra Dun to purchase presentation articles, and he has returned with them. Flowers were asked to be preserved in the Garden two days ago. Fruits were purchased yesterday: so were sweets for distribution.

Siva was the first on the scene. 'Vishnuswamiji, bring a few blankets. Spread them on the cement benches. Aravamudan, bring a carpet and spread it here. Come, ring the bell. Venkatesanandaji, collect everyone here. Let us do Kirtan now.' And Siva himself started with OM chanting, Jaya Ganesha and Maha Mantra Kirtan.

Siva himself brought the Shamash family and garlanded them. After a few minutes Kirtan, Siva announced:

'OM. Today is Sri Radha's birthday. Radha is the second daughter of Srimathi Liliane. She is nine years old today: this is her tenth birthday. Let us all do Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra Japa. This is a very great Mantra. It removes all accidents. It bestows long life on man. It is a prayer to the Almighty, Omnipotent Lord. It is a prayer to the Lord with Three Eyes, Who has the Eye of Intuition. Sugandhim is One who is the Abode of Auspiciousness, of Omnipotence, of Omniscience, of Power, Peace, Joy, Knowledge and Bliss. Pushtivardhanam—one who bestows vigour, health and long life on us. And, we pray that our bondage may be rent asunder, that accidents may drop away from us like the ripe cucumber fruit drops off the creeper. May we become immortal. That is the prayer. This prayer bestows both Bhukti and Mukti on us. Both are necessary. Without a certain amount of material wealth and prosperity, one cannot live and aspire to realise God. Mukti is the final goal of all. Lord Siva will be easily pleased and will bestow on us all Bhukti and Sayujya Mukti.

Siva then asked Radha to sing the Maha Mantra: Annapurna to sing 'Jaya Narayana': and their mother Srimathi Liliane to sing 'Raja Rama Rama Ram'. After this....

He himself sang the delightful Yuktiful songs where he combined wonderfully the names of the Shamash family members and divine names.

Sita Ram Sita Ram Sita Ram Bol

Radhe Shyam Radhe Shyam Radhe Shyam Bol

Radha Radha Radha Radha Jai Radha

Radha Rosie Radha Rosie Jaya Rosie

Jai Annapurna Annapurna Annapurna

Jai Sri Lakshmi Jai Sri Lakshmi Jai Sri Lakshmi

Jai Liliane Lakshmi Liliane Lakshmi Liliane Lakshmi

Shyama Shyama Shyama Shyama Shyama Shyama

Shamash Shamash Shamash Shamash Shamash Shamash

A smile of admiration played on everyone's lips.

'Today is Radha's birthday. And, on that account we have had an opportunity of singing the Lord's names. We have also performed Mrityunjaya Mantra Japa. It is very good for the child, for the entire family, for all of us who have assembled. May Srimathi Liliane, Annapurna and Radha live long. May God bless them, and all of us with health, long life, peace, prosperity and Kaivalya Moksha.'

ABIDING INTEREST

Brijlalji Kapoor of Bareilly has come: and he introduced his son to Siva. During the course of the conversation, Siva understood that B. was eager to retire from Vyavaharic life and spend his time in silent meditation in the Himalayas. Siva told the son:

'It is now your duty to fulfil your father's wishes. He has carried his burden long enough. You must now relieve him. Both yourself and your sister are earning. You must now take on the family responsibilities yourselves and enable your father to fulfil his spiritual ambitions.

Such is Siva's love for the Lord's devotees. He must see to it that they are well provided for their Sadhana. It is a great service to thirsting aspirants.

AN OLD ADEPT HATHA YOGI

Sri Brahmji and two of his devotees came into the office. At once Siva recognised Brahmji.

'Om Namō Narayanaya, Brahmji Maharaj. Anand?'

As the enquiries were going on Vishnuji brought some fruits and laddus.

Then Siva humorously reminded Brahmji of his Yogic Kriyas.

'You remember you used to drink air and pass it through the anus?' And then also told us that Brahmji used to live on top of trees at night while at Swarg Ashram, sleeping on the trees themselves.

'He used to observe Mowna also. He would run hither and thither shouting 'Brahm, Brahm'. He now lives in Gangotri, one of the leading figures there. He can live on air alone for a long time.'

At this stage Brahmji himself demonstrated the Kriya (Vayu Bhakshana).

Introducing Vishnuji, Siva said: 'This is our Yogiraj, Swamiji Maharaj.' Then Vji demonstrated a few Asans. The adept Hatha Yogi Brahmji demonstrated several Asans.

WHAT ABOUT SWAMIJI MAHARAJ?

An old lady from South India arrived at the Ashram and was directed to the office. Siva was working there, and was also talking to the aspirants in the office on the glory of the name, Bhakti, etc. He was returning to his Kutir, when the lady asked an Ashramite: 'What about Sri Swamiji Maharaj? Where can I see him?' She was told that she has all along been in his presence only. She ran forward and apologetically fell at Siva's feet and prayed for his blessings. Siva's winter clothing—overcoat, etc., deceived her.

AMBASSADOR TO GENEVA

Sri Lakshmi Narayan Chetlur has been in the Ashram for the past few days. He has been away from India for a considerable number of years: and is now practising as a lawyer in Geneva. He has been a student of Yoga, too: and has taken advantage of his visit to India to spend a few days in Ananda Kutir also. Siva had asked Vishnuji to teach Sri Chetlur all Asans and Pranayams. Siva himself has been giving him short talks on spiritual topics, how to organise spiritual associations, the daily routine, personal Sadhana, collective Sadhana, etc. He has given Sri Chetlur several books, magazine copies, leaflets: Chetlur is completely overwhelmed by Siva's love. On the eve of his departure, Siva gave him several of the gramophone records.

Your Indian Association (of which Sri Chetlur is the Secretary) should have as its basis, the spiritual culture of India. Divine Life is the common basis of all organisations: otherwise no organisation can thrive. God is the root of the entire humanity. All institutions should be based on God if they are to survive.' Then Siva gave him several instructions as to how to reorientate the outlook of the Europeans and turn them to God. 'Your Indian Association should convert itself into a Yoga School. I shall also send you regularly magazine, books, Prasad, etc. Now you can go back and face huge audiences boldly and talk to them on Yoga, Vedanta, Patanjali Yoga Sutras, etc.' Sri Chetlur has been regular in attending the morning classes and has thus acquired a fair knowledge of Yoga.

JEAN HERBERT

Jean Herbert has sent a complimentary copy of his French translation of Swami Vivekananda's Jnana Yoga.

'What wonderful work Jean Herbert is doing. He is really a Sanyasi,' said Siva. 'See: he is the chief interpreter of the U.N.O. Then he is writing several articles to philosophical journals. He translates good Indian books into French. He looks after their publication. Marvellous work.

'Sanyasins also should be like this only. Mere cave-dwelling will only lead to their deterioration. Sanyas-life should always mean active life. Do not mistake Sanyas for lifelessness: lifelessness is the property of a dead body.

'What is there in simply closing the eyes? You should actively see God everywhere. Brahman is all this. Active renunciation of egoism and expansion of consciousness alone can bring about final release from bondage.'

MATHUR'S GITA

Sri Ram Mohan Mathur of Allahabad had a small pocket-book. When he has had Siva's Darshan and when he went to the Diamond Jubilee Hall, he sat there and pulled out his pocket-book and started reading. That constant companion is 'Pearls of Wisdom' of Siva. He told Siva when the latter enquired what it was that he was reading:

'Swamiji, it is your book, 'Pearls of Wisdom'. It is a marvellous little work. I always carry it with me. Daily I have to travel in a shuttle service to Allahabad. I always read this book during this time. Whenever I have a few minutes' leisure, I read a few pages. It is such a wonderful book which contains stirring ideas which at once give me peace, joy and mental health. It is really my Gita.'

GOD IS FULLNESS

'Unless you make an effort, you will remain the same Aravamudan even after ten years!' Sri Aravamudan was electrified as Siva said this. 'God has given you so many faculties. You have got a very good taste for Tamil literature. You should develop that. You must be able to prepare roties also. You should know proof-correction, and printing technique. And accounts, too. You should be able to deliver lectures: conduct classes! All-round development is Yoga. You should develop all your faculties. One-sided development will soon make for dullness: all-round development will make for fullness. You will never feel tired. There will be ample opportunities of alternating your work whenever you feel the need for change. That is the secret of success.

'And, your root should all the time be in divine life. You may learn Sanskrit from some teacher: you may learn Hatha Yogic Kriyas from some Yogi: accountancy from some masters: but you should always say 'OM Namō Narayanaya' to all these after finishing your work and devote yourself heart and soul to divine life work. There is nothing all of you together cannot achieve. Each one of you should be able to turn out five men's work. There is tremendous power within you. You should take care of your health, too. Eat good food: practice Asans, Pranayam, Suryanamaskar: run a few furlongs. Then, practise Kirtan, Dhyān: study good spiritual books. Practise delivering lectures. You will soon become supermen.'

With thy blessings and guidance soon we shall be.

14TH NOVEMBER, 1948

LIGHTNING VISIT AND LIGHTNING HOSPITALITY

Sri Malhotra, the Society's auditor, arrived at the Ashram early in the morning along with Mr. And Mrs. Sondhi.

At the distant sight of Siva, Sri Malhotra bowed. He had specially come to Rishikesh to offer his Pranams to Siva and inform him that it was due to

unavoidable reasons that he could not send his assistants to audit the Society's accounts which will be taken up soon.

Siva at once took him in and nicely entertained him with milk and fruits. Sri Malhotra informed Siva that his mother was not in good health. On hearing this, Siva at once brought Chyavanaprash from the Ayurvedic Pharmacy and presented it to Sri Malhotra, to be used by his mother.

But, Sri Malhotra insisted on paying for it. He is so much devoted to Siva that he always declines to accept any remuneration for auditing the accounts of the Society. He knows the invaluable, divine currency in which his services to the Society will be paid.

WHAT IS RISKLESS?

Deputy Collector Dwaraka Singji met Siva on the Swarg Ashram road, on the Ganges bank. After the usual enquiries, D.S. told Siva: 'Swamiji, I have a number of your invaluable books. I follow your instructions in so far as I can. I practise Asana also. But, Swamiji, I am at present about 55 years old. Can I do Sirasasan without any risk?'

'Of course, you can.'

'But, Swamiji, some people say that we should not practise Sirasasan after a certain age and that there is some risk in doing so.'

'What is without risk, Maharaj? When you walk on the road, you maybe knocked down by a motor-car. When you ride in a boat, it may capsize and you may be drowned. Still, we have to go on doing these things.'

'Similarly, practise Sirasasan with the help of a wall, for a few seconds. Try. If it does you any good, continue the practice and increase the period. If you notice any evil effect, stop it!'

In the meantime, a passer-by Pundit approached Siva with an air of learning and commenced a mild discourse in Sanskrit. Siva simply looked at him, as if to remind him of the first verse of 'Bhaja Govindam'. Just at that very moment another Pundit (known to Siva) was approaching the party from the opposite direction. Siva introduced one to the other: they soon entered into a heated discussion. Siva smiled significantly and walked on. D.S. quickly understood the import and said: 'You have done the right thing, Swamiji. Let them fight.'

'I do not know why people waste their energy in idle discussions. One should be absolutely practical.'

HEART-REMOVER

A party of high railway officials (all friends of Sri D.C. Desai, a close disciple of the Master) was waiting for Siva in the office, and greeted him with a Namaskar when Siva came in. One of them was greatly interested in Asans and Pranayam.

'I am able to do all the Asans, Swamiji. But, this Paschimottanasan seems to be beyond my capacity.'

'Practise! The difficulties will vanish soon.'

At once the officer jumped out of the bench, sat on the floor with his legs thrown in front and demonstrated. 'Up to this extent I can do it Swamiji.' He bent forward and touched the toes.

'That is wonderful. It is fifty per cent Paschimottanasan. Even that is quite sufficient in your case.'

The topic turned to the therapeutic value of Asans and Pranayam. One of the officers had blood pressure and Siva was showing him how to do Sitali Pranayam. To another he taught Bhastrika to ward off drowsiness and to get abundant energy.

An officer explained that a few years before all his teeth were removed and that resulted in a sudden decline in the state of his health. That has greatly upset his Sadhana: and he is unable to get up early in the morning, unable to walk a few miles at one stretch, unable to exert himself.

'My advice is,' said Siva: 'never go to a dentist unless the case is very bad. Many of these doctors have a mania for 'removing'. Removing teeth, removing tonsils, removing appendix, removing lungs!'

'They have not yet come to removing man's heart, Swamiji,' said someone.

'But, Swamiji himself has been able to do that!' said another: and they all laughed. Siva was silent.

'Swamiji, how silently and quickly you remove our hearts! I think you are the only doctor in the whole world who can do this!'

After some further conversation, Siva said: 'Achchaji, Badee Kripa. You must all be busy and so you might want to go.'

Two of them were not very particular to leave: but, 'he has to'. And, this gentleman remarked: 'Swamiji is the greatest Karma Yogi. He is always busy. Therefore, he should have a lot of work to do.'

Before taking leave, they learnt from Siva several easy exercises, 'old-man's bed exercises', etc.

Siva taught them how the very act of getting up from bed might be converted into a proper exercise, how simple movements of hands and legs when done systematically and with regulation of breath, might form good exercises.

'Lie down on your bed and raise first one leg, then the other, as far as you can. Then, try to get up without the help of your hands.

'Stand erect and try to bend and touch the toes. With hands on the hip, twist the trunk this way and that. These are all exercises which will gradually tone up the system.'

15TH NOVEMBER, 1948

THE AWAKENER

Cold wind blows aggravating the effects of winter. Men adore the vertically placed mud that might have lain uncared for in the bosom of the earth. The woollen blanket clings to the body. The faint vibrations of the loud report of the Swarg Ashram bell mingles, as a quiet rendezvous on the right bank of the Ganges, with the melody that emanates from the rhythmically sounded bell at Siva's Bhajan Hall: and they pay their morning obeisance to Siva.

Within a few minutes, a solitary figure emanates from this rendezvous. In that calm stillness his very footfalls are resonant with the names of the Lord. The cold blast has long ceased to worry him: though his garments are disturbed by the winds, the real HE is far, far away—in the very heart of wind itself and yet beyond. He has realised long ago that the mud-houses (why even the fleshy tabernacle built out of divine-clay) are all ephemeral, and he has sought and gained his own Abode, Brahman. That is our Siva. Let us greet him at this glorious hour of our own life—the Brahmanuhurth of Divine Life. 'OM Namassivanandaya'.

Sri Brij Bihari Lal Kapur and his family are on a visit to the Ashram. With his characteristically majestic gait Siva approaches Sri Kapur's Kutir. OM OM(Silence)....OM OM OM....(Still no response)....Jingling of bangles announces the wearer's response: the door is opened: astonished at this unexpected presence of the Master at their door, the family prostrate before him.

'OM Namō Narayanaya!' Siva has seen his Narayana. 'Come: wash your face and go to the morning class at the Bhajan Hall.'

Siva awakens the slumbering: nay, not only that: he leads them on.

At the conclusion of the class, the party confessed that it was Siva's grace that enabled them to spend the morning hours most profitably.

WOMEN'S LIGHT AND GUIDE

Nothing delights Siva more than to hear that a boy or girl has resolved to take the vow of celibacy and dedicate his or her life to God. This time it was Srimathi Kanti or Bareilly (daughter of Sri Kapur).

In a delighted mood, Siva began to instruct her:

'Engage yourself heart and soul in the service of humanity. You have got all the talents: they are all the rarest gift of the Almighty. Utilise them all in His service. Take part in all women's movements. Only don't lose your head: don't allow yourself to be converted, but always endeavour to convert others and bring them to the divine path. Talk to the ladies. Deliver short stirring discourses on the importance of divine life, of righteousness, purity, truth and love. Serve them and win their hearts. Collect the children of your locality and lovingly tell them good illuminating stories and advise them on the essentials of perfect living. Training the ladies and the children in easy Asans and Pranayam. Break the cage: forget

the sex. Atma is sexless. There is infinite power within you. By all means develop the feminine (motherly) heart that God has endowed you with: but be not a coward. Stand up: hold before yourself the great ideals of Mira, Maitreyi, and Gargi. Contribute spiritual articles to ladies' magazines. Attend all ladies' meetings: and push yourself to the forefront and deliver lectures. Start with your own school. Informally talk to your own students on God and Divine Life. Create an interest in little girls. Talk to them of ethical culture and discipline. Gradually the circle will become wider and wider. People will soon come to know of your divine nature and flock to you. Side by side you should practise rigorous Sadhana and mould yourself. Then everyone will be compelled to listen to you. Keep always in touch with the leading women of the country and the world at large. Correspond with Sarojini Devi, Mira Behn, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and others outside India. Exchange of ideas is a healthy habit. You will soon become one of them.'

ALL THIS IS DRAMA ONLY

A devotee from Sri Swami Sukdevanandaji's Ashram has come. He was known to Siva to be a good dramatist. At once Siva asked that a copy of all the Dramas written by Siva be given to him. With a visible profusion of gratitude, the devotee started perusing the books one by one, forgetting the Ashram, forgetting that he is sitting before Siva, forgetting everything, in fact (for he was seen admiring the book, smiling at some interesting passages in it, suddenly growing serious and serene at the impact of a sublime thought, etc. etc.)

It was quite a while before his attention was shifted from the books to the author.

'You have written wonderful dramatic works, Swamiji.'

'Glory be to the Lord, the Prompter of all actions!' replied Siva in all humility.

'You have, Swamiji, given a new life to the histrionic art. Now people will know that even drama can be put to spiritual use. All the prejudices against the stage which grew in ignorant hearts will vanish.'

'I have always felt that spiritual truths should be presented to the public in a form which they would appreciate most. If I find that many people go to a cinema, I will at once produce a play. If I find that people are interested only in storybooks, I will write philosophical stories. After all, what harm is there in enacting a drama. As a matter of fact, we are all every day enacting hundreds of scenes. The whole world is a big drama. Our real nature is something and our assumed nature is something diametrically opposite. This grand play teaches us innumerable lessons. Similarly, the plays will also impress the spiritual ideas on the people's minds.'

After the devotee had left, Siva told us of Sri Swami Sukdevanandaji.

Sukdevanandaji is one of the oldest companions of Siva. And, in many respects they are alike. S. has the same spirit of dynamic activity which animates every nerve of Siva. He has done tremendous work through the Daivi Sampat Mandal. Wherever he goes, he holds conferences and does propaganda work. Another point of close resemblance between these two great spiritual giants is their

absolute sincerity. They never mince words or matters. They go straight to the very core of the problem before, decide on the adoption of a course, and with great zeal, earnestness and sincerity, achieve the object. Their courage, and will-power are beyond description. Their devotion to the cause is beyond words. Sukdevanandaji's Guru Bhakti is supreme: in fact, all his achievements are attributed by him to the grace of his Guru, Sri Swami Ekarasanandaji Maharaj.

16TH NOVEMBER, 1948

DEVOTION TO SIVA

Sri Mathur, General Manager of the Paramarth Bank, Rishikesh, was waiting for Siva near his Kutir early in the morning. Even while Siva was emerging from the Kutir, Sri Mathur fell prostrate at Siva's feet, on the bare ground. He placed a small amount (in silver coins) at Siva's feet, as 'flowers'.

'Swamiji Maharaj, today is my birthday. I have come to seek your blessings in order that I may stick to the path of righteousness and remember God.'

Siva blessed him and gave him his (Siva's) golden advice. Later Siva told us:

'Mathurji is a very pious and noble soul. He must have a lot of work to do. Yet, he is very regular in his Sadhana. Look at his devotion. He has come all the way from Rishikesh. He would have taken Sanyas also. But, his family circumstances are such that he is at present unable to do so. Now he is practically leading a Sanyasin's life.'

DESTRUCTION OF PLEASURE-CENTRES (A BLESSING)

Srimathi Kanta Rani of Delhi, a young devotee with good spiritual Samskaras who is staying here for the past few days informed Siva that her father-in-law, a retired Engineer (Sri Shroff) had decided to build a Kutir in the Ashram premises and live here. They had planned to have the foundation-stone laid by Siva today.

'It is an excellent idea. Only those who have spiritual Samskaras embedded in their very being will have such inclination. It is a rare ambition.

'Do not imagine that you are not happy because you have lost your husband. It is all God's will; and as He is our own Father, all that He does is for our good only. Lord Krishna Himself says in the Bhagavatha that he removes the pleasure-centres of one whom He loves most. I will tell you a story: listen.

'Sri Krishna and Arjuna were once travelling through a town. They went to a rich man's house and asked for some food. This haughty man abused them in the vilest terms, refused to give them food and ran to beat them with a stick even. Arjuna almost lost his temper; but Krishna, realising this, wanted to quit the place. But, before doing so, He blessed the rich man with very much more riches, hundreds of cows, bungalows, etc. Arjuna thought this was queer behaviour; but kept quiet. Then they went to a poor man's house. He was an emaciated skeleton. But he had great devotion to the Lord. When the divine travellers approached him for food, he at once ran in, brought good milk (the only article of food he had in the house at that time) made Krishna and Arjuna (whom he did not recognise,

as they were in disguise) sit on the cot and entertained them. 'Bhagavan, how blessed I am to have had your Darshan. You appear to be great devotees of the Lord. All this is yours only. Command me: what shall I do for you?' The Lord understood His heart's spiritual yearning. He looked around and He found that the only property of the poor man was a cow. As they emerged from the house, Lord Krishna uttered a curse: 'May this cow die!' Arjuna was furious at this outrageous act on the part of the Lord Himself. 'What, you cursed the poor man who entertained us so nicely and blessed the haughty rogue who scolded us. What injustice.' Krishna replied: 'My dear Arjuna, be calm. This poor man is a great devotee of mine: I love him, too. The cow is the only object to which he is attached. The moment it is taken away, he will devote himself entirely to Me. He will soon attain Moksha. Whereas, the rich haughty man would find that his riches have suddenly increased. This will add to his egoism, to his bondages and to his worries.'

'Therefore, we should all rejoice when the pleasure-centres are removed. You are now free to do Sadhana all the twenty-four hours. Sri Shroffji is also a good Sadhaka. He has retired from active public life. Why should he worry himself any more? He can also spend his last days peacefully on the banks of the Ganga in silent contemplation. Ekanta-Vasa is absolutely necessary from every point of view. Seclusion alone will give you everlasting peace and joy. Enough of friends, relatives. If you remain in Delhi, even if you are spiritually-inclined, there will be a lot of disturbance. Here, you can remain undisturbed.'

When Srimathi Kanta Rani had left, Siva talked to us of retired people. 'They can devote their entire time to Sadhana: they should. How few of them do so! Sri Shroff is a good Sadhaka. He is also a mental Sanyasin: as Srimathi Kanta is a mental Sanyasini. (After a pause) Do you know of certain other mental Sanyasins? They will indulge in tall talk: they will discuss Vedanta and high philosophy: they will sing, dance and do Japa: but, you will soon come face to face with their hollowness when you approach them with a request, 'Maharaj, you have got fifty thousand rupees, kindly donate one thousand rupees to the Ashram; it needs it.' They will not part with a single pie. This is a type of hypocritical mental Sanyasin.

'But Shroff is not like that. He builds his Kutir in the Ashram with the express purpose of letting the Society use the building whenever they are not using it.'

MOHAMED SHOULD GO TO MOUNTAIN

'If mountain does not come to Mohamed, Mohamed should go to mountain.'

As soon as Siva came into the office, he enquired of Vishnuji: 'Vishnuji, did you go to Shroff's Kutir this morning to teach him Asans?'

'Yes, Swamiji.'

'That is good. Some of these old people might feel shy to practise Asans in public. They will think 'Supposing I fall down while standing on Sirasasan, people will laugh' and so avoid coming to the Asan class. For such people's sake, you should go to their room and teach them Asans. That is real spirit of service.'

‘Another important point. Do not simply come away after the Asan-practice is over. Do a few minutes Japa and meditation: a couple of minutes’ silent meditation: repeat Shanti Mantras, and then come away. Thus, even this Asan-class will be converted into a class on Yoga of Synthesis, with Japa, Dhyana, Kirtan, etc. The effects of such Asan-practice will be much more lasting.’

HUMOUR—THE SPICE OF LIFE

A little later Siva’s bag was suddenly found to glove his right hand: off came the hand with two bananas, and the bag dropped itself into a corner.

‘Vishnuji, take these! These are not for you. You are a good Karma Yogi: therefore, you should not take them yourself, but give them to others. Give them right and left.... (meaning: one to Sri Sivapremji, sitting on the right, and the other to me, on the left).... But, don’t give them right and left!’

SERMON ON THE BATTLE-FIELD

The rattling noise of the typewriters, beating the divine life-drums, produced a deafening noise. The pen in the hands of many youthful, energetic aspirants rushed along the body of registers, wrappers and letter-heads, spilling ink (the blood of divine life). Sanyasins, Brahmacharis and householder-devotees rushed to and fro carrying magazines and leaflets, the banner of divine life. Siva, the General, sat at the head of the office watching with satisfaction this battle against ignorance.

There entered into this field of Supreme Battle of Life, an engineer, a doctor and a layman, with two ladies and a child. Besieged on all sides by the dark forces of materialism, they had resorted to Siva to help them fight their battles. Truly it was like Arjuna resorting to Krishna in a moment of despair and desolation.

They were eager to find a solution to the problem that faces them: ‘How to fight the inner battle?’

‘Do Japa, Kirtan, Asans, Pranayam. Get up at 4 a.m. Do Brahma Vichar. Study one chapter of the Gita daily. Observe Mouna for two hours. Fast on Ekadashi.

Siva virtually sang his song of Twenty Instructions.

‘But when I say all this you will be frightened; do Japa of the name of the Lord and remember Him always. This one thing is sufficient to take you to the Goal.’

‘The mind always wants to run after sensual pleasures. Draw it back to the Lakshya—God. Fix it there. Then you will enjoy more peace, more joy and more strength. What is there in these pleasures? Any amount of worldly good fortunes and wealth will be of no avail. When the bank fails, your heart also will fail. When you are out of job, even your servant will not listen to your word. It is only when you are a big officer that people salute you. It will vanish when you lose the job or when you retire from the job. But, if you are a man of God, if you have acquired divine wealth or Daivi Sampath, you will be honoured and revered everywhere at all times. Acquire the Four Means to salvation. Vairagya, Viveka, Shad-Sampath and Mumukshutwa. Then take to the study of the Upanishads, Gita and Brahma Sutras.’

‘Stage by stage, you should evolve and know that happiness is not to be had in sensual objects. The greatest pleasure that man enjoys during the course of the day is in deep sleep. Is this not clear proof that pleasure lies outside the senses, outside the mind, outside the sense-objects? When discrimination dawns, and when you have real Vairagya, there will be a natural yearning to realise True Bliss of the Atman. Then you will take to spirituality and enjoy Atmic Bliss.’

‘Lead a pure virtuous life. Practise Satyam, Ahimsa and Brahmacharya. Sing the names of the Lord with intense devotion. This alone is sufficient. Keep your body in good health by the practise of Asans and Pranayam. Spend your holidays in places of seclusion like Rishikesh and utilise the entire period in solid Sadhana. These are the preliminary aids to Divine Life. Then, by gradual stages, you will progress to the Supreme Abode. May God bless you. OM Namō Narayanaya.’

Long after Siva had concluded his inspiring discourse, the party was in no mood to get up or go. This sermon on the Battle-field apparently acted as a Brahmastra for them to slay all their inner foes and threw a flood of light and joy into their hearts. In a dazed mood they prostrated to Siva and thanked him profusely for this illumination.

‘MY FRIENDS AND RELATIVES’

The foundation-stone laying ceremony had been scheduled to be performed at 12 noon. So, Siva got up, collected his ‘children’ in the office, including the visitors, and proceeded to the site. The blazing sun and the physical movement slowly brought down our visitors to the human plane.

‘Swamiji, supposing we wish to stay here for some time, can we come with our family?’ asked the engineer as we were nearing the Ashram archway.

‘Of course, yes: do you think that we are without our families here? Why, this flower, this creeper, this delightful plant, this tall tree—all of them are my family-members. The whole world is pervaded by God, one Atman. Feel: feel, the entire world is your family only. Expand your consciousness and be free.’

After such a struggle they were able to ask him one mundane question: and expected Siva’s reply also in the language of the earth. But, what a luck!

ALWAYS THE SAME

My Lord! What frail instruments you often choose for thy gigantic work. You take us by the hand and drag us along. Yet, we act only as a burden to tire your tireless zeal, instead of taking you on our shoulders and running along under your direction.

Except for the solitary mason working at the site, Siva was the first to arrive. Again he started: ‘Bring the Puja materials from the temple. Go and get the Prasad. Call Iyannaji. Tell Sri X that we are waiting here. Where is Sastriji? Who will do the Puja? etc.’ What inexhaustible patience. Any other head of an institution would be fuming with rage.

One by one they started coming. When Sri Shroff arrived, Siva took him up the hillock for an examination of the pit dug. ‘Is this enough? Will it not be better to

have it a little deeper?' Shroff was of the same opinion. At once the mason started on his work again. This could well have been done earlier.

SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Then began Kirtan, Chidananda Swamiji leading.

'Today,' commenced Siva, 'is the auspicious day of the full moon. Purnami. It is a blessed day that reminds us of the nature of the Lord, Brahman or our own Self. Brahman is Paripoorna, fullness, infinite, Bhuman. It is not partial: it is One Homogeneous Existence, undivided, full. It is this that the full moon reminds us of. Other days represent the moon only as partial: only today the moon has all the sixteen Kalas. This is not the new moon (Amavasya) day of ignorance, inertia or Tamas. Today is the full moon day of light, joy and bliss.

'On this most auspicious day we lay the foundation-stone of a Kutir for seclusion proposed to be built by Sri Shroff of Delhi. He is a retired engineer who wishes to live in seclusion in Rishikesh spending the rest of his life in divine contemplation, in the practice of Sadhana. He and Srimathi Kanta Rani, another exalted soul keenly interested in the acquisition of the inexhaustible wealth of the Lord's Name, of devotion to His Lotus Feet, of leading the divine life intend to practice Tapascharya at this holy spot, and to attain the goal of life.

'This goal of life is God-realisation. Nothing else is of any use. Man is lost in the glamour of material pleasures. Sensual enjoyment cannot give lasting happiness. Even if you have a dozen bungalows, twenty motor-cars, a few crores of rupees in your bank, and a army of servants: even if you have a beautiful wife, and many children, even if you have all the material pleasures that the world can offer you, you cannot have that supreme peace that can come only out of Self-realisation. In the Self alone is there deep abiding peace. Do not be duped by these sensual objects. When the bank fails, you will weep. More wealth, more worry. With the fulfilment of your desires, they multiply: you can never root them out by feeding them. Unless you are desireless, you can never have peace.

'Himalayas represent the Swarupa of the Lord. 'Sthavaranam Himalayah' 'I am the Himalayas among the immoveables'. Gaze at this gigantic manifestation of the Lord. Again, 'Srothasamasmi Jahnavi' 'I am Ganges among streams'. What more do you want? The Himalayas are our father and the Ganga is our mother. It is a great blessing to live at the feet of Himalayas and to take bath in the Ganga. It is in the Himalayas that great saints and sages have practised Tapas from time immemorial and realised God. The holy vibrations of these Self-realised sages are ever present in the very atmosphere of these parts.

'Sri Shroff and Srimathi Kanta are indeed blessed souls. They have resolved rightly. They have understood the vanity of the world. Their examples should open the eyes of others. Nowadays even retired people cling to their families and relatives: they are attached to property and wealth: they are greedy and want to enter into private service somewhere or other to earn some more money. Even after suffering all their life in this Samsara they have not realised the gravity of the situation, they have not realised the importance of the life divine. Every retired man should follow Sri Shroff's example and actually retire into seclusion.

That is why our ancients instituted the Vanaprasthashrama. Without attachment to property, to son, wife or wealth, the man is asked to retire into a forest to practise tapas, to practise Sravan, Manan and Nididhyasan and ultimately to embrace Sanyasa and realise the summum bonum of human life. Renunciation is absolutely essential. Without renunciation of material pleasures, of egoism and of selfishness, nothing great has ever been achieved.

'May God bless Sri Shroff and Srimathi Kanta with health, long life, peace, prosperity, and Kaivalya. May the Lord illumine their hearts. May God bless you all. May you all attain GOD-realisation in this very birth. May you all shine as Jivanmuktas in this very birth. OM'

Siva was all the time standing on the hillock, and the flock below (on the path leading to the Viswanath Mandir) listened spell-bound to this Sermon on the Mount from the lips of the modern Jesus Christ. Wave after wave of spiritual fervour swept over the entire audience as the powerful vibrations of Siva's soul-stirring oration pierced their heart. With hairs on end, we stood, oblivious of the surroundings, listening to the words of the great master, with our eyes riveted on his magnificent form, until we instinctively cried 'Jai' at the conclusion of the Sermon.

At the close of the function, we were all coming down. The visitor-friends were also coming down with Siva.

'You take your food here: and then you can go,' invited Siva.

'Swamiji, we have not yet taken our bath. And, we have already brought some food with us in the car.'

'Do not worry about bath. Repeat 'Jnanamritam Suddham Atindriyoham'. This is Vedantic Snamam. This is superior to all other baths. Mentally imagine that you are taking bath in the Great ocean of Supreme Knowledge. Identify yourself with this ocean of knowledge—Jnanamritam. Realise that you are the ever-pure Atman-Suddham. And, feel that you are beyond the senses—Atindriya. You will feel completely refreshed. You will feel that you are entirely different! Come, then: repeat this thrice and take some food as Prasad.'

For once, they must have thought, Siva came down to human plane: but it would not last longer than to ask one question. Lucky visitors. God bless you.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER FLOCK TOGETHER

As we had almost reached the D.J. Hall, Siva turned and looked behind. Sri Balan and Sri Chetlur were coming together.

Smilingly Siva remarked: 'Birds of a feather flock together. A journalist always seeks a journalist's friendship. An advocate likes the company of another advocate, a cook that of a cook, a doctor that of a doctor: a bald-headed man goes with another bald-headed man: a Sanyasi likes the company of another Sanyasi. That is the law of nature. But, a Jivanmukta finds his own Self in every one and in everything and therefore moves with everyone without distinction.'

17TH NOVEMBER, 1948

SIVA IN EVERY NOOK AND CORNER

Swami Brahmanandaji, an aged Sadhu, came to the Ashram for a day's stay. Siva nicely entertained him with fruits and milk, gave him the magazine and leaflets and attended to the Swami's comforts.

'Swamiji,' said Swami B., 'I had been to Ceylon. I have wandered about in the interior of far-off Ceylon. But, I was surprised to find that you have your disciples in that country also. I saw a devotee in that country also. I saw a devotee in the countryside of Ceylon and he said that he has been one of your silent admirers and disciples for a considerable time past.'

Vishnuji took the visiting Sadhu to the temple, Guha, etc. When he returned Swami B. told Siva: 'Swamiji, from the road I thought that the hillock grew on it only jungles. But what a fine Ashram you have built over it! It is a miracle and a great revelation when one goes up the hillock.'

NOT YET CONFIRMED

Sri Ram Ram Ram of Lucknow is an aged devotee. Even in his advanced age he is reluctant to give up his practice as an advocate. He has, however, been a pious devotee who has regularly visited Rishikesh and attended Satsang on every occasion. Siva sounded him: 'Why not retire from active life and practise contemplation? You have worked enough: you have no encumbrances.'

'But, Swamiji, though I have attended Satsang all these years and though I have been doing Japa and Dhyana all these years, I have not yet a confirmed belief in God and His name. There is yet Moha for family, for position, for money and for worldly life. It is strange, Swamiji, I confess.'

'Maya is powerful,' said Siva: 'and, except in very rare cases when the Samskaras are very strong, taste for a life of contemplation does not manifest itself in man. No doubt, Satsang, Japa and Dhyana, help a Sadhaka a lot. But the Avarana of Avidya or the veil of ignorance is so thick that these are not sufficient to pierce it. They only create Samskaras which take shape in future births. But, if at the same time you do Vichara, develop Viveka and cultivate Vairagya, then the progress is extremely rapid. Vairagya and Viveka are absolutely necessary. Without these no amount of Satsang, Japa, or Dhyana will produce immediate results. Maya is extremely powerful: she can be annihilated only through Dridha Vairagya (intense dispassion).'

18TH NOVEMBER, 1948

NO WARM RECEPTION

Swami....., who had once stayed at the Ashram for a considerable time and who had done a lot of work for the Society, had come and gone away. There was a mild discussion about his attitude towards the Ashram.

‘Swamiji, perhaps he did not stay on at the Ashram because he was not given a rousing reception he might have expected.’

‘What reception? A Sanyasin should not have such expectations and desires.’

THE ACID TEST

‘He left the Ashram to do intense Tapasya and Sadhana. If he had really done much Tapasya or Sadhana, he would have developed the loving heart, an entirely changed angle of vision, and this would have electrified whomever he met here. He would have adopted an attitude of humility, of service, of brotherly love towards everyone here. He would thus have endeared himself to everyone. Naturally a different atmosphere would have been created. This is the way. He should always conquer people’s hearts through love and service. There is no other way. If he was not able to do that, it means the Sadhana was a continuous indulgence in inertia and an increased fattening of the ego.’

Good lesson we ourselves learnt today. What more precious lessons can Tapasya teach us? Better to serve selflessly and egolessly than to add to our egoism by other means.

SHIP OF LIFE

We should much rather surrender ourselves at Siva’s feet and let him carry the burden. It is possible by progressively opening up the Antahkarana to Siva’s daily teachings and actions to imbibe his divinity: when the fire of Siva-Sankalpa has burnt our ignorance, the flame of knowledge will get lighted and burn brilliantly illumining every nook and corner of our being.

Strangely enough, the same thoughts have found expression in a letter which we received just today from Srimathi Sivaramaseetha Bai of Tuticorin:

‘There are three types of Jnanis,’ she says. ‘There are the Muktha Purushas who are like the small pieces of wood that float on the surface of a river. They can float, but they cannot bear the burden of even one small bird. If the bird sits on this piece of wood, the wood will sink. Then, there are the Nityas. Like a country boat these Jnanis will take along with them beyond the ocean of Samsara a small band of devotees. Then there are the Avatara Purushas. They are like huge steamers. Without the least effort, as though playfully, they can carry over their shoulders thousands of Jivas with all their burdens, their bag and baggage (viz., their sins and Samskaras) and take them to the other shore of immortality or God-realisation. You are like the great ocean-going liner: you belong to the third class of Jnanis—the Avatara Purushas,’ says she addressing Siva. She has given another beautiful description: ‘Muktas are like a small lantern placed in a room. This is not of any use to those outside. Nityas are like the street lights. They illumine a whole street. But Avatara Purushas are like the sun. They illumine the entire universe. Like the sun, the Avatara Purusha helps the entire world. You belong to this class of Jnanis. I rejoice when I hear of your glory and service: the glory and service of a true spiritual sun. I rejoice that South India has been thrice blessed in giving birth to an Avatara Purusha like you.’

Well done. You have diagnosed the Doctor of the Soul himself accurately—that is what we should say to Sri Sivaramaseetha Bai.

LESSON IN BEGGING

Sri Swami Muruganandaji wants to lead a life of seclusion and Tapasya. He came to the office to take leave of Siva.

‘Swamiji, I intend to go to Andhra Ashram and stay there for some time. Then I shall find out a suitable place for myself.

‘But, whenever you go, you should make yourself useful. Then only will people like you. Merely taking Bhiksha and sitting idly somewhere is not Yoga. That is Tamasic indulgence. Not only will people not like you, but your own progress will be slow. Combine meditation with service. Then everyone will like you and your progress will also be quick.

‘All right: you can remain wherever you like. Take Bhiksha from the Kshetra. But, you should know the method! Come: I will show you how. Sit here. Now, you are the kitchen manager who distributes the food. You should make a nice bag of your cloth like this. Then hang it on your forearm like this. Go to the man who gives roties. Receive the roties gracefully bending your body, like this. Then catch hold of the loose ends of the cloth with the left hand itself (do not place the improvised bag on the floor) and, with the right hand, take the dhal in the vessel. Then go to the vegetable-walah: take the vegetables and walk off,’ Siva demonstrated the entire process: made M. also do so.

‘Swamiji, the main difficulty for me is that I do not know the language and there are no people here whom I know or who know me. Therefore, I intend to go to South India.’

‘What is this? A Sanyasin should always remain in a place where he is least known. That is the secret behind the Parivrajak life also. Familiarity not only breeds contempt in some quarters, but Moha in others, too. That is very bad. Always remain unknown, a stranger wherever you go. That is the gate to Moksha. And serve at every opportunity that you get. OM Namah Sivaya.’

M. left ultimately for his own South India.

RUB EVERYWHERE: SMALL OR BIG

A Chettiar from the South was describing the affairs of a well-known Ashram. There are parties and cliques: power-politics with national politics thrown in. Provincialism, caste distinctions: distinctions between high and low.

Siva remarked in jest, though with deep significance: ‘Everywhere there is rub. Only in some places it is a small rub: in others it is big rub. World is a place of rubs only. And, which Ashram or locality is ‘out’ of the world? The ideal Ashram is a place where there is the least rub!’

ALWAYS SING ANANDOHAM

Sri Aravamudan had a pricking conscience: he had told an unpremeditated lie, without realising its consequences. And, peculiarly (as it often happens with Siva)

events so contrived themselves that it was exposed, though the consequences were not serious, again thanks to the presence of Siva. With a contrite heart, A. had written a note apologising for the mistake and left it on Siva's table.

On seeing (at first sight), Siva exclaimed: 'What? Aravamudan is leaving the Ashram?'

'No, Swamiji, he has only left a note.'

'Achcha. About that incident?' Siva threw the note down without reading it further. 'Whenever someone unusually places a note on my table or prostrates, I take it to be an indication of 'OM Namō Narayanaya, I am going to Uttarkashi.' (To A.) 'Don't worry. These slips do occur in a man's life. Learn the lesson: profit by it: then, forget the whole even. Always sing Anandoham: never 'worryoham'.

A WEEK WITH SIVA

Sri Lakshmi Narayan Chetlur from Geneva had stayed for a week at the Ashram and intended to leave for Geneva tomorrow. He delivered a short talk in the Bhajan Hall on the benefit he had derived from his stay for a week at the Ashram. I give below some points from his lecture:

'Four and a half years ago, I happened to see on my father's table a few works of Swamiji and also a spiritual diary. I tried to study the books and also to maintain the spiritual diary. The keeping of the diary was at that time rather a difficult job. Later I went to Europe. There I felt that I should have a more thorough knowledge of Yoga and should be in a position to take Eastern culture into the West. This time when I came to India I wanted to utilise this short visit in the acquisition of this knowledge. Therefore I came to the Ashram. Have I been benefited in my quest?

'Yes: as a result of my stay here for a week, the meaning of life has become infinitely more clear to me. I have often been drawn out of my self-imposed seclusion and taught the principles of Yoga. I find in the Ashram a congenial atmosphere in which everyone works in a spirit of brotherly love. I find, too, that the moment one enters the Ashram one forgets all about caste, creed, colour and nationality. I find one family from California, a couple of Sadhaks from Africa, all mixing freely together, as though they are all members of one fraternity. Unsolicited, the Ashramites go out of their way, greet me and help me in solving my problems. That is something which marks this Ashram out from others.

'I leave with a definite feeling that I have been benefited in the moral fabric of my being.'

Later, Siva gave him invaluable instructions in regard to his propaganda work in the West, and encouraged him in his endeavours to spiritualise the Indian Association in Geneva of which he is the Secretary.

'There is no harm in having a materialistic department in the organisation. You need finance to run the Association. You need to attract people to the cause. I will tell you a secret. Open a small restaurant with the help of an Indian cook. The dosai there will attract a large clientele. You will be financially benefited: and you

will get a large membership for the Association, too. You can then introduce them into Yoga and work wonders. All these are necessary in the present age.'

Then Sri R.V. Sastri explained how many immoral people had been turned to the divine path by Siva contributing articles to very low-class trash journals.

'People first purchase the journal to read the trash stories. Later they find in it one page of matter which is absolutely the opposite of the matter contained in the others. There comes a moment in the life of every man, a hit somewhere, a knock somewhere, when he turns to God. This one-page catches fire in his heart at that psychological moment: he turns away from the rubbish and buys the magazine only for this one page. It goes to such an extent that he cuts the page away from the ugly matter of the magazine and then reads.'

That is the secret. Siva will find out the worldly man's weak-points, and seemingly try to feed him there, but inwardly draw him to Divine Life. This is what Lord Krishna was doing: an art in which He, too, was an adept.

19TH NOVEMBER, 1948

CHILD MAKES THE AGED CHILDREN

Sri S.Y. Krishnaswami, I.C.S., and his wife have come again from Delhi. Siva met them after they had finished their night-meal: in the Dining Hall.

'You have had your meal?'

'Yes, Swamiji. Last time we came here, we had a great desire to attend the evening Bhajan: but we could not. So, today we have come with the express intention of attending the Bhajan. When we returned to Delhi, we were always thinking of the calm and serene atmosphere of Rishikesh. It is only your Ashirvad that has brought us back here.'

'Very good. There is, I think, not one better place in the whole world, than Rishikesh. You must settle down here. What job, money, family, wealth, position? Peace you can get only in this sort of life.'

'I entirely agree with you, Swamiji. I have enjoyed all the comforts and joys that worldly life has to offer man. I have travelled all over the world. First I went to America through the Western route. The second time I went through the East. I have stayed in the very best hotel in America paying thirty-five dollars a day. I have presided over international conferences. But, nothing like spending even one evening here, sharing the simple food, leading the simple life, sleeping in a simple cottage.'

In the Bhajan Hall Siva prompted Sri Krishnaswami to sing. And, in the magnetic aura of this child-like Siva, K. forgetting the urban life he was accustomed to, and sang a couple of stanzas from Ananda Lahari, beautifully and with Bhav. Siva greatly appreciate the songs.

Old Satchidanandaji also sang. It was a thrilling Satsang gathering. All old men become like children in the presence of this utterly simple child Siva!

27TH NOVEMBER, 1948

TAGORE OF SOUTH INDIA SINGS SIVA'S GLORY

At the Bhajan Hall, during the evening Satsang, Sri K.S. Venkataramani of Kaveripoompattinam, a great author of repute, whose famous stories and novels had earned for him the title of 'Tagore of South India' spoke. Even before he commenced, the tender Siva in maternal affection had requested Sri K.S.V.—

'If your health permits, you may speak a few words: otherwise, please, do not strain yourself.' Such is Siva's natural concern for others.

Sri K.S.V. spoke of his great admiration for the Nama-Prachar that Siva has been carrying on in the country, and particularly for the fact that the Akhanda Maha Mantra Kirtan was going on in the Ashram. 'An infinite power is generated where this Mantra is repeated and that works out for the good of the individuals concerned and of the world at large. I have just visited the famous Samadhi of Bodhendra Swami, the great exponent of Nama-Sankirtanam: and I am very happy to find here another great Swamiji carrying on the same tradition. If devotion to the Lord and His name is today kept up in the human heart it is due to the Herculean endeavours of Swami Sivanandaji.'

28TH NOVEMBER, 1948

INITIATION INTO ASANOLOGY

Sr. K.S. Venkataramani is leaving for Delhi today. He was in the Sivananda Publication League section purchasing some of the Ayurvedic Pharmacy products, books, etc.

'Venkataramaniji, I wanted to teach you some Asans and Kriyas before you go.' So saying, Siva got out of his seat and met Sri K.S.V. half-way. And, unceremoniously Siva sat on the ground where he thought fit! Then he started demonstrating Asans to the astonishment of Sri K.S.V. and Sri R.V. Sastriji.

'This is Uddiyana Bandha. Pumping it quickly, it becomes Agnisara kriya. These two act as natural insulin. The pancreatic secretion is increased. This is Maha Mudra. Just bend and try to touch the knee with your nose. It is not necessary that you should actually do so,—a mere effort is sufficient. And, this is Paschimottanasan. These are all natural treatments for diabetes. You can do them just for a few minutes every day.'

With profound gratitude, K.S.V. said: 'Swamiji, what wonderful Kriyas these are. What a wonderful spiritual heritage we have, which we do not know. The pity is that the average man today is not aware of the very existence of these Asans, Kriyas and so on. But for you, they would have been altogether forgotten. Indeed, in this respect I must say you have rendered a service which no one else has done.'

MODERATION IS SATVIC FOOD

Then Sri K.S.V. wanted to know if Brahmi-Buti would be of use to him.

'Yes, it is very good. Soak almonds in water overnight: peel them: make them into a paste along with Brahmi Buti in the morning. Prepare a sherbat and take it, say, after your morning coffee.'

'Swamiji, I thought of it only as a substitute to coffee which I want to give up altogether.'

'No, no. You need not give it up. It is necessary for brain-workers like you. The prohibition is only for the sake of those who drink gallons of coffee every day. Always observe strict moderation in diet. Then, whatever food you take becomes Satvic.'

SIVA TRIES A SANDAL ON

I watched Siva coming, through the window of the office. I thought: 'Why is he walking so slowly, almost limping?' Siva's gait is always majestic (even if he is not well) and his pace fast. Siva noticed my curiosity.

'In all these sixty-two years I have not worn these!'—He pointed to the sandals (chappals) he was wearing. 'My shoes started pinching and I noticed small eruptions on my feet. So, I am trying these on. But, being unaccustomed to it, I feel a strange uneasiness. I feel as though the sandals would slip off. I have to grip them tightly with my toes.'

'Man is born with nothing in this world. The child gets a toy: and grips it tightly, lest it should lose the toy. The boy gets a chocolate, and holds it tightly. The man grips tightly to himself wife, children, property, position, prestige, etc., lest he should lose them. These are the glamorous objects that allure the human being. Once he throws them away and rests in his own Swarupa, he is at peace.'



DECEMBER, 1948

1ST DECEMBER, 1948

TAPO BHUMI

Sri Lakshminarayana Sastrigal and his sister came into the office and bowed to Siva. After enquiring about their health, etc., and whether they had taken their morning coffee and tiffin, Siva said:

‘Take your bath in hot water. It is rather cold today and cloudy, too.’

Smilingly, Sri Lakshmi Ammal said: ‘Swamiji, should we take hot water bath on the very bank of the Ganga? But, the water of the Ganga is really very cold: otherwise, we would have taken our bath earlier in the morning as we usually do in the South.’

‘That is different. Uttara Khand is Tapo Bhumi. The Achara of the south does not apply to those who live here. The very life here is Tapas and soul-purifying. The very atmosphere bathes us continually in a spiritual Jnana Ganga.’ After a pause, Siva added half in humour: ‘Do you know? When Suka Deva was roaming about in the Himalayan forests, he did not even clean his teeth. He purchased a packet of tooth powder only when he reached Delhi.’

Side splitting laughter was the result of this humorous remark full of sublime import.

SANYASIN IS NOT HUMAN BEING?

In the evening, after the Kirtan, Siva took Srimathi Lakshmi Ammal round to the Library, to the stock-room of books, to the Yoga Museum, to the Yajnasala and the photographic dark room. Padmanabhanji was showing them the photo-printing process. When this inspection was over and we were about to leave the dark room, Siva said:

‘What has a Sanyasin go to do with photography? What use has he for photographs?’

We turned to Siva himself for an answer.

After a few moments, Siva added: ‘That way people will start asking: ‘What has a Sanyasin to do with food? With clothing? Is not a Sanyasin a human being? Everyone’s body and bodily needs are the same and all that the householder needs and does, the Sanyasin, too, needs and does. Only the attitude is entirely different.’

2ND DECEMBER, 1948

WHO ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

The Judge Saheb (Sri Yogi Gauri Prasadji of Swarg Ashram) has come, on a sort of official visit to advise the Society on certain legal matters. After he had finished

the discussions, he was talking to us about certain legal peculiarities, concerning the copyright on books.

'You see, I have got most of your books, Swamiji,' commenced Judge Saheb and was drawn away from the main theme of his talk. 'And, I am trying to build up a good library of your books. They are so valuable, you know, that I intend leaving them to my children by a special will. I know that the children will cherish them as the richest treasure left by me. Swamiji, you have explained in these books in a language that is unrivalled for its simple grandeur what others have taken great pains to attempt to present in their bombastic language. Even a layman or a college student can just pick up your books and solve all his problems. That is what no one else can do: and I think that it is only due to our own personal realisation of the Supreme Truth that this direct simplicity characterises your books.'

'Another peculiar thing I tell you. I refer to your books every now and then to confirm my own opinions. You see: after I discuss a problem with someone else and after offering my own opinion on it, I take up your works and find that opinion has your weighty authority behind it. These books are something like the Vedas and the Upanishads for me. As the Yogis and Siddhas of yore verified their experiences from the Sruti, I feel that when I find the same view is expressed by you also, I must be right.'

All the time Siva sat there without a trace of any sort of emotion, deep like the unfathomable ocean, as though to ask:

'Who are you talking about?'

11TH DECEMBER, 1948

THE ANCIENT PROCESS

The morning university class was just over.

'Atmaramji,' called out Siva, 'are you taking notes of these lectures?'

'No, Swamiji.'

'You see: that is a mistake. Gaining knowledge is not such an easy thing. Just imagine: how many wonderful points are given out by Chidananda Swamiji, Sivanarayanji and others. The Rishis have prescribed the three-fold process of Sravan Manan Nidhidhysasan for the gaining of knowledge. If you do Sravan for one minute, you should do Manan of the same topic for ten minutes: then Nidhidhyasan for one hundred minutes. Then these ideas will become your own. Merely nodding to these talks will be of no use. Further, when you develop the habit of recording the thoughts that are given out here, you will also begin to listen most attentively to the talks. Otherwise, the tendency will be to doze off during the lectures.'

'Even today I am a student. I carefully listen to the lectures delivered here, then go to my room, think over the matter, and write my articles.'

Then turning to others, Siva said:

‘Atmaramji, too, will deliver lectures in the morning class. Did you see his wonderful performance the other day—the doctor’s parade? Full of humour: it produced side-splitting laughter. He has a brilliant intellect: and he is full of zeal and steady application to the work he undertakes.’

BE THOU LIKE ME

‘Everyone should be trained to lecture. Kesavji will talk hereafter on Vedant. Vishnuji will talk on Asans and Hatha Yoga. Everyone here has all the faculties hidden within. You should all try to bring out those talents and develop them. In this Ashram you have the fullest scope for that.’

CHARTER FOR PARIVRAJAKACHARY

‘Balan Swamiji, you should have a comprehensive understanding of all the Yogas. When you go out after Sivaratri on your first attempt at the life of a Parivrajaka, even though you may not do any positive propaganda, you cannot avoid people coming to you and asking you various questions. ‘Swamiji,’ someone will say, ‘Give me Upadesh on Bhakti.’ Another will need a little talking-to on Vedanta. Some other man will be fond of the Upanishads. You cannot avoid these personal talks. And, even these are as important as lectures on the platform. You will be in charge of all the sections of the university hereafter till you leave on the great pilgrimage. Just half an hour talks. Read some books: sit and think about the subject for ten minutes, jot down points and deliver lectures. It is very easy.’

‘Kesavji, Vishnuji, Dasarathji—all should be trained in lecturing. When you deliver a lecture, every word should be clearly audible. The tone should be clear, bold and effective. Everyone should hear every word. Then alone will it create an indelible impression on the hearers.’

‘You can get by heart some of the English songs in my book, ‘Inspiring Songs’ also. See how various ideas are combined in one song in the Hare Rama tune. Even if you do not deliver lectures, if you sing this one song, people will be thrilled. Study Gita, Upanishads, Bhagavata, Brahma Sutras, Ramayana and assimilate the ideas contained in them. You should become master of all these.’

THE RAZOR PATH

‘God-realisation is not such an easy job. These helps—Swadhyaya, Sravan, Manan etc.—are only intended to show us the way. When you have a keen longing for liberation, you will learn from the scriptures and from the lectures delivered by Chidananda Swamiji and others here how you should proceed.’

‘All the time you should be vigilant and watchful. You should learn from everyone the lessons of divine life. Merely sitting in a corner and practising Yogic Kriyas will not help you. What power do you wish to acquire? What is it to you if you gain the power to create a new world or to arrest the course of the sun and the moon? Siddhis and Riddhis will only fatten your egoism, and you will be farther removed from God. Do not run after them.’

‘On the other hand, consider yourself a blade of grass. Develop humility, patience, perseverance, forbearance, love, truthfulness and purity.

‘I have never longed after Moksha. I have never aspired for God-realisation. I shall go on serving everyone. I shall go on purifying my heart through selfless service. I shall always try to see God in everyone. God Himself should take pity on me and give me Mukti. Otherwise, I shall take birth again and again and go on serving, till God Himself voluntarily offers me Mukthi.’

‘Look at Sri Sthanu Subramanyam. See how wonderfully he has trained his heart. He has come to stay here for a few days. But, with him he has brought a box of medicines. He runs here and there to serve the sick. Examine your heart: have you got this one quality? Does your heart melt at the suffering of others? He does his Japa and Nitya Anushtan regularly here. Have you got that tenacious adherence to the path?’

‘I want all of you to become dynamic Yogis. Here you will get the greatest scope for the fullest development. People who have had training here have opened new Ashrams and Societies. Just think what a wonderful thing it would have been if all those dynamic workers had remained here itself and worked to expand this institution! Yet, it is a good thing that they are all doing wonderful work in their own way.’

‘One who organises an institution should have perfect tolerance, understanding, adaptability, humility and dedication. Some of the Mahants will drive away a young recruit if they feel that the young recruit has more talents and will one day shine superior to the Mahants themselves. This is very bad. What do you care if a new-comer is greater than yourself? You should try to win his heart, make him also dedicate himself to the cause and thus try to utilise his services to this great cause. That is the real spirit of an organiser. If you have such dedication, even if this new-comer, out of malice, drives you away, you will take Bhiksha from the Kshetra and work for the cause. You should always work to make everyone equal: if not better than yourself. Never suppress another: never ignore another’s talents. I want everyone to come to the Ashram: a scavenger, an artist, a journalist, a songster, a poet, an orator. I shall give them the fullest scope to develop their talents on the right lines. I shall serve them and win their heart. I shall give them the longest rope. If they have mischief in their heart and if they want to do evil to the institution, God will protect the institution.’

‘I am not bothered about the institution. My nature is to work. My goal is to serve. This service has been in me from my very childhood. Even if this organisation collapses, I shall sit in a hut, serve some patients, print some leaflets and serve humanity.’

‘Study the Gita. Find out how many divine virtues that the Lord has enumerated there, you have developed. Purify the heart. Serve, serve and serve. Meditation will come by itself. Samadhi will come by itself. Do not hanker after powers, Siddhis and Riddhis. They are all hindrances in the spiritual path. See God in every face. This is the essence of the teachings of all the Vedas.’

12TH DECEMBER, 1948

THE MAHANT SIVA

Kesavji delivered his first discourse on Vedanta. Vishnuji analysed the importance of Hatha Yoga. Sivanarayanji was eloquent in his exposition of the Gita. All during the morning class.

At the end, Siva was visibly delighted at the performance of the budding lecturers. 'Simply grand!' was his only comment. They felt greatly encouraged and enthused.

He thus demonstrated what he had said earlier—that his greatest joy is when he sees that his disciples shine gloriously.

CHARITY IN DISGUISE

Sri R.P. Gandhi, a worker in Government employ, came into the office, bowed to Siva and narrated his tale of woe. He is a refugee from the Punjab. He had lost everything in the riots; and he had recently received an intimation from his bankers that his bank, too, had completely failed. His sisters were sick: and the whole family had, owing to the shock, poor health.

'Swamiji, I have some good religious books. I wish to dispose of them as I am not able to make both ends meet with the salary I am getting. I wonder if you will purchase some of these books.' He showed the list which totalled Rs. 68.12.

Siva scanned the list: but I found his eyes straying elsewhere. He was deeply immersed in thought.

He read out the names of the books. Most of them were either in the Ashram library or were unnecessary.

'Does not matter,' he said to me. 'Select some good books out of this list for half the amount. Premanandaji, get Rs. 40. Rs. 30 we shall give him as the price of the books. And, Rs. 10 as my humble offering.... Yes, merely purchasing books is not charity. I should also give him some money as a donation.'

With the money came, Siva handed it to him with reverence and regard: 'Patram Pushpam!'

It is not a gift or charity, but it is worship of the Lord, the flowers being the currency-notes.

Where it is a matter of help, Siva finds his joy. And, he adopts strange ways to carry out his heart's desire to serve and to help.

An incident which occurred a few years ago comes to mind.

Siva was going to the Swarg Ashram with a party. On his way, he met a Sadhu who was fond of sweetmeats. Nearby was sitting a sweetmeat vendor, a very poor man, who subsists on these sales. Siva quickly perceived his chance. He took out some money, purchased the sweetmeats and gave them to the Sadhu: thus he had helped both of them in a strange way.

COAT OF ARMS

Devotees of the Lord are familiar with 'Kavachas' or Stotras invoking the Lord's protection. Every Kavacha ends with a Phala-truti: 'He who repeats this morning and evening will be free from diseases, etc.'

Siva has worn a wonderful Kavacha on him. The moment he sits on his chair in the office (and this I noticed only today), he quickly gazes at the various pictures of Gods and Goddesses hung on the wall around him—Vishnu, Venkatesa, Saraswati, Lord Krishna, Siva, etc. Try this once. You will at once be inspired with glowing spiritual thoughts, divine energy and potency. A great secret worth careful note by every Sadhaka. To Siva (as it is to most of us) the pictures hung on the walls are not mere decorations. But, they are realities to him who are there ever watching over him, inspiring him from within, guiding him and protecting him.

Now I understand why and how he pulled up an inmate for changing the place of the picture of Saraswati. Ordinarily we would never have noticed if such a changes takes place in our rooms or houses.

13TH DECEMBER, 1948

FUMES OF PROSPERITY

What a miracle!

Yesterday and today the Ashram witnessed a continuous series of Havans. Lord Viswanath was surrounded on all sides by sacred fires around which were seated pious souls offering oblations into the sacred fire with the repetition of Mantras.

Yesterday, on one side there was Gita Havan, for it was Gita Jayanthi, the day on which Bhagavad Gita was revealed to humanity. On another side was going on the grand Gayatri Havan with fifteen Brahmins sitting round the fire offering oblations to the repetition of the Gayatri Mantra.

The Gita Havan was performed by the Ashram, for the welfare of the whole world, and for the spiritual illumination of the entire humanity.

Gayatri Havan was arranged on behalf of a pious devotee.

Today there was a unique Havan in connection with the Ati Rudra Yajna. This Yajna in Kali Yoga is comparable to the Aswamedha Yaga in the previous Yugas. It entails enormous expense. It is only due to Siva's divine presence and grace that the Ashram has been able to undertake to perform this Yajna. Otherwise, it is difficult even for Rajahs and Maharajahs.

14TH DECEMBER, 1948

GLORY OF MANUAL LABOUR

Siva's eyes on his entrance into the office in the morning fell on the few banana peels lying in a corner.

'Nowadays, no one sweeps the office in the morning. All enthusiasm has faded away, I think.'

'Last Sunday, I swept Swamiji.'

'Day before yesterday was my turn.'

Siva listened as a school-master listens to the lame excuses of children who had forgotten to do home-work.

'If there is a genuine interest in keeping the office clean in you all, then even the thought of 'my turn' and 'his turn' would not arise.

'Vji may be busy with letters. But, then at least the junior inmates ought to take this work upon themselves. I am not saying because the others are senior: but they may feel that they may be able to do more intellectual work in that period.

'Manual work is very essential. It will keep your body healthy. It will provide you with a spirit of service. You will be able to develop humility, forbearance and other divine virtues. Cleanliness is next to Godliness. You should take delight in such Seva. There should be no compulsion from outside, nor should you do it just because some one else is asking you to.'

15TH DECEMBER, 1948

NEVER CLAIMING ALLEGIANCE

The Avadhuta Swamiji is seriously ill. Sri Rajagopalji and Chidanandaji are in constant attendance: through their efforts and by the grace of Siva, the old Swamiji had actually been rescued from the jaws of death two days ago.

Siva was at Avadhuta Swamiji's bedside, affectionately enquiring about his health.

Govindaswamiji who had a malarial attack, came to the spot.

'How are you?'

'Swamiji, he had high fever in the afternoon,' explained Chidanandaji.

Siva noticed Govindaswamiji's unshaven face. 'I think a good shave is urgently necessary. It will relieve him of half the feverish appearance. I always believe that a neat and clean appearance goes a long way in the curing of a disease.'

'Swamiji, I thought it would be nice to clip Avadhuta Swamiji's beard also a bit, because now he is greatly inconvenienced while taking milk or coffee on account of the beard.'

'No, no. We should take Sendamangalam Swamiji's permission before doing so. (Sendamangalam Swayamprakasha Swamiji is the Avadhuta Swamiji's Guru.) Without his Guru's permission, you cannot cut his hair.'

This, in spite of the fact that the old Swami had made Ananda Kutir his abode, and had Guru-like veneration towards Siva. Siva would help, lodge, feed and maintain a Sadhu, but not claim his allegiance.

17TH DECEMBER, 1948

THE END OF EVIL

Certain principles of Divine Life Society's organisation were being discussed.

'My idea is service,' said Siva. 'I will, therefore, keep the doors of the Ashram open even to a rogue. I will take him in and try to mould his character on right lines. Through him I will serve humanity. In this service his heart also will get purified.'

'I do not want to lose one worker. For, you see: this Ashram and Society started like a small mustard seed, and by God's grace it has grown into a big institution now with branches all over the world. Thousands of aspirants are writing that they are benefited by our service.'

Sri R.V. Sastriji interrupted: 'Yes, Swamiji. That is perfectly true. Sri Satchidananda Swamiji wrote to the All-India Congress Committee for a pass to join the Congress Session. The letter reached Sri Rajendra Prasad for sanction. Sri Rajen Babu noticed the name 'Sivanandashram' on top of the letter and at once remarked: 'Oh, this Swami has written from Sivanandashram. They are doing very good work. There is no worry. Issue him a ticket. Sri K.S. Venkataramani was with Rajen Babu at that time and K.S.V. himself told me this.'

Siva continued: 'It is all due to His grace. We are merely instruments in His hands. We should always see in what ways we can promote the work: and we should avoid the evils that eat away the very roots of the organisation. Jealousy, for instance, is a great evil which will prevent the growth of any institution. But, it is a human vice. It is in everyone. It can be totally eradicated only when one attains Brahma Jnana.'

'But, what we should all strive to do is to cripple jealousy so that it is unable to work its way into the very vitals of our being. This can be done only through constant Vichar and Vairagya. When jealousy arises in the mind, try to put it down and prevent it from taking positive shape.'

'Anger is another evil. If you get angry towards any one in the morning, in the noon you should do Vichar and in the evening you should make proper amends and become one with the other man. Always try to co-operate with all, adapt yourself with all, mix with all, and work for all. The most important point is service. That should be your motto. Then everything will be all right. You should every moment feel: 'How can I enable the divine life message reach thousands of more aspirants?' Then gradually all evil qualities will leave you.'

20TH DECEMBER, 1948

NO IMPORT: BUT CULTIVATION

Chidanandaji's discourse was on Raja Yoga during the morning class today. Siva felt that the visitors should have the benefit of listening to C's discourse. He sent Vishnuji to call them.

Sri Sthanu Subramania Iyer, who was staying down-hill near the Ganges-bank, at once went up to the Bhajan Hall to attend the class: but, Sri R.N., who was staying very near the Hall failed to turn up—even after being called.

Commenting on this peculiar behaviour, Siva said:

'Everything depends on the Samskaras with which each man is born. A man full of evil Samskaras will not enjoy Satsang in the same measure as another born with good Samskaras. A devotee with spiritual Samskaras will thirst for Satsang, will run to places where Satsang is held: but one who has not got them will neglect to attend even if the Satsang is held nextdoor.

'These virtues are products of long and arduous cultivation. One divine quality is fully developed in man as a result of patient endeavour through many lives. That R.N. is here shows that he has some good Samskaras. In course of time these will gain strength and he will take delight in Satsang.'

21ST DECEMBER, 1948

MOTTO OF SERVICE

The Superintendent of Post Offices has come to inspect the Ananda Kutir Branch Post Office.

The moment he was ushered into the office by Sri Atmaramji and was introduced to Siva, Siva showered on him the blessings of Jnana: his own priceless books. Soon the Superintendent was surrounded by books, magazines and leaflets. As Siva was autographing the books, the Superintendent was explaining the purpose of his visit to Ananda Kutir:

'Though, Swamiji, my main object is to inspect the Post Office's registers, etc., I was equally eager to pay you my respects in person. My brother-in-law also wanted to have your Darshan.'

'Are the Post Office accounts and registers here all right?'

'I am going to inspect them formally, Swamiji. But, I am sure they must be all right. We have had no worries about this Post Office. We know that the Post Office is being managed very efficiently, in spite of the very heavy load of work they have to carry. Because your motto, as also the motto of all the workers here, is selfless service.'

'How do you know?'

'Swamiji, even though I have not visited this Ashram previously, I have heard a lot about your humanitarian services and the noble work the Ashram is doing.'

22ND DECEMBER, 1948

I BELONG TO YOU

Today is the 87th Birthday of Sri Raghavacharyaji, the founder of Sri Darshana Mahavidyalaya, near the Ashram. Siva had been invited and he went up to the Vidyalaya with fruits, etc.

As he was nearing the Vidyalaya, Sri Raghavacharyaji, Sri Vishnu Dutt Sastriji and others were hurrying towards him to welcome him. Noticing this, Siva remarked: 'Do not trouble yourself, Maharaj, I belong to you all. This honour is, therefore, superfluous.'

DUTY OF DISCIPLES

Siva then delivered an inspiring talk. After describing in detail Sri R.'s services, to the cause of the spread of Sanskrit knowledge and a knowledge of the Darshanas, Siva felt that Sri Acharyaji's disciples should join hands with one another and bring out a short life-sketch of Sri R. 'It is your duty, the duty of all the disciples of Sri Acharyaji Maharaj. Where there is a will, there is a way. You should all at once set about the task.'

SAGUNA vs. NIRGUNA

Siva led the gathering to the famous RAM chant. He demonstrated to them how his RAM chant, in some respects, even excelled OM chanting. 'OM is Nirguna and RAM is Saguna. Chant RAM. It is even more inspiring. You will quickly get into Bhava Samadhi. It will bestow on you peace and joy.'

THE DESTROYER OF EVILS

Then Siva taught them the loud RAM Japa-Kirtan. It is unique. You have to quickly repeat Ram Ram Ram. 'This is wonderful,' said Siva. 'It is very efficacious when you wish to counteract evil thoughts. You can gain peace very quickly. Not only this, this quick chanting of RAM automatically brings about Kevala-Kumbhak and thus goes a long way in stilling the thoughts. It is a powerful form of exercise also. It increases the gastric fire. You will be able to digest your food properly. This is an all-round exercise, very suitable to you all, the disciples of Acharyaji, who is a Samuchaya Vadin.'

LIFE OF MY LIFE

Siva noticed some books lying stacked in a corner. He quickly pointed out to one of the inmates of the Vidyalaya (and this effectively proves the truth of the earlier remark 'I belong to you'): 'Please keep these books nicely. They are very precious. They are more valuable than our life itself. Tie them nicely in a good wrapping paper and keep them safely. I will ask Kesavji to assist you in this work.' Who else will do this? Divine Life is dissemination of spiritual knowledge: and whoever does this, Siva is at-one with him.

23RD DECEMBER, 1948

BLESSED IRONFILINGS

I was just passing along the verandah outside the dining hall when I heard this very interesting conversation between Sri Balanji and a visitor. I reproduce the gist of it: it gives you an idea of what Siva did silently, months ago.

'Balanji, I heard your wonderful lecture this morning and last evening. How long have you been here?' The visitor obviously was unaware of the fact that Sri Balan is an M.A. and a prosperous free-lance journalist.

'I came here a little over a year ago on just a casual visit. I stayed for a couple of days and felt irresistibly like staying on. On and on I have stayed, granting myself piece-meal extensions, until at last I feel that I have, as you would say, come to stay.'

The visitor was deeply interested. With just an exclamation, 'Achcha?' that involuntarily escaped him, he listened, eyes gleaming in curiosity.

'You see,' continued B: 'there is the rare blessing of Ganges here. You might say that there are other places where the Ganga flows. There are the Himalayas. I know you would again say that there are other places in the Himalayas. You have a Society here that has its numerous departments to cater to the needs of aspirants of all temperaments. Here, again, you might suggest that there are other institutions approximating to this, or at least with departments enough to suit MY temperament. But, then, you do not have one thing anywhere else. And, that is the closest proximity to a living sage and Jnani (and, what is extraordinary) who would talk freely with you, mix with you, crack jokes with you, at the same time clear all your doubts by his mere glance and elevates you by his mere thought. He is truly your father, mother, friend, all.

'Not only I: but quite a few there are like me who just came for a day and then decided to spend their whole life here. Do you know our Sivanarayanji who delivers inspiring Hindi lectures? He, too, came three years ago just to attend the Birthday celebrations. He used to deliver Hindi lectures during the celebrations. His talks were highly interesting, full of educative humour, of stories and anecdotes which produced side-splitting laughter among the hearers. Swamiji found good spiritual Samskaras in him and suggested he might stay on for some time more. S. actually renounced the world and has stayed on. The miraculous thing: this has saved his life, so to say, because he was living in what is now Pakistan. S. attributes all this to Swamiji's grace and timely suggestion. What else do you call a person who gives you life, than father and mother in one?'

With a look suggestive of an inward envy at the happy and glorious lot of these ironfilings who were without any effort on their own part drawn to the Great Magnet Siva, the visitor left the spot. He must have reflected within himself: 'Has this iron-filing, myself, reached that level of rustless purity that would enable it to be drawn to the magnet?'

SCALE OF VALUES

Sri Seth, the Society's auditor, expresses profound gratitude at having been able to stay in the Ashram.

Siva said: 'This is your own home. You can come here as often as you can. You are, after all, so near. Make it a point to spend all your holidays here and attend all important functions here.'

'Swamiji, the world is such that if, instead of saying all this, you had said: 'Come to Rishikesh. There is such and such a chance of your acquiring ten thousand rupees.' I would have rushed to Rishikesh any number of times. It is very difficult to gauge the value that one derives from this Satsang, seclusion and Tirtha Yatra. Very few people can even understand that there is a lot of good in them.'

How true, indeed!

28TH DECEMBER, 1948

OLD MAN'S SONG

Swami Omkaranandaji and myself had been deputed by Siva to represent him at the Tehri-Garhwal Constituent Assembly to be inaugurated at Tahri tomorrow.

Familiarity breeds contempt: is a proverb in which I had cent per cent belief. For once I had to experience an exception.

At Rishikesh, we ran into a tea-shop for a cup of tea. The shop-keeper is an old resident of Rishikesh.

'I have been here for the past forty years. I have been watching all the Sadhus and Mahatmas. But I have never seen anyone approach Swami Sivanandaji's greatness.'

'Oh, yes, he has written a number of books,' explained some one else.

'That is all right. Of course, he is a great learned man, too. But my point is not that. I have never met anyone who has got his heart. Swami Sivanandaji's is a divine heart. I remember how he used to serve all sick Sadhus and Sanyasins, poor people and lepers here. I shudder to think: he used often to sleep with dangerously sick patients suffering from cholera and typhoid. No, no: there is no one in the world with Sivanandaji's heart.'

30TH DECEMBER, 1948

SIVA THANKS YOU

The crowded Sadhana Week programme had almost come to an end. The Drama 'Four Letters of Yama' had been staged under the direction of Sri Swami Chidanandaji. Many were the interludes to the play: there was the humorous Doctors' Parade conducted by Sri Kesavji with his discourse on Namopathy and its uniqueness; there was the formal opening of the Anand Kutir Brahma Jnana Research Pharmacy with Swami Chidanandaji as the doctor-in-charge (Dr.

Brahman), and with sparking humour C. explained his Adhyatmic prescription for the root-maladies of man: lust, anger, greed, etc.; and there was Siva's dialogue between meat and milk which, Chidanandaji explained, actually meant Rajas vs. Satwa; dialogue between Astika and Nastika; and discussion among the senses re: their superiority. The boys taking part in the Four Letters had given a very good account of themselves especially in the tense death-scene.

Siva stood up on the platform, and spoke in fluent Hindi. Below is the gist of his stirring address.

'I thank you all for coming here on this occasion, for sitting through this performance in this cold. I am deeply indebted to you all for this.'

Look at Siva's attitude: surely, the entire audience is grateful to him for taking all this trouble for their sake! But, no: HE is grateful, and HE thanks you for giving him an opportunity to serve you. Let us all learn this Yoga attitude from him.

MORAL OF THE DRAMA

'Lord Yamma sends four letters to man. But, every time he is misguided by his worldly friends, and he ignores these letters. Hairs turn grey: but he paints them black. Teeth fall: he takes on false teeth. Eye-sight fails: he puts on spectacles. His vitality is exhausted: he resorts to tonics. He does not see that death is inevitable; and that only God's Name will really help him in the end. In the end he repents. But it is too late. He cries for help. But who can help him? There is only 'matlab' (selfish) friendship in the world. Note this point well. No one but the Lord Himself is your real friend. Every one else loves you for his or her own purpose. Understand this moral very well.

'Always repeat the Name of the Lord. Merely doing one or two Malas of Japa will not do. All the day you should repeat His name. Then only will His grace descend upon you and save you. This is a very easy form of Sadhana. This is the safest, too. Even if you don't realise God in this birth, if you go on repeating His name, you will continue the thread in the next birth: the Samskaras will be there and you will soon realise Him.'

MAHA MANTRA

With 'Sunaja' Kirtan (Siva's favourite), he continued:

Serve Love Give Purify Meditate Realise

Be good, Do good, Be kind, Be compassionate

'This is the essence of all the Vedas, of all Sastras, Puranas, not only of the Hindu religion, but of all the religions of the world. Always aspire to purify the Antahkarana. Service alone can purify the heart. Service will give you opportunities of analysing yourself and finding out the impurities that lurk in you. Gradually you should develop all the Daivi Sampath or divine qualities.

'Isavasyam Idam Sarvam—the Lord pervades the entire creation. Realise this well. Feel this. Bow to all. Be kind to all. When you have some sweetmeats, distribute them to others' children first, before giving them to your children. This is the way to develop the heart. Give to the health officer (scavenger, in Siva's

dictionary!) the fruits that you take yourself: do not give him stale plantain fit only to be thrown away. Analyse yourself. See how many good Samskaras you have developed. Look at the Auditor's wife. Even in this cold, she daily goes to the Ganga for her bath in the morning. Find out how many good Samskaras you have implanted in yourself. Perfection is not an easy thing: but you need not despair, you will surely attain perfection if you purify yourself every moment.

ONENESS OF GOD

Siva had instituted the two-party Kirtan with Krishna Dhwanis. After some time, he said:

'There is Uma Raniji: she is a devotee of Lord Siva, and she would like Siva-Dhwanis.' So saying, he started Siva-Dhwanis.

'All the names are one. God is one. He is called variously. Particularly, in the case of Rama Bhaktas, they are asked to repeat the Panchakshari for six months in the beginning, and worship Siva. It is said that only then will they get Rama's Darshan. There is a secret behind this: 'Sivasya Hridayam Vishnur, Vishnoscha Hridayam Sivah'. Both are one. Do not act like the silly devotee of Siva who plugged the Vishnu-side nostril of a combined image, lest the fumes from the incense which he was waving before the image should enter Vishnu's nostril. Know that all forms of the Lord are one: all names of the Lord are one and have equal effect. Some people foolishly imagine that one name is superior to another. Soham is the best they will say. What do they understand by Soham? They think that the body is the Atman. What else can they understand? Their minds are full of dirt. Without cleansing their minds, they cannot understand the Mahavakyas. They do not practise Karma Yoga and Bhakti Yoga. They speak derisively of these: they jump to Jnana Yoga. Finally, they achieve nothing at all.'

MODERATION

Again Siva sang his other favourite Kirtan in the Maha Mantra tune:

Eat a little, drink a little, talk a little, sleep a little

Mix a little, move a little, work a little, rest a little

'Eat and drink in moderation. You will have health and long life. It does not mean that you should starve. You should be moderate. Have one good meal at noon. Take a light diet of milk and fruits at night: that, too, before night-fall. In this respect the Jain custom of finishing their supper before sunset is very healthy. When you go to bed, you should have digested your food. Then you will have a refreshing sleep: and you will be able to get up at 4 o'clock next morning.'

'But, what people generally do is just the reverse. They run hither and thither during the day: and at night—that, too, very late, they take a heavy diet. They do not have proper digestion. They suffer from Dyspepsia. They do not enjoy sound sleep. And, on top of it all, they get up at 8 a.m. A day's programme is before them. They do not know what to do. They get bewildered. Their mind is confused.'

'Mixing with all sorts of people is very bad. That does not mean that you should be gloomy and secluded. Talk to people: be cheerful: but be moderate in this. Too much of talking will only result in fights and quarrels.'

He again sang the song.

'This is the 'Song of A Little'. You will be able to remember this very easily. The moment you think of 'A Little', you will remember the instructions, too. This is the Law of Association which governs the mind. Have you not heard of the famous 'tion' sentence? Examination is a great botheration to the Hindu nation whose sole occupation is cultivation.'

Everyone laughed.

'Here you will make many pious resolves. But the next morning you will forget all about them. Get these small songs by heart. Sing them every morning and evening. They will inspire you. They will not allow you to slumber again.'

At this stage Siva noticed that some people were feeling drowsy, while some people were slightly inattentive (the time was nearly 12 midnight.)

'I have got a medicine which will revive you marvellously. You will get new vitality without having recourse to tea.

Now sing:

Jaya Jaya Radhe Shyaaaamm....

Jaya Jaya Sita Raaaaaaaammmmmm....

Now, the shooting Dhwani:

SHYAM

SHYAM

SHYAM

(The words are shot out with force)

The effect of these on the audience was miraculous. Siva continued:

'Remember the moral of today's drama always. The more you reflect on it, the more strength you will get. Vairagya alone is the priceless treasure. Turn away from the world: and direct your gaze towards the Lord in the heart. Do not run after worldly pleasures. You can never get any satisfaction in them. Even a millionaire is only a poor man. A crorepathy is more worried than an ordinary man. When the bank fails, the crorepathy's heart also fails. He sleeps over the concealed iron-safe in which he has stored his wealth. He is afraid of thieves. Even his sons hate him: everyone is jealous of him. He has hardly a true friend. Throw away worldly riches and acquire the priceless treasure of God's name. No one can rob you of this wealth.'

Then Siva sang his Vedantic song:

Sarvam Brahmamayam re re

Sarvam Brahmamayam

Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagat

Sarvam Vishnumayam

Matha Pitha Brahmam

Ladka Ladki Brahmam

Ganevala Brahmam

Sunnevala Brahmam

Orange juice Brahmam

Soda Lemonade Brahmam

Tablavala Brahmam

Harmoniumvala Brahmam

‘People with little understanding cannot realise the significance of this great truth: Sarvam Brahmamayam. But, when you have real Vairagya and Viveka, then you will understand the real meaning. People who try to understand and interpret the utterances of the sages with the help of their own finite intellect are deluded and they are led astray. They are like Virochana in the Upanishads.’

‘Sarvam Brahmamayam means that the Adhishthana or support for all is Brahman. The name and form are illusory. You will have to negate them and take the essence, the substratum of everything, which is Brahman.’

‘This understanding will come only when the mind is purified of its dross through selfless service and Upasana. Therefore, I say again: serve, love, purify, meditate and realise.’

Sri Sudarshan Sareen specially requested Siva to sing his ‘Govind song’. Siva poured forth his precious instructions in the form of this famous song. ‘The nature of God, ethical teachings, essence of Yoga—all are given in the form of this beautiful song. Siva concluded the song with:

May God bless you	Govinda
With health and long life	Govinda
Peace and Prosperity	Govinda
And Kaivalya Moksha	Govinda
May you all become	Govinda
Jivanmuktas	Govinda
In this very birth	Govinda

31ST DECEMBER 1948

SIVANANDA’S SIVA

Today is the Viswanath Mandir Pratishtha Anniversary Day. A programme of Ekadasha Rudra Abhishekam and Laksharchana is being put through in the temple. The Abhishekam is over and several Sadhus and Sadhaks are sitting inside the Mandir worshipping the Lord with flowers and bael leaves. The

Laksharchana had already progressed well and the Lord (Siva Lingam) had been fully covered over with a thick shawl of flowers: a wonderful sight.

Siva was circumambulating around the temple. Suddenly he appeared at the threshold of the shrine. One of the Sadhaks offered Siva some flowers and bael leaves to worship the Lord with. And, as the Sanyasin outside was going on with his recitation of the Mantras, Siva also joined us in offering flowers to the Lord. This went on for a few minutes.

Lo! In a mood of complete self-forgetfulness, Siva had turned on the Sadhus and Sadhaks sitting around the Lingam and is worshipping them with the flowers intended for the Lord. I looked up: but there was not a trace on Siva's countenance or eyes that would indicate his recognition of who exactly we were. The eyes gazed on: they looked at us—but what can anyone say what he saw?

Sadhus and Sanyasins had vanished: Grihasthas and disciples had vanished: boys and old men had vanished: man and woman had vanished: all distinctions melted away before his purified gaze. Lord Siva alone remained. Siva in the Linga being worshipped by Siva in the human garb. And, Siva worships Siva in the Lingam and in all: Sarvam Siva-mayam,—a silent discourse.



JANUARY, 1949

3RD JANUARY, 1949

JAPA YOGA SADHANA

A visitor wanted Purascharana-rules. He desired to perform a Purascharana of the Panchakshari. Siva explained to him the essential points.

'Swamiji, I don't know if I can every day spare so much time.'

'It does not matter. Do Japa for about two hours in the morning and two hours in the night, and if possible increase this period. But, on that account, do not miss the morning and evening Satsang. Sit down on your Asan, pray to the Lord and then commence your Japa. Repeat the Mantra slowly. Keep a watch by your side one day and find out the rate at which you are repeating the Mantra. Then you can give up counting beads. Supposing, you find that you are able to do 30 Malas in one hour, calculated the number of Malas that you daily perform according to the time you have sat. This will prevent distraction in counting.'

NO CONTRACT WITH GOD

'How many Malas of Japa should I do, Swamiji?'

'Five Lakhs. But, to be sure, continue till you reach six lakhs. You should not have the contractor's mentality with God. Do the Japa with Nishkamyā Bhava. No rules will worry you.'

MIGHTY INTELLECT, BUT?

Sri R. Ramakrishna of Karachi (now at New Delhi) has come with a harmonium for the Ashram.

He narrated to Siva the gist of a thrilling lecture by an independent spiritual leader (what a contradiction in terms—one cannot be independent and a leader at the same time.)

'Swamiji, Sri.... stresses on the immediate individual transformation to be brought about by Self-awareness, and asserts that the awakened individual will then be able to establish the right relationship with environments. His theme begins with an intellectual analysis of one's own emotions which, through the mental process of naming them as such, become anger, lust, jealousy, etc. Then such feelings are recorded in memory. This triple process of experiencing, naming and recording the emotions, is the work of mind or self-projection, or thought-feeling. The separation of the Thinker from his thought, which is a mental process leads to the cessation of thought process. When the awakened individual is alive to the force behind his emotions, it is a state of Being called LOVE in which the individual experiences an inward richness and creative joy. He is face to face with the Reality which has no end and which is never static and, viewed from the relative standpoint of time, is ever new, ever fresh from moment to moment. When he says this, Swamiji, it is so convincing and inspiring. He does not have any organisation; and he actually condemns organisations, and also the

institution of Guru and disciple. He does not believe in, or quote from, any scripture. He does not advocate any religion, but he says that he has arrived at the Truth independently himself. He does not like Kirtan and speaks of them derisively as the shouting-class.'

'You should not attend such lectures,' instantly came Siva's reply. 'What a travesty of truth. Lord Krishna has clearly said in the Gita that one should not unsettle another's faith. That is why the Sastras emphatically declare the need for a Guru: the Guru alone will be able to understand the aspirant's state and prescribe the proper Sadhana. The same instructions do not suit all: and if you enunciate some general principles, they should not be antagonistic to anyone else's principles. These instructions are suitable only for the microscopic minority. For advanced students who are well-versed in psychology. Those who have faith in the Lord's name, in Japa, Kirtan, and the Yoga of Synthesis, should not attend such lectures. Their faith in their own Sadhana will be shaken: they will not know exactly how to proceed on the new path: and torn between the two, they will simply collapse midway.'

'Further, organisations are necessary if you want to do some real and substantial service to humanity. Everyone has his own organisation. Take the case of this Sri....: is he not being looked after by the public? Does he not have a following? That is the organisation, though he may not call it so, and register it. If you have no selfish motives, there is no harm in having an organisation.'

LITTLE THINGS MATTER A LOT

In the evening Satsang, Rampremji had concluded today's portion of Vinaya Patrika. Quietly, he folded the right-hand top corner of the particular leaf, to serve as a book-mark, and closed the book. But, Siva, of all people there, had noticed this.

'No, no: Rampremji, don't do that. If you go on doing so, the pages will start breaking. The book will be spoiled. This is a little thing: but it matters a lot. These little habits of carelessness and ease-loving nature you should try to overcome. Place a proper book-mark—a piece of paper.'

'This is not the only one. There are people who, when they find it difficult to turn a leaf in the book, will bring their saliva to use. God did not intend saliva to be used for this. To prevent this only have the Sastras prohibited such practices as unholy. They are unhygienic, too.'

'There are several other practices which a Sadhaka especially should avoid. Cracking the fingerjoints is one such thing. Spitting, especially when it is accompanied with a roaring throat-clearing sound, is another. When you are in others' company, disturbing others, specially when they are in meditation, with curious noises is another. These little things go a long way in forming a Sadhaka's character.'

6TH JANUARY, 1949

MANAGER SIVANANDA

A devotee came into the office to have Darshan of 'Swamiji'. Siva greeted her with OM and folded palms, made her sit on the bench near-by and started enquiring about her health, the Yatra, etc. When Siva resumed his work, the lady quietly walked out, feeling a bit uneasy to sit in the office idly, where others were busy with their work.

Near the dispensary, she asked Sri Swami Chidanandaji: 'Where is Swamiji? When can I see him?'

Chidanandaji was amused, as he had noticed that the lady came straight from the office where Siva was at the time.

'Swamiji is in the office. Why, you are coming from there only. Have you not seen him?'

'He, with a coat and spectacles, sitting there? Is he Swamiji? I thought he was the Manager of the Ashram!'

With tears in her eyes, she ran back and fell at Siva's feet. The tears wash away the defective vision which sought to recognise saintliness only in externalities and to disregard the inner divinity clothed in an overcoat: and she beheld before her now the pure Satchidananda who, for the sake of sport, has clothed himself with the Koshas.

TRAINING IN EMOTION CONTROL

'Satyanandaji Maharaj, nowadays you are not attending the morning class. Gradually you are becoming an Alasyanand, I think. You see: I come from my Kutir which is the farthest from the Bhajan Hall. But, you are not able to walk half the distance even!

'It does not matter. You have already acquired an immortal fame through your brilliant lectures, thrilling songs, and plays. Have you copied that article? It is a masterly production. You have a tremendous brain. Though you look like a small boy, yet you have very well developed your intellectual faculties. Try to grow fat and fat. Then you will have an impressive physique. What is this? You have no moustache also. At least put on a false moustache. Then with all this pompous dress you will look like a Maharajah. You have now established a first-rate office for yourself. You look more like a Marwari business man, sitting at your desk. Very good: that is also necessary.'

A wonderful speech! Blowing hot and cold! S's expression was worth watching, as it reacted to all that Siva was saying—one moment praising and the next moment pointing out a defect. That is the subtle way in which Siva trains his disciples. Instruction mixed with a lot of glorification, is highly palatable. The sugar-coating slowly melts away by constantly dwelling on what he said: and in a calm mood flashes the flowery sword. But then the edges are smoothed by this time,

though it lodges itself deep inside the heart. We learn, but without the bitterness that naturally accompanies 'learning' in the world.

SHARP TONGUE

A Sadhaka had a grievance. He came into the office with a complaint against another inmate who had insulted him. Siva counselled forbearance. Later, it was pointed out to Siva by someone else that the offending party had a sharp tongue in truth.

'Everybody has a sharp tongue. After all, we are all human beings only. But the beauty lies in controlling it. Before an offending word is uttered, you should introspect and check it. And, even if occasionally you happen to use the wrong expression, you should learn the art of smoothening the matter out at once. You should apologise to the man whom you had offended, talk to him sweetly, ask his pardon and pacify him. Gradually your very nature will be changed.'

7TH JANUARY, 1949

HUMAN NATURE

The room occupied by Sri Shamash had been vacated: and several chairs and tables had been put to other use. Aramudanji was sitting on a small chair brought from the vacated room. Siva was walking on the terrace opposite the D.J. Hall. Seeing A., he remarked:

'There is a peculiar joy in using other people's property, isn't it? It is part of human nature. Even if we have good chairs, we will discard them and use others just because they belong to other people. Mysterious is the mind.'

Such objective analysis of human nature, without letting the emotional aspect of our own personality or any personal equation coming into the picture at all, serves to enlighten us, and saves us from the inevitable fault-finding nature apparently involved in it.

ITCHING HAND

'Padmanabhanji! Bring me one rupee worth of small coins. Write the amount as charity. Whenever I go out, I should have some small coins in my pocket. I see poor people on the road, but I have nothing to give them. I used in Malaya always to keep a lot of small change in my pocket and distribute them to the poor. That gives me a great joy and peace. Bring the coins at once.'

P. at once brought some coins.

THIS IS MONEY?

'What is this?' asked Siva handling a half-anna coin.

'Half-anna? I have never seen this. (This coin has been in use for a considerable time now.) I do not have any occasion, because I do not handle money. It is a peculiar shaped coin. Is it enough if I give a poor man only half-anna? What will he get for it?'

It was difficult to convince Siva that half-anna was also money.

8TH JANUARY, 1949

SUBTLE WAYS OF MAYA

'Swamiji, I found these two rupees near the Brahmanandashram,' Sri Menon handed Siva the coins.

'You should have found out the owner. How can we appropriate the money to ourselves just because it lay on the road. Someone else will miss it.'

'No, Swamiji: it was lying on the road. If I had not taken it, it might even have been lost in the sand. Here, Swamiji, the two rupees would be put to very good use; and in absentia the donor will receive the Lord's blessings.'

'Ohji, this is how Maya deceives man. You see: I have just written a story about a man who was told by his Guru to shun Kamini, Kanchana and Kirti, but who was later very gradually dragged into the very pit of temptations.'

Siva turned to another Sanyasin (not belonging to the Ashram) who was sitting near him.

'Supposing you found five thousand rupees on the roadside. What will you do? Will you give them to me, for this divine work? Or....(rocking with laughter).... will you merely think, 'I will give two thousands to Swamiji and utilise the rest myself. After all, I have my own needs. God has given this moment only for this purpose?'

This is much like saying that it was only because the amount was insignificant that the Sadhaka had the good sense of putting it to good use: otherwise, he might not be able to resist the temptation of evil. The mind will offer its own excuses: and will lead him astray.

Another strange coincidence which I could not fail to notice is this. Siva had just yesterday expressed his holy wish to have some small change always in his pocket for the purpose of 'charity on the roadside'. Ere a rupee is exhausted there is this charity from the roadside! Strange are the ways of the divine and His messengers.

MAKES THE DUMB ELOQUENT

Siva has received a letter from the Kali Kamliwala Kshetra requesting his help in the matter of holding Kathas and Satsang under the auspices of the Kshetra. Siva had already deputed three Ashramites to deliver lectures on four days in the month. Swami X is in the Ashram today on account of the Birthdate celebration. Siva very tactfully (it will be impossible for anyone to narrate how this is done: you will have to see it for yourself, how an unwilling horse walks into harness without compulsion and of its own accord) persuaded the Swami to take part in the Kshetra's programme. Part of the conversation I shall narrate here:

'You deliver such thrilling lectures, Swamiji. How are you able to do so if you are not holding frequent Kathas and discourses? How do you remember all the stories and points? Many people lose touch with this faculty and it is dulled.'

'I do not deliver any lectures and Kathas. But, I teach students if they come to me,' replied the Swami.

'But, yet, your discourses are like those of learned pundits who have made lecturing their profession.'

'Swamiji,' confessed the Swami: 'but for your grace I would not have been able to deliver even one lecture in my life. It is only because you forced me in the first instance to deliver lectures that today I am able to hold an audience. Otherwise, I would have remained dumb, Swamiji. Your grace it is that has made me eloquent.'

MISINTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURES

Topic drifted: and the Swami told Siva:

'Swamiji, in his discourse that Acharya gave, a strange meaning to the Upanishadic Utterance,

Na Ayam Atma Pravachanene Labhyah

Na Medhaya, Na Bahuna Shrutena

He says that this decries the utility of Sravan, Manan and Hididhyasan. He interprets 'Pravachana' to affect Sravan: 'Medhaya' to affect Manan: and 'Bahuna Shrutena' to affect Nididhyasan. And, he has made out a queer meaning of this to the effect that the Atman is not to be attained by Sravan, Manan and Nididhyasan, but by the grace of the Lord alone. He says that this is the view of Visishtadwaita.'

Another student of Vedanta present in the office pointed out to Siva that the Dwaita Vadins have found a hidden 'a' in the quotation from Chandogya Upanishad where the Mahavakhya occurs. Atmaatattwamasi they have construed to mean 'Atma Atattwamasi', i.e., Thou art NOT That!

Siva was greatly amused and he said:

'You see: the Acharyas are not at fault. Ramanujacharya was great: and he has stressed the doctrine of grace and devotion, as he found that the vast majority of the people was not suited to direct Adwaitic initiation. These are all several rungs in the ladder. Dwaita, Visishtadwaita and then Adwaita. People should not indulge in these misinterpretations and 'Khandana'. Philosophers and seers should always synthesise: and their followers should understand the spirit of the Acharya's teachings and desist from condemning followers of other schools.'

EVER-READY TO SERVE

At 11 a.m. Siva was told that at 12 the foundation for a new Kutir (to be built by Sri Gajanan Sharma of Janjgir) was to be laid. Already Siva had made two rounds of the hillock: once in the morning for the class and again his usual trip to the cave. And, food was waiting: it was getting late. Yet, such is Siva's readiness to oblige, Siva walked up all the way to bless the foundation-stone-laying ceremony.

9TH JANUARY, 1949

THE FORMIDABLE GULF OF SLIGHT DIFFERENCE

Govindasmawiji's heart ached to see Siva clad in an overcoat worn out with age! It was once upon a time a good woollen coat. It had served its master well. Now, it looks like a gunny-bag. Suns and moons adorn its face, revealing the inner garments here and there. Yet, it was proud of the love that Siva bore towards it: and on Siva's back it laughed—perhaps at a newer coat lying unused.

'Swamiji, this coat is torn all over the back. It looks ugly also. Please wear the other, new coat.'

Siva looked up and smiled.

'Achcha? It is torn? Very well: but it keeps the warmth all right.'

People are prone to imitate a saint when he enjoys certain creature comforts: they misunderstand the saint's behaviour when they see that 'he also wears good, nice clothes: he also takes sweetmeats.' But they hardly understand the inner difference, the vital difference that there is between the saint's attitude towards these and their own. The saint cares not if Prarabdha brings him silk gowns or dirty rags. He greets both with a happy smile. The dull-witted aspirant rejoices in fashionable dress and new clothes, and thinks that he is right in doing so—does not the saint wear these. He would preach to others that equanimity is the secret and that the costly wearing apparel does not taint him. But, ask him to wear a torn coat or a dirty dhoti: the old Abhiman will raise its head from within.

That is the difference. It is very subtle. It is like the deep chasm that separates the mountain-peaks very close to each other. From a distance the gulf appears to be very slight: and you think you can walk over it. When you approach it, you discover that the very sight of it makes your head reel. That is why Lord Krishna warned Sadhakas to obey His words and not to imitate His actions.

11TH JANUARY, 1949

SWAMI RAMANANDAJI

Today is Vaikuntha Ekadashi, a highly auspicious day.

Early in the morning, as we entered his room, we found Ramanandaji had passed away. He had been suffering from asthma for the past some weeks: but the end was sudden and unexpected. He had carried on his work till the very last day.

When Siva was told of it, he merely nodded his head. A little later, when we took out the body for giving it a bath, Siva saw the calm face. 'He does not even show any signs of death. Don't be hasty: first give some artificial respiration, administer a couple of injections: make sure that he is not merely in a swoon.'

Sadhaks rushed here and there. Two people rubbed R's feet with liniment turpentine: two administered artificial respiration: Chidanandaji was giving

injections. Siva himself sat beside the body and rubbed the chest with 'Hare Rama' Kirtan.

When Padmanabhan who was giving the artificial respiration let go the hand, R's hand fell down on the ground just touching Siva's foot.

After some time, it was declared that life was long ago extinct from the body. 'All right, now say 'Krishna Bhagavan ki Jai' said Siva and permitted us to carry on with the last rites. Siva himself poured the first vesselful of Ganges-water on the body, with Panchakshari Kirtan.

Everyone talked about Ramanandaji: how very quietly he passed away: on such an auspicious day: without causing any inconvenience to anyone: in harness, working up to the last breath: etc., etc. Siva gave a quick reply:

'Why! His entire life was most exemplary. He was a pucca Vedantin. He never had any connection with his Purvashram family after he came here. He never hankered after any comforts of good food. He never interfered with anyone else's affairs. He had led a perfect life. He had convened three Divine Life Conferences in Rangoon, and one Religions' Conference. He has rendered great service to humanity. What more do you want?'

Someone then remarked: 'Swamiji, he has always been saying that he would prefer to die at Swamiji's feet and that he would never leave the Ashram, whatever be the physical inconvenience.'

May his soul rest in peace.

12TH JANUARY, 1949

THE FOURTH RESORT

During the morning class, Siva taught us some very good sitting-pose exercises.

Asans and Pranayama have the body as their basis. Siva is never content to let them remain so. He would insist on the practitioner bringing his mind also into play. Thus, he prescribes certain Bhavanas, e.g., the Bhavana that the seminal energy is being converted into Ojas Shakti during the practice of Sirasasan and Sarvangasan. And, he insists that the Sadhaka should go on repeating some Mantra mentally all the time.

This morning he started with Uddiyana and Agnisara while sitting comfortably on Sukhasana.

'Mentally, repeat TAT while drawing the abdomen in: and repeat SAT while resuming the normal position. This applies to Uddiyana and Agnisara Kriya.'

Then, the Yoga Mudra with a corresponding backward bend of the spine: first touching the floor with the nose and then in a swing bending the spine in the opposite direction resting on hands placed just behind the body. The same Mantra is repeated in the two processes.

Similarly, lateral twisting of the spine. First, a slight twist towards the left side, enough to enable you to place both palms on the floor to your left: then the same thing on the right side. The Mantra is to be repeated here also.

Then Bhastrika in the same posture.

'You would have sat comfortably in Sukhasana and within a few minutes you would have revitalised the entire system. The little attention you pay to the body and the mind will be amply rewarded in physical and mental health.'

OM TAT SAT DRILL

OM we uttered while still sitting in Sukhasana.

Siva then taught us the following drill:

We assumed the arms-bent-forward position with clenched fists.

TAT: throw the hands forward in a line with the shoulder.

SAT: resume the clenched fist position.

TAT: throw the hands sideways in a line with the shoulder.

SAT: resume the clenched fist position.

TAT: raise the hands, straight, above the head.

SAT: resume the clenched fist position.

Thus, without taking the trouble of changing position or taking off your coat, you will be able to perform a very useful exercise.

SUPREME COMPASSION

Man is generally compassionate towards himself. He is then nearer the quadrupeds. A little wider-visioned man extends his compassion to his family. He has not yet crossed the border. Another man gradually envelopes the village, district and nation with his compassion. Selflessness to a degree is manifest in him: he is really a MAN. A saint's compassion extends to humanity at large. A divine personality is compassionate towards all living beings—yet, within this world. What shall we call one whose compassion flows to planes other than this?

Such indeed is Siva.

After the morning class was over, he suddenly confronted us with a suggestion. 'From now, the first of every month will be observed here as ALL SOULS DAY. We should offer special prayers for the peace of all departed souls. In this modernised materialistic world Dharma has long ago been lost. Many religions have come into being in India itself that condemn ancestor-worship, Sraddhas and Tarpana. The departed souls are in great grief. They naturally look to us to help them. We must do this.

Someone pointed out that a Spiritualist who had recently visited the Ashram had contacted several departed souls who declared that they were eternally grateful to Siva for his Kirtans and prayers for their peace. They said that they had received great benefit through his mercy.

Another incident has already been chronicled: Sri Gauri Prasadji's granddaughter who rejoiced at Siva's Kirtan.

'The programme will be,' Siva continued: 'in the morning we should arrange for consecrated food-offerings to the departed souls. There will be a special Edkadasha Rudra Abhishekam at the temple. We can have poor-feeding and Sadhu Bhojan also. In the evening there will be a special Ganga Puja when lights will be floated on the waters of the Ganges in the name of the departed souls. There should be special illumination in the temple.'

'More expenses....' someone thought. The thought was at once read by Siva. 'Ohji, don't worry about the funds. They will come. When the Pitrus (manes) are pleased, they will goad their descendants to contribute to the Society. When old people hear of this arrangement, they will allot some portion of their properties to the Society in their Will. Our motive should be pure. We should always endeavour to serve all with selfless love. God will look after us.'

'Swamiji, you are perfectly right,' said an aged inmate. 'We started the worship in the temple. Since then the Ashram has attained to rare heights of prosperity. Who would have expected the growth of the Ashram so rapidly? How many Kutirs, how many typewriters, how many books—it is no joke. Surely, all these are indications that the Devas are highly pleased: the Lord is highly pleased with the worship here.'

'I told you: Lord Siva has run away from Kailas at the ceaseless chanting of Rudram and Chamakam here: and has taken his permanent abode in the Vishwanath Mandir.'

'But, Swamiji,' slowly put another aged devotee: 'you are an Adwaitin. Why should you encourage these Karmas? Where are the departed souls: and how are we to please them?'

'That is the mistake we commit. Do not mix up Absolute Truth with relative activities. So long as the body is there, so long as you think of the body, adorn it, feed it and look after it, you are in the relative plane only. You can by all means study and try to understand Vedanta: but you should not attempt to bring it into Vyavahara. When you have converted this body into a worn-out leather bag to be used or discarded at will, then you can discard all these Karmas also. Till then, you have to believe and carry on all these actions.'

15TH JANUARY, 1949

FROM MALAYA

A doctor from Malaya has arrived with his wife. After touching reverently the feet of saint Siva, he said:

'Swamiji, I had the rarest good fortune of living in the same bungalow that was previously occupied by your Holiness.'

'Is that so?' enquired Siva with child-like curiosity.

‘And, Swamiji, the Tulasi that you had planted outside is still worshipped: and every day till I left Malaya I used to light the lamps placed around the Tulasi Peetham.’

It is customary in Hindu households to have a small Tulsi-altar in the courtyard. Tulasi is very sacred and is very dear to the Lord. Its glory has been sung by Indian sages: and, curiously enough, its glory is being sung by eminent doctors and scientists today. The prosperous Dr. Kuppuswami (as Siva was called in his Purvashram) was yet religious to the very core. And, he took great delight in observing all these religious customs that have been handed down from generation to generation.

‘Yes, yes: even after I had left Negri-Sembilan, Dr. Parsons used to tell me every time he visited the place that the Tulasi Peetham was being maintained. I am very glad to hear that.’

They then fell into a discussion of the good old days and about their mutual friends.

‘Swamiji, you know well that no one in Malaya, especially among those have gone from here, was free from these evils—wine, woman and tobacco. All over Malaya you alone have acquired the unique name of having been the single man who was untouched by these evils. It is a great marvel.’

17TH JANUARY, 1949

HOW TO ATTAIN COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS

An intellectual friend who accompanied Sri Pindi Dassji, Manager of the Kali Kamliwala Kshetra, had a desire to know about things concerning the Self. Even as both of them entered the Hall, Siva had welcomed them with his natural hospitality, entertained them with fruits and tea and then enquired about their health, etc.

‘Swamiji, I wish to ask you some questions on the spiritual side. May I?’

‘Of course, you are welcome to.’

‘I wish to know from you, Swamiji, how I can develop Cosmic Consciousness.’

Siva looked at the questioner, as though to measure him with his eyes. After a couple of minutes came the laconic reply:

‘Meditate on formulas like ‘I am not the body: I am not the mind: I am the Absolute Brahman, Omnipresent, Omnipotent, Omniscient,....That is of the nature of Satchidananda.’ As this idea gets deeper and deeper into your mind, you will enjoy the Universal Consciousness.’

‘In that case, Swamiji, how am I to be sure that I am not merely hypnotising myself through these auto-suggestions? That which is beyond mind cannot be obtained through the mind’s working. In that case, even meditation becomes impossible.’

'You are right: if you get into these arguments, you will come to an impossible state. Some sort of auto-suggestion is necessary in the beginning till you reach the state of intuitive perception. These formulas have to be culled from the Upanishads which are the utterances of seers and therefore eternal verities.'

At this stage Sri Pindidassji interrupted and asked: 'Swamiji, how are we to ensure that this consciousness is kept up throughout? When we meditate, sometimes the consciousness is aroused. But, then, again we turn to work, this consciousness vanishes.'

'You have to go on with the practice. Sadhana Chatushtaya Sampath is necessary. Mind does not want to meditate on God. It always flows down: but the Yogi tries to take it up to its own source. That is Yoga. You should have to coax it to do the meditation. Viveka and Vairagya are necessary: then Samadi Shat Sampath are necessary. Then Mumukshutwa will come. Then and then alone will the mind long to realise the Supreme.'

The visitor put another question: 'Some Philosopher-Yogis say that the Atman is not attained through all these Sadhanas, Swamiji: their view seems to be, as I said, that That which is beyond the body, the mind and the intellect, cannot be attained through any amount of effort with these.'

'Quite true: that is what the Sruthi says, too. 'Na Ayamatra Pravachanana Labhyah....' Here the Sruthi positively hints at the doctrine of grace. God's grace is necessary. Otherwise, nothing is possible.

Sri Pindidassji: 'But how are we to deserve His grace, Swamiji?'

'Exactly, that is the point. You have to deserve the grace and invite it to descend on yourself. Therefore, these Sadhanas are prescribed. First acquire Sadhana Chatushtaya. Then do Sravan, Manan and Nididhyasan and then you will have universal consciousness.'

Sri Pindidass: 'That is a long, long process, Swamiji. We want a short-cut, a royal road.'

'That short-cut and royal road is meditation. Get up at 4 a.m. It is very favourable for meditation. Meditate on Vedantic formulas. Try as far as possible to keep up the Bhavana throughout the day. Gradually, you will become established in it.'

They were convinced: it is curious to note in this connection that without enquiring about their method, Siva had administered the right medicine, the right method, suited to them!

Then the topic turned to Swami Ram Tirtha whose admirers they both were.

Sri Pindidass: 'I have read almost all the works of Rama Tirtha and many other works on philosophy. But, you have very beautifully cleared my difficulties as no others could.'

Siva said: 'Rama Tirtha was at first a Bhakta and later turned into a Vedantin. I have heard that on the sands of Brahmapuri he used to dance with the tinklers around his ankles.'

‘There is no difference between Bhakti and Vedanti. Bhakti leads to the same realisation of the Cosmic Consciousness. Tulasi Das, Kabir Das—all Para Bhaktas have had that Realisation.’

‘The mind wants something to base itself on. Therefore, has Patanjali insisted that a Yogi should have OM as his Mantra and he should meditate on Its significance. OM is the name of the Atman. OM is Satchidananda. OM is omniscience, omnipotence, etc., light, joy and peace. Meditate on these ideas—then you will have Brahmic Consciousness. No doubt about it. Behind all names and forms, you will then perceive the Nameless and Formless Brahman.’

Sri Pindidass then narrated his own story, his interest in philosophy since his student days in Jammu.

‘I had once been to Jammu also,’ said Siva.

‘Yes, Swamiji. I know. For it was at that time that Kirtan was started at Jammu. Before that there was no Kirtan Prachar in Jammu. Since the time you planted the seed of Kirtan there, I cannot describe to you what a great change has come over Jammu. Everywhere Kirtan. That was solely due to your work there. And, it went on till the very day of partition and the Pakistan troubles.’

18TH JANUARY, 1949

SANYASIN BEWARE!

The morning class again witnessed Siva burst forth in torrential thundering wisdom. Sivaratri is approaching. A few have applied for Sanyas initiation.

‘Sanyas is not a joke. When you embrace Sanyas you take upon yourself a tremendous responsibility. The glory or ignominy of the entire order of Sri Sankaracharya rests upon your shoulders.

‘Of course, I have always emphasised that more and more young people with vigorous limbs and health should come forward to embrace Sanyas and lead a life of complete self-dedication. There is very little purpose in a man taking Sanyas when he has a foot in the grave. If you take Sanyas when you are a blooming youth, you will have ample time to practise intense Tapasya, to do a lot of selfless service, to meditate, to study, to do Kirtan and Vichar, and realise the Self in this very birth.

‘But, then, you should constantly remember that you are living today in a vicious world. Maya assails you on all sides. Self-realisation is not an easy thing. Ignorance is the very nature of the universe: though in its essence it is Satchidananda. Name and form deceive you at every step. Beware. Even Arjuna, whom the Lord Himself characterised as of His own Amsa (Pandavanam Dhananjayah), who was so intimate with the Lord, who had seen the Viswarupa of the Lord which no one else had the good fortune to see, and who was personally instructed by the Lord in the Bhagavad Gita, even that Arjuna was afterwards the same man with the same nature.

‘Guru can only show you the path. He can only point the goal to you. You will have to tread the Path yourself. Guru will point out the pitfalls. You will yourself have to be cautious and avoid them. If you slip into them, remember it is not the Guru, but you yourself, that are in the pit. But, if you instead of treading the path of virtue, stray away into sin, you not only kill yourself, burn yourself and reduce yourself to ashes, but you bring into disrepute the Guru, the order and the illustrious founders of the Order. Now, do you understand clearly the great responsibility that rests upon your shoulders?’

‘The foremost among the pitfalls is lust or sexual immorality. This is the greatest curse for a Sanyasin. It is a terrible fire which burns him instantly: not only that, its effects last for many, many births. A Sanyasin should beware.’

Remember, the world will not be charmed with your erudition or knowledge of philosophy. Everyone will be watching you to find out if you have Sadhu-qualities. They will watch if you are gentle, humble and polite. If you have virtuous qualities, then you need not go and invite people to admire you. As the scented stick when lit wafts its smell all round without effort, so if you have virtuous qualities, people will feel themselves drawn to you. If you have the proper Bhavana, when people are walking on the road and when another Sadhu just stands there like a pole, you will remove glass-pieces from the road, you will run to the aid of a sick man or an old passerby.

‘Introspect and find out. Why do you want to take Sanyas? You will see that the mind craves for certain privileges. Egoism will be fattened. You will think: If I am a Sanyasi, people will respect me: everywhere people will call me ‘Swamiji, Aiye’: now I am looked down upon by some Sanyasins: they think that I am only a Brahmachari or a Grihastha. Ideals like this only impel most people to take Sanyas: not ideas like: I will renounce and regain my Self: I will realise the Self. When this foundation itself is not there, then all your construction will be futile.’

‘When there is this desire to be respected, you will grow more and more sensitive. You will be very easily offended. You will be highly irritable. Fights and quarrels are the result. Intriguing, backbiting, scandal-mongering, fear, jealousy, hatred—all these come out of this one root. As you grow older, you will develop this evil more and more. ‘I have been a Sanyasin for forty years now: this little fellow has insulted me.’ Diseases will increase this sensitiveness. You will soon get exasperated.’

‘God will test you in a million ways. Why should He not? Is the goal you aim at a little thing? Even to a good many Ghaktas of great evolution God has given Darshan in the form of ass, buffalo and monkey. You do not aspire for that. You do not aspire even for a vision of the Virat that Arjuna had. You wish to go beyond that, beyond Hiranyagarbha, beyond Iswara, beyond Maya—you wish to realise that Supreme Self, the Paramatman. That is the meaning of Sanyas. Ask yourself: are you ready to sacrifice everything that is not this Supreme Self?’

‘You are already in an Ashram which acts as an impregnable fortress to protect you. Remain in white cloth and practise Sadhana. Eradicate all evil qualities. Cultivate virtues. Think that you are in reality a Sanyasin. That itself is sufficient.’

‘When you take Sanyas, you should make up your mind once and for all to stick to the path and bring glory to the Order. Never wander about. You get nothing by that and you expose yourself to all sorts of temptations. Never have anything to do with householders. You will realise too late that you have been led into the deep abyss of ruin.’

HINTS FOR SPIRITUAL ORGANISATION

This led Siva into thoughts about the future of the institution whose crest-jewel he is today.

Later in the day he gave some precious instructions to Swami Chidanandaji about the conduct of the Society’s affairs and the maintenance of the Ashram.

‘No one should feel estranged in the Ashram. Everyone has got so many faculties. There is capacity also to do something grand. The Will of God also guides them. But the difficulty is that when a man leaves his hearth and home, his wife and children, his parents and relatives, his wealth and position, he feels that he is entitled to be independent and refuses to be bossed over. We should appreciate that or at least recognise its existence. Personally, each Sadhaka should take care that this independence does not blossom forth into arrogance. But those who run the institution should not hurt the individual’s feelings, nor make him feel that he is being looked down upon. Each department, the moment you entrust it to a particular person, should be almost independent.’

‘There is a difficulty in this. For instance, there is the Ayurvedic Pharmacy, the League, etc., where saleable articles are stocked. If those who handle these things are left to themselves, Maya will spread her net over them and instigate them to pilfer, thus ruining themselves and the institution. The system should be fool-proof and there should be frequent checking also.’

‘This should not lead us into a suspicion-complex. If those who are responsible for the various departments feel that they are being watched with suspicion, their interest and zeal will be lost. Just once in a way, have an eye. It is not only good for the institution, but will prevent the individual from falling a prey to evil.’

‘Every Ashramite should be made to feel that this is his own home. Especially, those who do not belong to your own caste, creed, community or group should be specially looked after, lest they should feel that, ‘Because I am a Punjabi, I am neglected by these Madrassis.’ They should be made to feel that they are in fact looked after better here than they would be in an Ashram predominated by their own people.’

‘And, there should be a sort of tribunal to settle grievances and to listen to complaints. This should meet once in a way and iron out the differences that may crop up between man and man.’

‘Old workers, I mean both those who are aged and those who have served the institution for a long time, should be well looked after. If a Sadhak has served well for three or four years and has been very useful to us (like Krishnanandaji, for instance), the Society should attend to his needs till the end of his life. What little service they can render to the Society they should voluntarily do. There

should be no extraction of work from them. They should be allowed to meditate and progress in their Sadhana.'

'But, this should not bring about an effeminate nature in you. Some people have an intriguing nature. They will create parties, cliques, and troubles. With them you should be polite but firm. Say 'OM Namō Narayanaya, Swamiji Maharaj, you can leave the Ashram.' These vipers should not be allowed to poison the atmosphere, and create internal dissensions.'

'These are just some thoughts that occurred to me. Keep them in mind. The organisation has grown world-wide beyond our own expectations. It is better, therefore, that we adhere to certain principles. The whole world looks to us for guidance. It is but essential that the main hub of the institution should be efficient and run on systematic lines.'

'I have a feeling that even if all of us disappear from the scene, the Lord's Will will work itself out through other instruments. But, that should not lead us into complacency. We should exert our utmost to do our bit.'

20TH JANUARY, 1949

ROOT OF DEPRESSION

Gazing at the beam in melancholy, A. stood before Siva. Siva's torch searched him out. Just then the Hatha Yoga class of the Forest University was over and Siva was talking about radiant health.

'Why is A., such a young Brahmachari, so melancholy and morose?....(Turning to A.)....Be happy and cheerful. Why, I have never noticed you laugh or in a happy mood even.'

A. was silent. After a pause Siva continued. 'Something you are hiding and suppressing. This melancholy is the result of that. Be open and plain. Let the secret out. Then you will be happy and peaceful. Nothing will ever haunt you.'

'A young man of your age will be ever brisk and active, will be bubbling with joy and cheer. I have never seen a boy who is always gloomy.'

'That shows you have not come here out of real Vairagya. If you had, you would immediately on your arrival here be full of joy and peace; for, here you have no anxiety to haunt you, no responsibilities to oppress you, no fear to frighten you, no nightmares, nothing at all that could ever make you feel depressed.'

'Only when a boy runs away from the house after committing some sinful deed and even after going to an Ashram broods over it, he is depressed. Even this sort of Vairagya is good: but you should not brood over the past and thus spoil your future, too. Work, work strenuously. Take real interest in the work. Try always to engage yourself in some useful activity. You must have your finger in every kind of service. You must regularly go to the temple, prostrate before the Lord and ask His pardon for whatever you have done. There is no harm in telling me whatever the secret is. That will be a sort of Prayaschitta for the act and it will relieve the mental oppression a great deal. Everyone has got a secret or other. Nobody in the

world is there who can boldly assert that he has not sinned at all. But, Kirtan, Japa Dhyana, Vichar, Seva and devotion to the Lord's feet burn up even Brahma-Kathya Dosha. A dip in the Ganges washes away all your sins.'

'Now, cheer up. Be bold, happy, peaceful and cheerful. Nothing will ever happen to you.'

FOOD WITHOUT WORK?

A young boy had left his house and has come to the Ashram. Siva noticed his presence in the Bhajan Hall during the morning class.

'What for have you come here? How long do you want to stay?'

'I have come here to become a Sanyasin, Swamiji. I shall stay here permanently.'

'You? Sanyas? What for? You think that if you take Sanyas, you can have a comfortable living, free food and clothing? You wish to eat without work? Otherwise, why have you come here? You are afraid that you will not be able to earn your livelihood by working in some office. And, you imagine that you can deceive the world by taking upon yourself the robes of a Sanyasin and expecting the world to feed your laziness. Go back: do some service somewhere: earn your livelihood by honest means: then practise Sadhana side by side. You will get Moksha rapidly.'

REVITALISATION IN A FEW SECONDS

In the morning class Sri Vishnuji demonstrated Bhastrika and also explained the technique. Siva said:

'This Pranayama is a great help to Sadhaks. It has innumerable advantages. The mind will be more easily concentrated during meditation if you sit after one or two rounds of Bhastrika. You can effectively drive off sleep and drowsiness during meditation with the help of this Pranayama. No tea or coffee is necessary. Lungs get thoroughly exercised and flushed. This Pranayama is a sure remedy for asthma. It increases the gastric fire, too. Digestion is improved. In a few moments the entire body and mind are revitalised. In cold places, even if you have no blankets, practise a few vigorous rounds of Bhastrika. You will be comfortable. The Pranayama will produce warmth in the body. Padmasan is the best Asan for practising Bhastrika and Kapalabhati.'

'This is very much like Kapalabhati. In Kapalabhati breathing is automatically controlled by the pressure and relaxation of abdominal muscles. When the belly is drawn in, the diaphragm is thrown up and the lungs will automatically throw out the breath: similarly, when the abdominal pressure is relaxed, the diaphragm will descend thus creating a vacuum in the lungs and automatically the breath is taken in. There is no particular attention paid to breathing and hence, it is more diaphragmatic exercise. But in Bhastrika, besides the abdominal muscles, attention is also paid to breathing. Forced expulsions of breath characterise this Pranayama. The nostrils and the entire bronchial tube as also the lungs are vigorously cleansed. Here, special attention is paid to Rechaka alone: Puraka becomes an inevitable corollary. Puraka should be mild, short and automatic and just that much of breath is taken as would be sufficient for the next forcible

expulsion. At the end, Bhastrika has a long, mild and full Puraka followed by a long Kumbhaka and then a full Rechaka. In Bhastrika the maximum number of expulsions per round is 20, and a Sadhaka is advised to do only three rounds per sitting. There should be a clear interval between two rounds. In Kapalabhati, the expulsions can go up to a maximum of 100 at a time.'

'All of you should make it a point whenever you meet an asthmatic, to teach this Pranayama (Bhastrika) to him. You will be rendering a great service. You should teach this Pranayama to all those with whom you come into contact.'

21ST JANUARY, 1949

FIRST AID TO THE INJURED

The Sanskrit class was over in the morning at the Forest University.

Siva began his Kirtan: but, curiously enough, it was Jaya Ganesha Kirtan!

'From this morning,' said Siva: 'we should have a First Aid Section in the University. Everybody should have a working knowledge of this most important branch of knowledge. When a man has cut his arm accidentally and he is bleeding profusely, a Sadhaka should not be standing near-by, gaping like a fool. He should at once rush to the aid of the injured. Without proper knowledge, he will be able to do nothing. If he has a knowledge of First Aid, he will at once be able to stop the bleeding and thus save the patient.'

'First of all, this knowledge will be very useful to yourself. The body is an instrument provided by the Lord to enable the Jiva to achieve the goal of realising its unity with the Paramatman. It should be looked after well. Then only will the path be smooth. Diseases are obstacles to Sadhana. Everyone should, therefore, have a fair knowledge of simple remedies to ordinary diseases, besides First Aid. First Aid will enable you to know exactly what to do if a snake bit you or a wasp stung you. It is a great help to the Sadhaka himself.'

'Secondly, you will always have your neighbours and friends. Even a renunciate Sanyasin cannot avoid having the acquaintance of one or two others. Food is necessary: clothing is necessary. Man is a social being. When your neighbour meets with an accident, you should not just stand there looking at him: you should at once render First Aid to him and thus relieve him of his suffering. There is no service greater than this.'

'Thirdly, this branch of knowledge is the basis for a system of Yoga which effects the necessary purification for the dawn of Knowledge. Unless the Antahkarana is purified, the Light of God cannot shine in it. There is no greater purifying agency than helping a man out of pain. You will have to serve the patient with Narayana Bhav or Atma Bhav. Then the inner purification will be rapid.'

'If a man has accidentally drowned himself, you should give him artificial respiration. You should learn the technique of getting the water out of the lungs and restoring the breathing. Normal breathing may not sometimes be resumed

until after a few hours. You should go on persistently applying the artificial respiration.'

'Even before that, you should know how to rescue a patient who is about to be drowned. If you do not know how to swim, you should throw a rope or a piece of cloth with the help of which the drowning man may reach the shore. Similarly, you should know what to do when a man is suffering from asphyxia.'

'Then there are cases of snake-bite, scorpion-sting, etc. You should have presence of mind. You should be able to find out whether the snake was a poisonous one or not, from the wound. If it is non-poisonous, you should be able to restore courage to the patient by gently telling him that nothing will happen to him. More cases die of shock than of any actual causes.'

'Then there are cases of poisoning. You should know what sort of emetics should be given or purgatives and antidotes. Millions of lives can be saved by timely help. Just imagine what a great help you will be to humanity.'

'You should be able to attend to features and dislocations of bones. You should always use your commonsense. If the usual ready-made material is not available, you should rapidly improvise a splint by cutting pieces of thick card-board, etc.'

'In the case of broken arteries or veins, you should know that bleeding from arteries will be in jerks and the blood will be of red colour and can be stopped by applying a bandage between the place and the heart. Bleeding from the veins will be of dark hue and will simply ooze out. If the bleeding is not immediately stopped, the patient will have a collapse very soon. You should know how to apply the triangular bandage.'

'In the case of cuts and wounds you should know how to bandage them. You should know the use of tincture benzoine: this acts as a plaster on the wounds when applied over some cotton-padding. If the plaster gets stuck up, you should use spirit to remove it. You should also be able to treat cases of burnt or blistered skin, scratches, abrasion, etc.'

'You should be ever prepared to rush to the aid of persons injured by accidents—car accident or tonga accident.'

'You should know the methods of removing foreign matter which might have gotten into the ear, the nose or the eyes.'

'Lastly, you should be able to treat cases of fatigue, fainting, shock and other forms of sudden collapse. In all these cases if proper First Aid treatment is rendered in time, the patient has every chance to revive. If this treatment is neglected, then the patient's condition gets worse.'

'You will by now have realised how very useful this science is. Every Sadhaka should have a thorough knowledge of First Aid, and some working knowledge of medicines, of household remedies, of hygiene and sanitation. He will not only help himself but help others and thus purify himself for the reception of divine light.'

PRAYER FOR SELF IN OTHERS

At the close of the morning University class, Siva announced that the entire class will repeat the Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra for the health and long life of Dr. Hetram Agarwal and family.

‘You may ask: why should we pray for the health and long life of other people, when we ourselves are trying to say that this world is a long dream, that the body and the other Koshas are imaginary coverings over the Eternal Atman which alone IS. These questions arise out of mere intellectual perversity. If it is, of course, your aim to become Jivanmukthas now and here, and after shuffling off off this body to become Videhamukthas and even then, so long as you are in this relative plane and not ever merged in the Absolute, you should also take into consideration the relative reality of this world. The world exists as an illusion. In this illusory play you have to act your part efficiently and well, according to Dharma.’

‘Secondly, as the Lord has said in the third chapter of the Gita, there is mutual dependence between the Devas and the men. When the Devas are pleased, they help men who in their turn offer Yajnas to the Devas. Similarly in the world, too. You cannot isolate yourself from the world, altogether: you cannot sit idly and expect to be looked after by the world. If you rise above all care for the body, then you can afford to ignore the world. Not till then. If you serve the people, the people will look after you. Therefore, from this point of view also, such prayer is essential.’

‘Thirdly, your aim is to realise that the same Atman, the same Satchidananda Brahman pervades the entire creation and is beyond that also. Sadhana should be a continuous process of expansion of the heart. When you pray for others, feel that you are praying for your own Self in them. By continuously dwelling on this Truth, you will soon realise the All-Pervading Self.’

ASHRAMS: INDISPENSABLE NEED

The First Aid class in the morning gave rise to a discussion after the class was over. Siva wanted that an examination should also be held in due course to qualify students for a Seva Yoga Certificate to be issued by the Forest University.

‘Everyone who comes here should be put through a rapid First Aid training. Even if he goes away later on, he will prove a real aspirant wherever he may be and his knowledge of First Aid will be of great help to himself and to humanity at large.’

‘Why: everything that the Lord has provided in this Ashram has a great significance in a Sadhak’s life. The library, the temple, the Bhajan Hall, the dispensary, the office and lastly the dense forest behind: all these put together constitute the best locality for practising intense Sadhana. You can render service at the dispensary: you can do some work in the office and the kitchen: you can do Akhanda Kirtan: you can worship in the temple: you can study in the library and then when you feel like it, you can seclude yourself in the jungle.’

‘Whatever you need you get here. You have been placed above wants by the Lord Himself. Elsewhere, you will have to suffer for want of proper food and creature

comforts. If you wish to read a book, you will have to hunt for it in many libraries. Here the Society will order the book for you. Elsewhere if you need a langotee, you will have to run round a dozen rich men: even then they will say: 'You are a Sadhu: why do you need a langotee? Those days are gone when the kings themselves used to look after Sanyasins. Now everywhere materialism has spread. It is a very bad time for Sanyasins and Sadhus. But, God will help them. Parivrajak life is not good nowadays. As the Sadhu will be woefully neglected, he will have always to be thinking of food, clothing and other necessities of life. There should be established Ashrams all over the country where renunciates can live and evolve.'

'Occasionally Sadhaks may go out on Parivrajak life. They should not be prevented by public institutions or Government from doing so. But, the Government may insist on their having with them an identity card from a recognised spiritual leader. Thus, the ancient order will be protected: and no one will have any misgivings about the wandering Sadhu.'

AWAKENING OF KUNDALINI

Siva had paid a visit to Sri S.'s room after the class was over in the morning. S. was still in bed fast asleep. Siva's Pranava Dhvani woke him up. Later in the day, Siva remarked:

'S.! I think your Kundalini needs awakening by a new and special kind of Tadana Kriya! I should take a small stick and give a few good Tadanas so that the Shakti in you may get awakened. You are so young and yet so lazy. I have requested you so often to attend the class: you never care to listen. Even though you are in the next room, you do not attend the Kirtan in the office. You are slowly becoming a Thahappan Swami I think.' (Thahappan Swami is a humorous way of saying 'an undisciplined and disobedient disciple.')

And, then turning to us, Siva said: 'there are various methods of awakening Kundalini: through Hatha Yogic Kriyas, through Pranayama, through Vichar, through Guru's grace, through devotion, through selfless service, etc. There is a special Shakti Sanchara Kriya, a Tadana Kriya. This method of Tadana has a special value. My Tadana Kriya is an entirely new method. It consists of taking a good stick and giving a few mild canings. Then Kundalini will get awakened and the aspirant will be brisk.'

RECIPE FOR PEACE

Chidanandaji was coming down after night Kirtan, along with Siva. Siva noticed this unusual feature and enquired of the reason.

'Nowadays, Swamiji, I am taking my bed down.'

This is after he took over as the General Secretary of the Society.

'Why?'

'Much of the misunderstanding and ill-will among people has its origin in the kitchen, Swamiji. I spend most of my time in or near the kitchen nowadays so as to be on the spot to smoothen out matters.'

This moved the all-compassionate Siva. 'No, no, Chidanandaji, do not worry yourself over these things. Kitchen is a tiresome business. You will waste all your precious energies on silly things. No, no: do not come down. Just supervise the work for a few minutes daily. You should go on with your meditation, study and other things. I myself have experience of the kitchen-politics. But I am indifferent. God's will be done. If He wants, then people will remain here: otherwise, not.'

'I am always peaceful. Because, I am prepared for anything. If all people go away, I will take my Bhiksha in the Kshetra or in some houses here and remain in a Kutir. I will serve the few sick patients that come to me. If some devotee would like to print, I will give him some of my writings. Best of the time will be my own. If just two or three hundred rupees come every month, then I will keep a few hard-working Sadhaks and run the show on a small scale. If lakhs and crores come, then I am prepared to expand the work to any magnitude. I am prepared for anything. So, I am always peaceful. You should also be indifferent to these things. From tomorrow remain in your Kutir and just supervise the work. Do not bother yourself always about finance and kitchen.'

Peace and courage have their origin in renunciation.

GO YE! AND SIN NO MORE!

As we were coming down after night Satsang, a discussion arose about discipline and Sanyas. Chidanandaji quoted several instances of Sanyasins quarrelling with their own Gurus or with others.

'Sanyas is not an easy thing,' said Siva. 'I think in Sanyas-life, too, we shall see all the Lilas that characterise worldly life. Fights and quarrels, jealousy and hatred, passion and greed. Many Sanyasins have gone back to household life after they had embraced Sanyasa. They had all taken Sanyasa perhaps before they were fit for it. Some of them have again come back to a life of renunciation and thenceforward have been very good Sadhus. Sri K. who started the Satyasevashram was one such. Evil is there inside: man has got to be vigilant and to exert always to annihilate it. Sometimes this evil overpowers him: he goes astray. Then he wakes up again and comes back to the proper path. It is all His Maya. We should not condemn anything. The moment the Sadhu who is a Yoga-Bhrashta comes back to the proper path, the Lord takes him back with open arms and leads him on the right path. Only he should not relapse into evil ways.'

A significant point in this connection is that the above is the answer to an unasked question from me. In the afternoon, Swami Krishnanandaji and myself were discussing this very problems and were unable to arrive at a proper conclusion. It was of no great moment: so I did not broach the matter before Siva: but, the answer has come all the same.

22ND JANUARY, 1949

TYPEWRITERS IN THE JUNGLE

The Commissioner of Paori has come with Sri Gauri Prasadji and the Mahant of Swarg Ashram.

After bowing to Siva, he occupied the chair opposite. Siva at once called Vishnuji and Padmanabhan. One brought fruits and the other brought books for presentation. Ever-ready to serve.

Within a few minutes, the visitors had their Prasad, for their body and soul. Siva asked them while handing over the Asan-chart: 'Will you practise them?'

'Sure: yes, Swamiji. I shall try.'

Then a few minutes later the Commissioner turned towards the office. He was astonished.

'This is your office?'

Judge Saheb explained: 'Yes, it is Swamiji's office. You see it is here that the innumerable books, magazines, pamphlets and leaflets, and letters are produced. Swamiji has flooded the world with spiritual literature.'

30TH JANUARY, 1949

THAT LOOPHOLE

Siva is not a revolutionary. He understands that perfection is not attained in a day. He does not want anyone to break his habits all of a sudden. He does not advise anyone to jump from luxury into Virakti.

He is an evolutionary. He would not allow one Sadhaka to go on repeating from day to day the same old acts, without even TRYING to alter his attitude towards life and striving to change his habits.

Early in the morning before even coming into the office, Siva entered the bathroom. He found a few younger Sadhaks waiting for hot water for bath, along with more aged inmates.

Just a mere smile, an 'OM Namo Narayanaya' and 'You are also taking bath in hot water?' indicated to the young Sadhaka that a good invigorating and healthy plunge in the Ganges was indicated. A short sermon!



FEBRUARY, 1949

6TH FEBRUARY, 1949

MRS. CHAKRAVARTHY PASSES INTO SIVA

The bell goes, announcing that the midday meal is ready. With Kirtan and Santi Patha the office work is closed down for the morning. Siva followed us to the dining hall.

‘All of you should sing the Maha Mantra today for fifteen minutes before food is served. Today Sri Rajani Mohan Chakravarty is performing the Sraddha of his departed wife: let us all pray for the peace of the departed soul.’

This was done.

What a beautiful soul. Sri Rajani Babu is a great devotee of Siva: and his wife was indeed a thrice-blessed lady. Just see what he has written to Siva about the lady’s last hour:

‘At about 4.50 a.m. I was alone sitting at her head and praying. I had a vision of your good self (Swami Sivananda) appearing before me and I placed her at your feet and then she peacefully passed away. So I know that you have given her shelter in thy lotus feet. I am satisfied.’

In Brahmanuhurtha with her husband at her bedside and the visible divine presence of Siva, the lady merges herself in Siva, becomes one with her Guru. What more can blessedness be?

What is the attitude of the husband?

‘I think it is the will of the Lord to free me from worldly attachments, so that I may devote more time to His service. You know best. I am resigned to thy will.’

To a man of such self-surrender belongs Siva’s infinite grace, the grace that ennobles, divinises and bestows immortality. Glory to Siva. Glory to Rajani Babu.

9TH FEBRUARY, 1949

THE ADEPT’S DIAGNOSIS

Vishnuji’s eyes were red. Siva noticed this the moment he came into the office, in the afternoon.

‘Oh, Vishnuswamiji, why are your eyes red?’

Vishnuji was silent.

‘Ohji, don’t do Tratak too much.’ Siva said. ‘It is due to an overdose of Tratak, is it not?’

‘Yes, Swamiji.’

‘Be moderate. There is no fun in overdoing these exercises and spoiling the eyes. Apply boric lotion to the eyes.’

11TH FEBRUARY, 1949

ALERT AND APPRECIATIVE

On his way to the office, Siva peeped into the Ayurvedic Pharmacy. Master Satchidanandaji, an expert Ayurved Acharya, was busy in the preparation of Chyavanaprash. Siva personally examined the progress of the preparation, the materials kept for the Chyavanaprash, the vessels, etc. and satisfied himself that they were all hygienic and good. He remarked to a senior disciple standing near him:

‘Satchidanandaji is an expert: and he puts all his heart and soul into the work. His are the best preparations of Ayurvedic medicine. Many have expressed their great appreciation of the quality of the medicine. Hundreds have already written to say that they found immediate relief from the use of these preparations.’

‘I know all this. And, we should pay a visit to this department once in a way. We should check the stock and verify the accounts. Satchidanandaji is ever so busy with his work: a pilferer as a servant could well make a fortune here. If we neglect this, then we shall indirectly be encouraging these pilferings.’

‘Moreover, when some of us come here occasionally and say kind and encouraging words to Satchidanandaji and others here, they will be greatly enthused and will work more vigorously. They will not feel neglected.’

Siva left the A.P. after doing Kirtan of Lord Dhanwantari and the Aswini Devatas. Satchidanandaji’s joy knew no bounds.

BEWARE OF UNFULFILLED DESIRES

Sivaratri is approaching. Candidates for Sanyas have slowly begun to be mentioned. There is already a list of six. In that connection Venkatachala Madi’s name was proposed. Quickly Siva remarked:

‘Not yet. He does not know what it is to suffer from indigestion after overeating laddus. Let him wait.’

Words of wisdom, these. If a man who has many worldly desires and yet embraces the holy order of Sanyas without having had a chance of fulfilling them, he will soon have a downfall, if he is unable to sublimate those desires. Few have the courage, the will and the capacity to sublimate desires. The others ought to think a hundred times before embracing Sanyas. Sanyas is made of much sterner stuff than people generally take it to be. Renunciation of all the pleasures of the three planes of existence—that is Sanyas. He who is not prepared for this ought not to taint the glorious order by prematurely taking the robes on.

Does Siva then mean that only old people should take Sanyas?

No: but....

OFFER HIM A FRAGRANT FLOWER

Another name was Sri Vishnuji’s and Siva readily agreed to include his name in the list.

'Such young men of courage and bravery should come forward and embrace Sanyas. What do old men, just about to die, gain by being initiated into Sanyas? What have they to renounce? Their senses are already dead. What have they to control? Is it much too difficult for a man of seventy-five to be a Brahmachari? Should a blind man be told not to look at ladies? Of course, it is better than no Sanyas at all.'

'That is only second-rate. The first grade Sanyasins are the young and vigorous ones like Vishnuji. They can live an active self-controlled life and show to the world the glory of renunciation. The flower must be offered to the Lord when it is full and fragrant: not when it has faded.'

UTILITARIAN GURU BHAKTI

The topic then drifted to the case of the disciples who vilify their Guru: and the point was made that unless the Sadhaka showed strong and unshakable faith in and devotion to Siva and his mission, he should not be initiated by Siva himself: for, if this man later turns out to be a black-sheep and vilifies his own Guru, the situation will be awkward. To Siva all this was foreign, and in a merely jocular vein he replied:

'But, when this man goes to the Kshetra and the Kothari there asks for his antecedents, he would emphatically declare that he is the disciple of the great Yogi Sivananda.' All joined in the mirth.

SIVANANDA BHAKTAS GET SPECIAL TREATMENT

Here is Sri Ramanathan of Allahabad, a very good devotee of Siva, who has tasted the nectar that flows from devotion to Siva. He writes:

'I do not know whether you have heard of His Holiness Paramasant Dr. Chaturbuj Sahai of Etah. He seems to have great regard for your revered self. He usually comes to Allahabad on the occasion of Basant Panchami and lectures at two or three places. This year he refused all lecture engagements because he said that people simply came to the meetings but never practised what he advised them to do. He made an exception in the case of the Divine Life Society, Allahabad, as you will see from the programme enclosed. The reason given by him for accepting this engagement was that we are all Sivananda-Bhaktas.'

A NOVEL REASON

The Principal of the Bharat Mandir High School met Siva.

Swamiji, I have something very interesting to tell you. I advertised a teacher's post in the High School which has now fallen vacant. I received hundreds of applications from highly qualified candidates. Believe me: almost every application contained the plea that the applicant selects this High School for he wants to be near Swami Sivananda. It is very strange how your fame and spiritual influence have spread so far and wide and how it makes everyone eager to be near you and get your spiritual instructions in person.'

Siva conveniently smiled away the remarks and said: 'It is all His grace.'

THE GREATEST UNIVERSITY IN THE WORLD

A visitor was attracted by the signboard 'Yoga-Vedanta Forest University'.⁴ He attended one of its morning classes. He approached Siva thoughtfully and asked: 'Swamiji, you have called this a University. But, I see very few students here.'

Siva at once understood the visitor's difficulty. 'This is not a University like the others in the world. People are not trained here to become clerks, advocates and scientists. Humanity has nowadays so demeaned itself that people everywhere want only sense-pleasures: they have no idea of Yoga and Vedanta, or the Supreme Bliss that they will enjoy out of Atma Jnana. In such a topsy-turvy world it is a great thing to have even one good Sadhaka bent on renouncing worldly pleasures and striving to attain the goal of life—God-realisation—through the practice of Yoga. That there are even a dozen students earnestly endeavouring to realise the Truth in the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University is a great achievement: that qualifies the University to be called the greatest university in the world.'

'You are perfectly right, Swamiji. How can we apply the worldly measure to spiritual things?'

16TH FEBRUARY, 1949

REFUGE OF RUNAWAYS?

The postman brings a telegram. It is placed before Siva. Let us see what it is: 'Hem fled last night. If arrived, inform and stop him. Karnua, Gauhati.'

We all had a hearty laugh, and silently congratulated our latest brother on his brave action. One more boy is fired with Vairagya, and has given the parting kick to worldliness.

It is very significant: the parent of every spiritually-minded boy missing from the house almost instinctively wires to 'Swami Sivananda'!

'I think many fathers and mothers would be scolding me to their hearts' content. But, what am I to do? Let them stop the boys if they can. When Vairagya dawns no one can prevent a boy from running away from home. Each man's Prarabdha is his own: no one can prevent its working out.'

Surely: when this spiritual Prarabdha is backed up nicely by stirring and often revolutionary call to arms against Samsara, when the combustible spiritual Samskara filled aspirant's heart is brought near the fire of Siva's writings, it at once catches fire. No one can help it.

⁴ *The University has been re-named Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy since 1958.*

17TH FEBRUARY, 1949

AVINASHANANDA

Sri Swami Avinashanandaji Maharaj, one of the senior monks of the Ramakrishna Mission paid a visit to the Ashram.

From Kankhal the Swami had written to Siva that he intended to come to the Ashram to have Siva's Darshan. 'I have been closely watching the rapid expansion of your selfless mission,' he wrote.

Siva had met Swami A. nearly 25 years ago when, along with Pt. Chand Narayan Harkuli, Siva visited Madras en route to Rameshwaram. The pilgrims had stayed at Madras for a couple of days, as it happened to be the time of the Theosophical Convention at Madras. During their stay there they paid a visit to the Ramakrishna Mission at Mylapore, and there met Sri Swami A.

The Swami had a long conversation with Siva, during which he expressed his personal admiration of Siva's work and the Divine Life Society's mission. 'Particularly, the Akhanda Maha Mantra Kirtan at the Bhajan Hall, that has been going on for several years now is a remarkable idea. Swamiji, why don't you have a similar Akhanda Gita Patha?'

'You have echoed my own wish. I have been thinking of it for a considerable time now. Once I give it a push also: and we had Akhanda Gita Patha for fifteen days. Lack of men and finance came in the way. Thank you: I shall certainly bear it in mind and put the scheme into operation the moment conditions are favourably.'

Siva entertained Swami A. and party nicely at his own Kutir. They were all highly pleased.

22ND FEBRUARY, 1949

SIVA'S WORK WAITS FOR NONE

For, Siva knows that 'Time and tide wait for none'. What comes to the mind, if it is a Satsankalpa should be done at once.

The fencing of Siva's Kutir verandah is over. At the spot where Siva usually sits during the summer evening Satsang on the Ganges bank, a cement back-rest has been constructed. Siva noticed this: at once he began to sing his usual Ganesha Kirtans.

He distributed some food to the fish in the Ganges, extra today.

'Oh, Shraddhananda Swamiji, please give these coolies some food today. Who is there, on the Ganges bank? Oh, Venkatesanandaji....' I ran up to the spot.

'Take some Prasad now.'

'Swamiji, I have already taken food.'

'It does not matter. You should be able to digest. Come in.'

Shraddhanandaji is made in the same mould as the master: he quietly distributed food to the coolies and myself, without a thought about himself.

Thus was celebrated the opening ceremony of the Pen Air Summer Satsang Bhavan in Siva's Kutir, with all the formalities of Kirtan and feast!

Oh, Siva! Great is the power of Thy Sankalpa.

SIVANANDA SANGEETA KALA MANDIR

Swami Sivaswaroopji, a talented musician with poetic abilities is composing Hindi poems embodying in themselves the life and teachings of Siva. Some of us had a desire to learn the tune of these poems from the author himself. So, we had requested S. to teach us those songs. As a preliminary, he had started teaching us the rudiments of music. This has been going on for the past few days.

Someone told Siva of this. And, this conversation took place just opposite the Siva Kutir where we used to assemble in the morning for the music lesson.

'Is that so?' asked Siva: and without moving an inch forward he began his inaugural Jaya Ganesha Kirtans. Thus in reality came into being the Sivananda Sangeeta Kala Mandir.

We marvelled at Siva's insistence that all undertakings, however small or great, should be commenced with a prayer to the Lord—first Ganesha, then Saraswathi, then Guru and lastly the Lord as Rama and Krishna. Without this there is no function in Ananda Kutir: and Siva carries on this practice even when he attends public meetings elsewhere, whether the public ask for the Kirtan or not.

24TH FEBRUARY, 1949

GLORY OF SANYAS

A pious social worker was somehow upset by certain young aspirant-Sanyasins going astray. He had heard many stories of such misconduct on the part of Sanyasins from the Rishikesh public. What struck him as unique was the fact that in Siva's Ashram almost all the Sanyasins were young and youthful.

'Swamiji, pardon my presumption. But would it not have been better for these people to wait for some time more before embracing this holy order which is so very difficult to stick to? Are you sure that these young initiates have really understood the duties of this Ashrama, and that they will adhere to the principles? I should think it is a great mistake to initiate them so early.'

Siva laughed gently. 'Why! I myself can give you many examples of this type. One young man took Sanyas. He was a great Vairagi. His exemplary life made his brother also to take Sanyas. Later on, his (the former's) dispassion wanted. He married, ate eggs and meat. His brother, however, stuck to the line. The former did not live with his Guru: he had his own Manmukhi (whimsical) Sadhana. He did not protect himself in seclusion by Satsang. Another young Sanyasi was fiery in his Sadhana. He inspired and elevated many Sadhaks. Later on he married and has a child. How did this happen? He freely mixed with householders. He allowed

ladies to shampoo his legs. He had a downfall, brought forth a child. There are many such instances.'

'That is exactly what I mean, Swamiji. In that case, is it not better not to give Sanyas to young people at all.'

'My dear Bhagatji, that is where you are mistaken. They might fall and rise again. Yet, they are worthy of your veneration. For, at least one day they were Sanyasins. They had the courage to throw up their hands and say: 'I renounce the pleasures of the three worlds.' How glorious is Sanyas. How glorious is such renunciation of the pleasures of the three worlds.

'They had the boldness and daring to stand up against the greatest forces of nature, the forces that maintain this Samsara—those of self-preservation and procreation. They stand there as the masters of nature: you are mercilessly driven by these forces whose slave you are. Maybe: some renunciates do not properly assess the strength of these opposing forces. They are sometimes taken unawares, when they are a little heedless. But those who never renounce, for fear of having a downfall are cowardly, and they never know what it is to renounce all. They never look at the battle-field lest their nose should be injured. They jest at scars that never felt a wound. But a brave warrior wears these scars as ornaments, for those scars taught him to protect himself in battle.

'Churchills are required in Sanyas. Brave, courageous even in the face of successive defeats, Sanyasins should learn lessons and pin their faith in 'ultimate victory'. Sure, victory will be theirs if only they persist, persevere and plod on, without yielding midway. Let the light of God shine brightly in the heart: protect that faith and tenacious adherence to the Lotus Feet of the Lord. Storms of passions will sweep the externals: and when God's grace descends on the Sadhaka, everything will be quiet and tranquil. Glory, glory to Sanyas and Sadhana.

'Sadhaks should learn a lesson from these stories. They should be vigilant, cautious. There is no need to lose heart. But, each such episode ought to re-awaken in the young Sanyasin a love for seclusion, for Satsang with his own Guru. Sadhaks should never drift away from their Guru. They should plunge themselves into Sadhana and endeavour to realise God, every moment of their life.

'A wise man profits himself by others' experience: a middling by his own: a fool by neither. The story of others' downfall ought not to dishearten you. But, on the contrary, it should teach you a lesson. It should put you on your guard. And, you should uphold the glory of Sanyasa. Because one man has failed to live up to Sanyasa, you should not think that the Order itself is unsuitable for the youth.

'What about the names of great Sanyasins like Swami Vivekananda, Swami Rama Tirtha, Swami Dayananda, Bhagavan Raman Maharshi. As a matter of fact, you find that most of the noteworthy Sanyasins renounced the world while yet they were youthful. What can an old man achieve? When the power of hearing has gone, what Sravana is he going to do? No Sadhana will be possible for the old man. It is mock-Sanyas if he embraces the Holy Order. Sanyas would then

become a formality. Further, conditions are such these days that an old man finds himself inextricably entangled in family life. Therefore, it is essential that young boys should renounce the world and embrace Sanyas. They have fewer worldly ties.'

'It was because perfectly or imperfectly man has striven to live, to exist, that we find today that he has survived when countless other species have perished and gone. Similarly, it is because young men or old felt disgust for the worldly life and embraced Sanyas whether they have later been able to rise to eminence or have been the victims of animal nature, that today that glorious Order has survived.'

'Young Sanyasins should keep themselves ever busy in Japan, Kirtan, Swadhyaya, meditation and Vichara: they should live in the company of their Guru and practise vigorous Sadhana. They should never enter the cities. Even if they have to pass through a city, they should as far as possible avoid the crowd. Seclusion is the key to successful Sanyas-life. I have always advised my disciples never to enter the plains: and even if they have to do so owing to the exigencies of selfless service, I ask them to finish their work quickly and run back to their Himalayan abode. The Himalayas are the homes of Sadhakas and Sanyasins. A Sanyasin is safe so long as he is there. Sanyas was born in the Himalayas: Sanyas lives and will ever live in the Himalayas alone.'

EQUAL VISION

A South Indian typical Iyengar is a welcome guest to the Ashram today. A fairly imposing personality, with his chest literally covered with rosaries of every conceivable kind, a beard which bespoke of his ascetic tendencies, and a more or less renunciate grade, the tuft, and the traditional way of wearing the Dhoti, as well as the peculiar bag (Madi-Sanchi), singing the praise of the Brahmin's orthodoxy in chorus with his Dwadasha-Urdhwapundram or twelve caste-marks of U shape.

He heard Tamil being spoken in far-off Himalayas: his ears that had been starved of this received the divine elixir. Without further ado, he entered the Ashram, and introduced himself with a couple of hymns in praise of Sanyas.

Siva very kindly enquired about him.

'Swamiji, I am on a pilgrimage. I have experienced untold difficulties as I do not know Hindi. When I heard Tamil being spoken here, I greatly rejoiced and feel much relieved. Yesterday was Ekadashi and I could not take anything in Hardwar....'

Siva quickly interrupted him, and asked a few Ashramites to rush to the kitchen and bring something to eat. In the meantime, the Brahmin was seated on the D.J. Hall verandah. Whatever the Ashramites brought from the kitchen fell short of Siva's expectation of hospitality: sweets, fruits, milk, curd, fruit-juice, the old Brahmin was beside himself in gratitude.

Later Siva listened to the old man's oration and recitations.

After he left the place, Siva remarked: 'To achieve Adwaita Bhavana of Samadrishti is not an easy thing. First of all, we should feel the same way towards

a visitor, whoever he may be, as we would say if a member of your Purvashram family comes, or an intimate friend comes. We should not disregard a person just because he is an unknown stranger.'

Even this is very rare in this world. When all is said and done, a Mahratti likes a Mahratti more than anyone else, a Bengali likes a Bengali, a Madrassi likes a Madrassi. Look at the exhilaration that the old Brahmin felt when he heard Tamil at the Ashram. This sectarianism creeps even into spiritual life. The very fact that Siva's disciples are spread over the entire world, and even his Ashram has housed people of all sects, classes and nationalities is proof positive of the catholicity of Siva's heart.

Siva then spoke admiringly of the Brahmin's recitations. Mark Siva's tolerant understanding of the various paths adopted by Sadhaks.

'Like this Bhagatiji, we should have a section. We should have Avadhutas of Pranavanandaji's type. At one place there should be only Jnanis. At another we should have Hatha Yogis. At a third one very busy Karma Yogins. At a fourth only Bhaktas with musical instruments always singing the Lords' names. Ladies and children should have their own Ashram. One Ashram, like this, should be a modern one where the Sanyasins will use table, chair, typewriter, radio, photographic equipment and cars. At another, only Avadhuta Sanyasins: and then orthodox type Sanyasins, swatting on a mat with only a Kamandalu by their side. The entire India should be represented in one Ashrama, with all these sections.' A grand idea.

Visitors to Ananda Kutir who have cared to watch this wonderful phenomenon, are aware that this idea of Siva has already been worked out by him in a miniature scale in Sivanandashram itself.

25TH FEBRUARY, 1949

SIVARATRI

The great day has at last arrived. Preparations are afoot for the initiation of seven youngsters into Sanyas. Today it is specially cold, much colder than the previous days. On the verandah of Siva's Kutir are assembled the aspirants for Sanyas, their muscles active trying to generate heat!

Siva came out of his Kutir. He has not been keeping quite well for the last few days. Yet, along with the Sadhaks Siva, too, took a few dips in the icy-cold Ganges. The youngsters looked on with astonishment: and drew much inspiration from Siva, which sustained them for one inevitable dip in the Ganges.

The Akhanda Kirtan at night needed a little more spirit: and Siva stepped in timely and his very presence in the temple till the early hours of the next morning kept all wide awake and in a very meditative mood. The ease with which he keeps awake is indeed a marvel. For, whereas others have to shout, walk, clap the hands, dance, etc., to keep themselves awake, Siva just sits still, motionless, singing the Kirtan, occasionally throwing up a glance at the Lord (very much to suggest that He needs it), and quickly surveying the devotees all round.

When Siva found that some people were preparing themselves to sleep, he came into the temple and said:

‘What about the individual Abhisheka by all?’

‘We can have it during the last quarter, Swamiji.’

‘No, no: have it now. Some people are already sleepy. They will go away a little later. They should not miss the chance.’

What consideration, even for the apparently undeserving!

Next afternoon (on the 26th) Siva noticed our eyes red and gloomy, and could readily see that we had been a victim of sleep.

‘I think you did not even take food in the afternoon? After all, nature gets her dues, with compound interest!’

‘Yes, Swamiji, I am unable to get sleep even if I try to sleep.’

Obviously: for these lower Tamasic forces of nature have no operation in the regions where dwells our Siva.

27TH FEBRUARY, 1949

MOTHER HOW POWERFUL YOU ARE!

The aftermath of Sivaratri night’s vigil has been characterised by an inordinate attachment to the dear blanket which lies heavily yet so comfortably on some of the Ashramites that they are unable and unwilling to discard it. Beyond the four walls of the Kutir whizzes past the winter wind. Sailing along with it, yet more powerful than it, inspiring and awakening, is a Pranava-Dhwani. The Ashramite, gently awakened to the world he is living in, listens. Again, OM!....This time a little louder. The blanket flies: the blinking eyes peep through the door. Yes: it is Siva.

‘Come: get up. Come to the class.’

Mark the process well. A very important lesson should not escape our notice. A sleeping man should be gently awakened, without giving him the least ‘shock’. Many people have this bad habit of violently shaking another person in order to wake him up, or of shouting aloud while another is asleep. This practice causes nervousness in the person thus awakened and should, therefore, be scrupulously avoided. The Life Force that had withdrawn itself into the core of the heart should be allowed to resume its position all through the body, gently, gradually and gracefully, as it does when withdrawing itself from the limbs.

Let us resume the narrative. Thus, from to room goes Siva, waking up each individual. Then everyone assembles in the Hall and the class commences.

FORCE OF HABIT

Siva later explained: ‘Man is a bundle of habits. Life goes smoothly on so long as good healthy and virtuous habits have been cultivated, and are adhered to. The mischievous mind is ever watching for an opportunity to slip back into its old

grooves of lethargy, ease and comfort. A day's slackening of effort is sufficient for the mind to work its own havoc. It takes a long time to cultivate a good habit: but only a moment to break it. If today you sleep during Brahmamuhurtha, tomorrow will naturally be a repetition of today—and so it will go from bad to worse, and in due course, you would have gone right back to the good old days when the warm rays of the sun used to greet you out of bed.'

Precious piece of advice which applies at all aspects of Sadhana.

28TH FEBRUARY, 1949

PSEUDO-GURUS

A very enterprising young gentleman poses himself as a rationalist Guru of highly intellectual persons whom he advises to think for themselves. Day in and day out he lectures, talks, and discourses upon this philosophy, forgetting all the while that his main theme is to let the other man think for himself. He is their Guru to teach them not to believe in Gurus. He has his own brand of followers who support him and cry hoarse his creed against organisation.

Siva heard about this misguided young man who has undertaken the task of guiding others. The old Sankara was awakened in him. Perhaps, he suddenly remembered that he, too, belonged to the glorious order of Sankaracharya who defeated Pundits, Karma Khandis and materialists. Siva the Prativadi Bhayankara at once wrote out the following poem:

Some teachers mislead their aspirants.
They do not understand the level of the students.
They preach high philosophy to all
They condemn Japan, Sankirtan, study of sacred scriptures.
They say unto all:
'Think for yourself: don't depend
Upon authority of books, Prasthanatraya.
Do not surrender yourself to any Guru.
There is nothing in the books.
Have right thinking.
Recitation of Mantras blunts the intellect.
Sankirtan is shouting and howling.
Kirtanists are howling sects.'

OH ASPIRANTS

Do not approach such pseudo-Gurus.
How many persons can think for themselves?

You will be bewildered and puzzled.
You will be hanging in the air like Trisanku.
Do not hear their lectures.
How much spirituality and knowledge
Can you expect from such persons?
Who have neither spiritual basis
Nor realisation of any kind?
Save some intellectual acrobatic feats,
Some high sounding words and rich vocabulary of terms?
Follow the teachings of Sankara, Vyasa,
Vasishta, Dattatreya, Lord Krishna, Valmiki.
Study Gita, Brahma Sutras.
Their teachings are suitable to all times.
All countries, all persons and all races.

OH PSEUDO-GURUS

You are not worth the dust of
The feet of these great Rishis and Seers.
Your intellect will fade away
If you are starved for a week,
If you are delirious
If you are intoxicated!
Jnana or Supreme Wisdom is
A matter of Guru Parampara.
Goudapada Govindapada Sankara Padmapada is one line.
Matsyendranath Gorakhnath Jalendranath and Nivrittinath is another
line.
Similarly Blavatsky Olcott Annie Besant Arundale Jinarajadasa.
Read the long list of Guru Parampara in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad
Are you wiser than those sages?
What new ideas have you got now?
That they did not propound?
India is full of the wisdom of the sages.
You cannot cheat anyone in India.

Do not create wrong ideas in the masses.
When you say 'Do not follow any Gurus',
You intend to be the listener's Guru yourself!
Yet, you would argue against this ancient tradition!

Teach now:

Tad Viddhi Pranipatena Pariprasnena Sevayaa
Upadekshyanti Te Jnanam Jnananah Tattwadarshinah.
Learn yourself from the mouths of saints and sages.
And, spread this ancient wisdom.
Join a saint's Ashram and learn.
Don't argue against Ashrama and institutions.
Without some sort of institution you cannot live,
Nor do anything permanently good.

SHRINGA BHANGA AND MUKHA MARDANA

In Indian rhetoric it is Shringa Bhanga to break the horns of the pride of knowledge of the opponent: it is Mukha Mardana to silence the opponent. Materialism is gradually gaining ground in the world today, influenced by science and by certain misguided rationalists, who insist on applying the proofs of sense-perception to the universe and on ignoring inconvenient truths that defy these proofs.

Read the following reply that Siva has penned to the rationalists: you will readily agree when Siva is called the Shringa Bhanga and Mukha Mardana of rationalists.

GOD EXISTS: THE PROOFS

You always feel I exist. You can never deny your existence. Can you? So, denying your existence is quite absurd and illogical. In denying your existence, you deny your own self. Existence is Brahman or your own innermost immortal Self. Though you are encaged in this finite body, though you are imperfect and mortal on account of egoism, you can think: 'I am infinite, perfect, immortal being.' This idea of infinity can only arise from an Infinite Being. Hence, infinite or Brahman exists. This is the ontological method of proving the existence of Brahman or the Supreme.

You can deny your own self. You can deny the existence of God or Brahman. You can doubt the existence of your own Self or God. But the doubted or denyer always exists. The existence of the doubter or denyer is Brahman or the Absolute.

Everything is changing in this world. There must be a substratum that is unchanging. You cannot think of a changing thing without thinking of something which is unchanging. Forms are finite. You cannot think of a finite object without thinking of something beyond, without thinking of the infinite. This is the teleological method of proving the existence of Brahman or the infinite.

In this world of phenomena there is cause for everything. The law of cause and effect operates. This is the cause (father) for the effect (child). There is the cause seed for the effect tree. There is the cause potter for the effect pot. A branch of a tree moves. The blowing of wind or the sitting of a bird is the cause for the movement of a branch of a tree. You see this world. There must be a cause for this world, the effect. That causeless Cause is God or the Creator. This is the cosmological method of proving the existence of Brahman or the infinite.

There are beauty, intelligent beings, luminosity, law, order, harmony in spite of apparent disorder and disharmony. There must be an omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent Being who governs and controls this vast universe. This is the theological method of proving the existence of God.



MARCH, 1949

1ST MARCH, 1949

COUNSEL OF HOPE AND COURAGE

Srimathi M. had written a pathetic letter, recounting the misfortunes that have visited her, her desperate condition and the causes that often tempt her to commit suicide. By the next post goes Siva's reply which after entreating her to think, reflect, and face the trials of life with calm endurance, warns her against hasty surrender to emotion.

Do not commit any such unwise act—You will gain nothing. This will lead to misery and suffering. Life is most precious. It is very difficult to get a human birth. Yield not to emotions. Be bold. Be cheerful. You can attain divinity in this birth and free yourself from birth and death through Japa and meditation. May God bless you.

MAHADEV DESAI'S SOUL BLESSED

Today is the All-Soul's Day at Sivanandanagar. The elaborate ceremonial observance is in progress, with consecrated food offerings, prayer on Ganges bank, Kirtan, etc. Siva sits on the cement seat opposite his Kutir, on the bank of the Ganges. He says:

'It was here that Mahadeva Desai and I were sitting in 1942. I offered him a chair: but he preferred to sit on a block of stone near the water's edge.' Then Siva did special Kirtan for the peace of Sri Desai's soul.

Was it that this noble soul (who was Mahatma Gandhiji's Private Secretary) yearned for the saint's blessings for his own onward march to the Limitless Kingdom of God, and thus claimed Siva's remembrance on this auspicious day when he remembers the departed souls of all devotees?

The memory is within recall. The faithful Secretary to Mahatma Gandhiji arrived at the Ashram. He was nicely entertained by Siva, who also taught him some Yogic Kriyas and Pranayam. M. was greatly impressed by the multifarious activities of the Ashram: and he paid a glowing tribute to Siva and his mission in the 'Harijan'. Siva, for his part, was all admiration for a new Charkha which M. had brought with him and which he later presented to Siva.

MYSTIC PHILOSOPHER SEEKS SIVA'S HELP

Sri Dr. M.S., M.A., Ph.D., a mystic-philosopher, writes to Siva:

'Indeed I very much appreciate your kindness and blessings to me.

'Revered Swamiji, I have tried to live seriously on the mystical path, but I don't find any friend in it. People's brains are so organised and their life impulses move so coarsely that they cannot appreciate the finer life and vibration. Hence it is difficult for me to live in such a coarse surrounding. I find better company in silence and books and in India today ideal life in mystical pattern is very much

misused. You have passed through such experience, and I am therefore wanting to profit by them. I have mixed even freely with people who have entered into some spiritual order. But, alas! I have not got any help from them.'

The learned doctor's predicament is a very understandable difficulty in the India of today. Let us now turn to Siva's reply:

'Yes, that is the problem that faces most Sadhaks earnestly aspiring to achieve something in the spiritual path nowadays. The task is comparatively more difficult now than it would have been in the ideal circumstances in days of yore: perhaps it is that that adds to the glory of Sadhana now. Obstacles augment the Sadhak's zeal, and put him on his guard at every step.

'The problem, I find, is the same everywhere. Only it assumes different forms in different places. Evil co-exists with good; and the Dwandwas are spread over the entire creation. However, the ideal surroundings exist within us: and we should strive our utmost to live in them.'

Thus the problem of the doctor of philosophy solved by the doctor of the soul—Siva. Siva has never indulged in polemics. He is a hundred per cent practical Yogi-philosopher. Yet, it is a fact that many doctors of philosophy and doctors of literature count themselves among Siva's foremost admirers, devotees and disciples. Dr. Atreye went overseas on a lecture-tour: and he declared that it was only Siva's blessings and good wishes that sustained him, and inspired him to crown his tour with success. Many other doctors have paid glowing tributes to Siva's thrilling books, and to Siva's personality, too.

6TH MARCH, 1949

ROADSIDE PARTY

Siva was walking up to the Bhajan Hall and Mandir for his evening stroll and circumambulations around the temple.

A shop-keeper (Bali) has shrewdly opened a sweetmeat-stall just on the road near the archway to the temple and the Siva Kutir, greeting Siva with an 'OM Namō Narayanaya, Swamiji Maharaj!'

'OM Namō Narayanaya. Are you all right? How is your business?' enquired Siva with all love.

'All your grace and blessings, Maharaj,' replied Baji touching Siva's feet.

'Swamiji, Bali has a feeling that Swamiji has not so far blessed his shop by partaking of his preparations.'

'Is that so?' Siva looked around. For he cannot take anything anywhere, unless there is a big crowd of people to share the feast with him. Some of us were emerging on the road. His voice rang out through space, and we all doubled up to him, and the Guru-loving Chidanandaji literally rolled down the up-hill, though he had just then struggled up the hill, at the Guru calling out his name.

We all devoutly assembled outside the shop with our Lord in the centre. I had an indescribably strange vision in which I saw our Siva as the leader of a Parivrajaka party, all standing outside the shop ready to receive Bhiksha.

Bali started distributing some sweets and some savoury.

The author of several books on health and hygiene who would ordinarily insist on the laws of hygiene being observed rigidly, was partaking of this open-air feast when a fleet of lorries and buses whizzed past on this dusty Devaprayag Road, raising behind them a cloud of dust which surrounded us all and filled our lungs, too. The edibles that we had in our hands were laid over with a thin layer of the dust we tread under foot.

The Sanyasin Siva had instantly swallowed up the doctor in him, or the Member of the Royal Institute of Sanitation (London) in him, and into Siva's stomach went sweets and dust with equal ease and freedom. The unconcerned look on Siva's countenance taught us: the sweets, the dust and the body (the physical sheath) all belong to the same category, only there is a difference in name and form.

The bill was paid: Bali was highly pleased: and the partakers of this holy feast were blessed with several silent sermons.

7TH MARCH, 1949

SECRET OF SIVA'S VOICE

An old veteran exponent of Tiruppugazh, an immortal work of Saint Arunagirinathar of South India, gave a lecture at the Ashram. Age weighed the Tiruppugazh Swamiji's tone and pitch of the voice. Yet, Siva appreciated the Swami's zeal and enthusiasm in spreading the sacred knowledge. Siva asked several Sadhaks to get pepper, sugar-candy and hot water to help the Swami clear his throat. When the discourse came to a close, Siva himself took up the harmonium and began playing his own songs on Shanmukha and then sang Kirtans, too.

A visitor who could not find room for himself in the Hall where this function was held, and who had therefore to be content with receiving the impressions of the Kirtan and discourse through the ear alone, was later on curious to know which young man sang after the Tiruppugazh Swami.

'Swamiji, after the Tiruppugazh Swamiji's songs and discourse, the Kirtans that followed rang out in sharp contrast. It was melodious music.'

Chidanandaji burst forth in laughter. 'It was Swamiji himself!' he informed the visitor. Then C. himself explained: 'Swamiji has maintained the youth of his voice through Yogic practices such as Pranayama, through strict and regulated diet and through constant singing of Kirtan.'

8TH MARCH, 1949

THE MEMORABLE EIGHTH

Indeed, the Eighth is a day which all of us who follow Siva look upon with veneration. As Janmashtammi, or the day of the birth of Lord Krishna, is still celebrated as a great day long after the disappearance from this earth-plane of that incarnation of God, so also 8th will ever be celebrated on earth by devotees of divine life.

Year after year, earnest Sadhakas have been rejuvenated and revitalised on the 8th September: all parts of their being receiving rich food.

We thought that the animal nature in man was too strong to be curbed by an annual reminder of this great day: and so decided to celebrate it every month.

Such is Siva's play that the spiritual food, too, is not distributed every month. Eighth is indeed a memorable day.

A DIVINE TRIBUNAL

Early in the morning, the divine tribunal was constituted. Someone had a misunderstanding with another: a slight rub, a hitch, the distant rumblings of the clouds of discord. Siva patiently heard both sides. We awaited the verdict: but, it proved to be a most strange verdict, strange in the sense that no law court in the world has this simple method of seeing good in all—the accuser, the accused—and then striking at the root of the problem and eradicating the root there itself, instead of simply chopping off the branches.

TO THE ACCUSED

'In the field of active work alone does man come face to face with his own inner contents. The inner nature is dormant while one is away from the battle-field. When the favourable opportunities offer themselves, then these inner hidden traits have a chance of manifesting themselves.

'There must be some truth in what the other man says. This is the attitude that every Sadhaka must adopt. Then, sit, reflect, analyse your own self and find out that hidden trait he has pointed out.

'Some people's nature is sensitive. Their sensitivity is too high-strung; but we should not consider that a defect in them and prick it. We should mind what WE do. We should on our part understand and respect that sensitiveness.

'His sensitivity has felt that something you said was offending. At once, you should feel thankful to him. Thank the man who points out your defects. This is the basic virtue that every Sadhaka should cultivate and develop. Then only is there a chance for one's own improvement.'

TO THE ACCUSER

'If everyone aspires to be a Sadhaka, there will never be any complaint, rub or quarrel. A Sadhak's attitude should always be to work selflessly, to aspire to be a good, perfect Sadhu. Then there will be no need to revolt. God has given us all

comforts. You have never felt the pinch of hunger: you have never suffered insecurity nor exposed yourselves to the mercy of nature. You have found a prosperous institution to care for you like a loving mother.

'I have known what it is to run to a Kshetra to take Bhiksha. I have known what it is to sleep on the roadside. These should always be held before the mental eye of the Sadhaka. These are the principles of a Sadhu's life. We should compare our status with that of the Rishikesh-Sadhus. We are a thousand times more comfortable than they. We should be thankful to God for that. This complaining mentality should go.'

TO BOTH

'This incident reveals the fact that there is somewhere a disharmony of hearts. A quarrel arises only when there is this disharmony. Otherwise, the accuser refuses to accuse and the accused readily admits the accusation. Then there would be no need for law courts. All people should develop this one family spirit. Then quarrels will cease. There should be harmony of hearts. Your heart should beat in unison with all hearts: you should love all. Once there is rupture it is very difficult to patch it up. But this is quite possible: what is required is continued, uniform and prolonged love-approach, so that the other party will have time enough to get over the grudge, then the suspicion of your inner motives of love, and ultimately understand your true nature.

SWAMI CHIDANANDAJI

'All of you should treat Swami Chidanandaji as your Guru. Even I revere him as my own Guru. I have learnt countless lessons from him. I love him: I adore him. His knowledge is vast: his wisdom is truly inspired and intuitive. His good nature is unrivalled. His heart is very large and his kindness is unequalled. All of you should learn from him. Then only will you all improve, develop and evolve.'

WHAT IS NIRGUNA

The Rationing Officers of Dehra Dun and Rishikesh have come. They were cordially welcomed and at once entertained by Siva's children who had by now imbibed Siva's traits in these respects to a great extent. Sri Ayyannaji, Swami Chidanandaji, Sri Vishnuji—all were busy in the visitors' service.

They were all very intellectual people, students of philosophy, and Sadhaks, too.

One of them asked: 'Swamij Maharaj, what is your idea about Nirguna Brahman? Does it mean only Shunya? In that case it does not very much appeal to us. Who would like to meditate on nothingness?'

'Nirguna, blessed devotees, is not nothingness. It is the fullness of everything that is good. Nirguna is plenitude. In it you find all auspiciousness, all goodness, all beauty, all joy, all health, all sweetness, all purity, all peace,—everything developed to perfection. From a distance this fullness becomes inconceivable and so the sages called it Nirguna. Once they reach there, they get merged in that inexpressible experience. It is not nothingness: but it is everythingness, and beyond this, too: for it is inexpressible. Only know that all that exists in Maya or false perception, viz., evil, ugliness, misery, change, birth, death and decay, etc.,

are not in IT. For, IT is beyond Maya. In Nirguna there are not the Gunas of Maya. Hence, It is called Nirguna.'

'Oh, Mahatmaji, we are grateful to you for this explanation. Indeed, you have convinced us that we should aspire to realise That. Please tell us what is Avyaktam.'

'Avyaktam, blessed children, is a term which is applied both to Brahman which is unmanifest, and also to Mula-Prakriti which is also unmanifest.'

'Why did, then, Swamiji, the Unmanifest become manifest?'

'That is a question which has never been answered. Many have tried to answer the question: but you will accept the answers only if you have faith. They have described this 'action' as the Swabhava or Lila of Brahman.'

'The same question has assumed various forms: Why is there evil in the world? Why is the world there? Why has the Jiva been created? When did Karma originate? Why did Karma come into being at all, etc.? Do not put the cart before the horse. Annihilate the sense of duality; go beyond the realm of Maya: you will know the answer to this transcendental question. You will not be able to express the answer: but you will know it: the problem would have dissolved.'

'Swamiji, you have given a most convincing answer to this unanswerable question. But, please tell us, do you think it is correct to say, in the case of Avataras like Sri Krishna, that the Absolute Nirguna assumed the Sakara, Saguna aspect? If so, why?'

'That is simple to explain. The devotion of the devotee, the tears of a Bhakta's Prem, the cry of a devotee's heart, forces the Nirguna Brahman to assume the Saguna form. The form is there for the satisfaction of the devotee, to enable him to worship Him. In fact it is the materialisation of the devotee's devotion.'

Another friend in the group began: 'Swamiji, with all the philosophical explanations at our disposal, we are still unable to reason out the inequality that exists in the world. One man is born as the son of a king: another the son of a beggar. One man is born blind: another a beautiful baby. Why did the Lord create this inequality?'

When Siva said: 'Ask the Lord Himself!' the entire gathering roared with laughter. What humorous wisdom! Ask the Lord: that is, first try to realise Him. Then the answer will be apparent.

Siva continued: 'The Lord does not create inequality. He does not make a man suffer and another man enjoy. He is the silent witness of all this. Man himself is the cause of his own suffering. He reaps what he has sown in the previous births. The relentless working of the law of Karma (the Law of Cause and Effect) brings about pain and pleasure, misery and joy. Misery is only the purgation of past evil deeds. Mother nature punished man in order that he might learn. She is not unkind either. Just think: would you accuse a mother who beat her own dear child to correct him and to mould his character? Similarly, you ought to be thankful to mother nature for enabling you to work out your own Karma by suffering in this birth. At the same time, you should take care that you add no

more to this load of Karma, by the awakening of the knowledge latent in you and by thus crossing over this ocean of Samsara.'

The officers were highly impressed by this lucid explanation of this difficult question. They bowed to Siva with great veneration and left, with his Prasad.

10TH MARCH, 1949

SUCCESS OF DIVINE UNDERTAKINGS

Sri Bhakti Prem Swarup Brahmachari of the Bhagavan Shankar Annapurna Kshetra of Haldani approached Siva with a request to bless his scheme for providing amenities to pilgrims to Kailas-Manasarovar. Siva wrote out his blessings in a special note-book which the Brahmachari had brought.

Then the blessings also materialised into a ten-rupee note, and Siva insisted that it should be accepted, in spite of the fact that the Brahmachari regarded the Ashirvad alone as worth a great treasure.

Then came what was perhaps of even greater value: a few precious, invaluable instructions to the Karma Yogi-enthusiast:

'Maharaj, I shall say only two words in respect of the noble work you have undertaken. First: do not be an Arambha Soora. Once you have undertaken a good noble work, you should see it through till the completion. Some people encounter some difficulties, their zeal and enthusiasm fades away in the middle and the work is neglected. You should not do that. Secondly, at no time should the self enter the work. The work should always be selfless. Here also generally people make mistakes: first they work selflessly and sometime later they stray away into selfishness. These two points are very important. Further, even though you might have undertaken this scheme as a scheme of social service, you should side by side develop divine virtues such as Vairagya, Viveka and Shad Sampath and yearn to realise God through the service. You should convert all work into Karma Yoga. Then the undertaking will be really successful. OM Namō Narayanaya. Jai ho.'

11TH MARCH, 1949

LIVE ALONE

'Chidanandaji, I have permitted Sri Ayyannaji to go to Badrinath this year. Last year itself he had a great desire to do so: but he postponed it due to pressure of work here. He has worked very hard and he must have some change. Give him whatever money he needs for his expenses.'

'Yes, Swamiji.'

'Oh, Ayyannaji, Shraddhanandaji may also be going to Badrinath. Would you like to go with him?'

'Yes, Swamiji, if I can be of service to him. Otherwise, I would like to go all alone.'

'You are right. You should always go alone. Otherwise, it is a great botheration. Even at some personal inconvenience, one should try to live and move alone. I have had several experiences: and all of them go to show that a man should always remain alone. Even if Brahma Himself comes and says: 'I am Brahma the Creator. I shall accompany you' you should say: 'Go your way: I shall go alone.' Not even this. Even if from your own heart another Ayyanna comes out and offers to keep you company you should decline it with thanks. Peace and bliss is only in living alone and moving alone.

'You should all lead an independent life of seclusion and solitude. That is why I have built up this organisation. I have known what it is to wander and to depend on other people for the bare necessities of life. I used to wander from place to place before coming to Rishikesh. I used to go to one house for the noon Bhiksha: and again I would not go to the same house. I used to feel, 'What will the man think? Will he get disgusted with me? Will he think that I am a burden on him?' This sort of dependence on others will not do. You should live alone and independently. The organisation has provided you with all the facilities necessary for that.'

SIVA'S GURU BHAKTI

Siva was making enquiries about the progress of the music class. We replied that we were carrying on.

'You should all greet Sivaswarupji with folded palms and OM Namō Narayanaya. You should revere the Guru who teaches you the Vidya. Only then will the learning be fruitful.'

'Yes, Swamiji. We are all doing that, though sometimes we forget to do so.'

'No, no: you should never omit this. See, I had Swami Viswanandaji's company for only a few hours. Yet, I daily remember him in my Stotras in the morning. I include Swami Vishnudevanandaji's name also: as it was he who performed the Viraja Homa for me. It is very necessary: only then will the spark of Mumukshutwa burn brightly in us.'

SIVA'S TEACHERS

As usual, the topic drifted to lighter vein full of instructive humour.

'Once I learnt fencing from a Pariah. It lasted only for a few days. He was an untouchable: yet, I used to greet him with cocoanut and betel-leaves. Guru is Guru, to whichever caste or creed he belongs.'

'In Malaya there were several adept Tantriks. It was the time the Spanish 'Flu took a heavy toll of lives in Malaya. I, too, had an attack: but somehow escaped. The Tantrik had several Mantras and Yantras. There was a wonderful Vidya. A special unguent is applied on the thumbnail of the adept who has done the requisite number of Malas of Japa of the Mantra: through this unguent the adept will be able to see and know about distant happenings. He can tell you what is going on in such and such a place in Mysore: or, what a particular person is doing, where he is and so on. I even now remember the Mantra.

Here Siva actually repeated the Mantra. I had great reverence for the man who taught me the Mantra. I used to prostrate before him and entertain him nicely, serve him whenever the occasion arose. Later, I gave up the Tantrik practice as I did not like the idea of subjugating Devatas and getting things done through them.'

Therefore, when Siva warns the Sadhaka from pursuing the Tantrik Sadhana in its degenerated form which is prevalent widely nowadays, where the Sadhaka through Mantra Siddhi brings to his own selfish use precious psychic powers, it is not a sour grape philosophy, but it is a sincere advice of an adept. Misguided seekers would do well to listen to the warning and take to the Yoga of Synthesis which is both safe and sound.

SHALLOW VAIRAGYA

Sri Hem Kant's brother has come, with the intention of taking away Hem. They both came into the office.

'Do you wish to go?' Siva asked Hem.

'Yes, Swamiji: I might go for a few days and come back.'

'Then you are at perfect liberty to take him. (To Hem.) If you wish to come back and remain here, you should make a thorough self-analysis and find out if your Vairagya is pucca. You should clearly understand the difficulties that you will have to encounter on the path. Renunciation is not a joke. Tomorrow if you fall sick, and you find that you are not as fondly attended to here as you would have been in your own home, you should not regret having taken the step. You must be prepared to undergo any sort of suffering for the sake of God-realisation—the greatest good. So, consider deeply before finally making up your mind to stay here.'

They both had almost left the Hall, when Siva called the brother again.

TWO SONS FOR FAMILY: ONE SON FOR GOD

'What made you come all the way from Gauhati to Rishikesh?'

'Swamiji, our mother is greatly upset on account of Hem's absence. Everyone in the family is miserable. So, I was asking to fetch him back.'

'It is a good thing: because you have had a good Ganges bath which you might not have had otherwise. You have done some Japa on the Ganges bank. But, why should the parents be worried? Hem is not dead. He is alive, and very much so, because perhaps only now he is really alive. Do you call a worldly life of misery life at all? Here he is leading a spiritual life, a blessed life devoted to God. Why should the parents be anxious? Has he committed any crime? On the other hand they should all be happy that one of their sons has taken to the spiritual path. He is not the only son: he has two brothers. The progeny will be kept up by them. Why should he also procreate? Here he will do something which no one has done: he will have Self-realisation. Is it inferior to studying in B.A. and later rotting in an office as a clerk? Tell the parents from me that if two sons remain in the family to look after the parents in their old age, and to keep up the progeny, at least one

son should lead the path of renunciation and strive to attain God-realisation. You can also spend your life of retirement here, and so can your parents. What a great blessing it is.'

12TH MARCH, 1949

AMSA AVATARAS

Dr. Brij Behari Lal's letter had not been attended to promptly. To Siva that was an occasion for imparting a lesson to his children.

'Even after such a long training our inmates have to learn more the art of service. The organisation is growing daily. And, everyone should work like a bee, tirelessly and with zeal. Someone who has run away from the Ashram and fallen into evil ways, it seems, remarked that I did not teach him any philosophy. Why? What need is there for all of you to be taught? The very work, if you do it sincerely and with all your heart and soul, is enough: just see how I am working day and night. You will have to watch and learn for yourself. The talks and discourses that you listen to will not impress you so much as would an example.'

'Service, service—that should always be your motto. The moment I get an address, see how I serve. Immediately I will enter it in my register. I will send a copy of the magazine, a packet of leaflets, a book, Prasad and a letter, too. Thus, the Lord's name and the Divine Life message have been taken to another household. This should be your motto, too. You should eagerly wait for every opportunity of service. I have every time to extract work from you. Some of you have yet to feel that every work is our own, that the whole Society is your own, and that it is all His Service.'

'Avataras will come in special times of stress and strife. Perhaps the birth of an Avatara is imminent. But, now, we should all take on the duties of an Avatara: in fact all the saints of today are Amsa-Avataras, and we are all their helpers. We should ourselves feel that the divine spark is in us and work hard. Each one of you should do what an Avatar will do. Then the divine spark in you will burst forth into a conflagration.'

'Can I not sit in a closed room and pursue the 'Who am I?' enquiry? But, the bliss that I get out of this service and untiring service of Sadhakas is, so to say, much greater than the bliss of meditation. The point is this: through this service people are benefited. There is infinite expansion of the heart. What great service did Lord Krishna do? That should be our idea. Serve, SERVE: feel that the divine spark (Amsa) is in you. Feel that you are preparing the ground for an Avatara to come.'

'I assure you: you will get Sadyo Mukthi if your body falls off while you are engaged in the service of humanity. If the body dies while you are carrying water to the temple, at the very moment you will attain Final Liberation. Fear not and serve.'

Blessed is today. For after a lapse of about three years I am again hearing such fiery words from the lips of Siva.

Similar were the discourses that Siva used to give during October-November 1945 when the presence of a large number of visiting-Sadhaks created a perpetual Sadhana Week atmosphere in the Ashram. And it was Siva's fiery advocacy of Karma Yoga that made a proud Dhyana Yogi of violent temper to carry water for the Ashram kitchen, a very high official of an Indian State to remove cow-dung from the road.

13TH MARCH, 1949

TO PLEASE ALL

A devotee brought a small packet. Only the wrapper and thread were visible from outside. The packet found its place on Siva's table, as the devotee's head sought the sage's feet. Siva looked curiously at the packet.

'Swamiji, it is a humble devotee's token of reverence: a chaddar.'

'Silk chaddar?'

'Yes, Swamiji,' replied the devotee at the same time opening the package.

Receiving the chaddar, Siva said: 'I am a Sanyasin. I should not wear silk. People will not like it. They will criticise Sanyas itself.'

'But, Swamiji, you cannot refuse my loving gift. Then you would have injured a loving devotee's heart.'

This silence Siva and he received the gift with the joy born of a recognition of devotion.

The World! It takes all sorts of people to make the world. And, the Creator alone can know His creation. Thus, you always find yourself in a tight corner if you try to satisfy all. Which way to go? You stand bewildered. See how Siva solves the problem. Cast the lot in favour of the one who would be spiritually benefited by the action. The other party can be ignored—in this case it is the one who would purposelessly criticise the dress of a sage, being unable to understand even a little of the sage's inner nature.

18TH MARCH, 1949

EVER BUSY IN COMMONWEAL

Mr. Relton of the Theosophical Society, Adyar, has come. Siva greeted him cordially and enquired about his health, etc., and if he had had his morning coffee.

'Yes, Swamiji: thanks very much.'

Siva presented him with a few of his (Siva's) books.

'Thank you very much, Swamiji: I shall read them with utmost interest.'

'Is Henri van Zeyst at Adyar? Is he all right?'

'Yes, Swamiji: he told me a lot about you and about your humanitarian activities here. He told me that you are ever busy....'

'What busy! It is all His work,' Siva said in all humility.

'Yes, Swamiji: those who are engaged in doing good to humanity are ever busy. It is really a marvel how much work you turn out. It is our prayer that God may grant you many, many years of health and strength for the service of humanity.'

SOMADEVA SARMA

Hardly had Mr. Relton left the D.J. Hall, and hardly had Siva uttered the words 'Today Sri Somadeva Sarma is coming?' than....

'He has come, Swamiji,' Jyotirmayanandaji ushered in Sri Srivatsa Somadeva Sarma and party.

Siva at once got up from his seat and with folded palms greeted the great saint and savant, who is very well versed in the Vedas and the Puranas.

S. offered Sashtanga Namaskara to Siva.

'The rarest good fortune to which I have been longing for such a long time, of your Pada Sevanam or your holy Darshanam, I have got today. My eyes have today got the greatest feast. I am blessed, thrice blessed. Today is the greatest day of my life.' So on....S. was literally in ecstatic joy at the sight of Siva.

A few of Siva's disciples ran hither and thither bringing coffee for the party, arranging for the rooms etc.

A CURE FOR LEUCODERMA

A young man, very seriously concerned about his own health, slipped into the office, along with his wife. Suffering—physical or mental—tramples on etiquette or decency! Neither prostration nor patience—the man went right up to Siva's seat, and stood almost brushing his sleeves against Siva's arm.

'OM Namō Narayanaya!' greeted Siva, unmindful of his own conversation with Sri Somadeva Sarma.

The man placed his problem before Siva: 'Swamiji, I have got this....(pointing to a white patch on his neck)....Please tell me what it is and how to get rid of it. I have consulted many doctors and each one says something: some doctor said it is....'

Seeing the young man hesitant, Siva volunteered 'Leucoderma?'

'Yes, Swamiji; that is what one doctor said and I got greatly upset. It has brought on great mental agony.'

'No, my child: you should not give way to emotions like that and get upset. It is after all loss of pigment.'

'Still, Swamiji, it will disfigure me. Oh, I am greatly worried about it. Please do something for me, Swamiji.'

'Practise Sirasasan and Sarvangasan. Do Pranayama also. Use the prescription that I am giving you.'

Siva gave him a medical prescription also. And the young man prostrated before Siva, now greatly relieved, and left.

SIVANANDA AVATARAM

Only a sharp, subtle intellect with a pure understanding of Truth will be able to perceive Divinity. In spite of obvious supernatural birth and Lilas, Lord Sri Krishna was recognised as God incarnate only by a few great souls.

Sri Somadeva Sarma, the profound scholar who could entertain learned audiences spell-bound with his eloquent and illuminating lectures on the Prasthanatraya, the Shastras and the Puranas, spoke during the evening Satsang. Here are a few salient points:

'Whenever there is decay of righteousness and a seeming triumph of unrighteousness, the Lord Himself has assured us in the Gita that He incarnates on this earth and upholds Dharma. Again, He has said that anything that is divine and splendid is His own Amsa. Our Lord Sivananda is surely an Avatara of Bhagavan. He has come to raise the fallen, to illumine the intellects of worldly-minded men and lead them all on the path of righteousness. Today through Sivananda's grace and divine influence, thousands of Nasthikas (atheists) have been converted into Asthikas (theists), thousands of utterly beastly men and women have been divinised—and they all sing God's Name with great devotion. This I have seen with my own eyes. I have seen with my own eyes the impossible being achieved through the magic of Sivananda's name and influence. It is due to him today that Dharma still holds its flag aloft. How many branches of the Society, carrying on what all divine activities! Truly, truly, Sivananda is an Avatara of Iswara Himself. His grace alone can guide South India, the land where today atheism is gaining strength, and lead that part of the land towards God.'

He sang several Sanskrit stanzas composed by him in praise of Siva and said: 'In all our gatherings we start with these stanzas in order to invoke the blessings of our Guru and God, Swami Sivananda, on our undertaking.'

Oh, Siva! Such is thy glory. Who can comprehend it truly?

25TH MARCH, 1949

ADVAITA SIDDHI

What is the difference between a man and a saint? I eat: he eats. I sleep: he sleeps. I wear clothes: so does he. I suffer from diseases: so, I see, does he!

But, I now understand that what I see apparently is wrong. For, when you and I suffer from a disease, we suffer: but, when a saint suffers from one, he does not actually suffer, but passes through it. Disease, as it were, is an ornament to him, or a natural state of health, a common thing as answering calls of nature.

Siva has scabies. The percentage of sugar in the urine is high: the frequent injection of insulin brought on its own reaction, scabies. For this, he used sulphur ointment, etc.: this had its reaction in fever. This chain of action-reaction would have been sufficient to make us fret and fume, swear and be scared.

Not a day did he miss at the office. 'Now I think I should bring my ointment and brush daily to the office, as I bring my fountain pen and spectacles.' Siva remarked one day. How lightly he treats it.

Siva has temperature today. Yet, he is there in the office. A young man came into the office and wanted to learn Pranayama. I would have given him a bit of my mind and turned him out: for, I would have expected the visitor to notice that when I had a blanket on in summer it was an indication that I was not well and so, should not be bothered. But, not so our Siva: he began to demonstrate to the visitor the various easy comfortable Pranayamas.

And, if a man writes the following poem in that state of health, do you call him man?

O Lord! Thou art the scabies.
Thou art the parasite acari scabii
That produces scabies or itching.
Thou art the doctor who treats patients.
Thou art the medicine Ascabiol (M & B),
Sulphur ointment, talc and cuticura powder,
Neem oil, neem soap and the paste or lepan
Made up of gerua, sandal and rose-water.
It is a great mystery, Oh Lord!
Thou art hiding in all these forms
And playing the game of 'hide and seek'.
I have realised this great mystery.
I behold Thee in all these forms.
Glory unto Thee, O Adorable Lord!
Prostrations and adorations unto Thee,
Oh Secret of secrets!

PHILOSOPHY IN HUMOUR

In the evening, some of us were working with a petromax lantern in the office. Siva stepped in, on his way to the Bhajan Hall.

'Come: try this.' He invited each one of us in turn to a packet of 'Sev' (savory prepared in his own Kutir.) Then he asked for the opinion of each one of us on the taste of the stuff.

'Somehow, the bazaar Sev appears to taste better,' said Siva, and asked Vishnuji to get a little of other bazaar stuff.

'Now, taste both and tell me the difference.'

Each one said something. One liked a little chillie added to the Sev: another said it was not good, and so on.

Siva summed up: 'Tastes differ.'

What profound truth!

ANIRVACHANIYA

And so the consumption of Sev went on. 'Can anyone tell me what exactly is the taste of the Sev?' Siva posed a question. We merely looked at each other in bewilderment.

Siva himself solved the difficulty. 'I think it is quite impossible to make you understand how I feel about it. To each one of us the taste is essentially different. Each one's experiences of the taste is different. You alone can know it: you experience it: you cannot express it. Such is the Atman, too. Therefore, realise It yourself.'



APRIL, 1949

1ST APRIL, 1949

THE VIEW OF THE WORLD

A few visitors from Madras had, during their stay in the Ashram, accidentally chanced to come face to face with a young man who had renounced his family and come away to Uttarakhand for practising Tapasya.

When Siva was told of this identification, he fondly enquired about the status of the family, to reassure himself that the young man's disappearance would not starve the members of his family.

'Swamiji, his father-in-law is a fairly rich man, so is his own father. It is about a year and a half since he left the house: so, perhaps even the anxiety that they felt about him and the sense of privation would have by now cooled down.'

'But, the wife wants her husband! That is the trouble. She is not satisfied with money, parents and children. The woman is always after a husband,' remarked Siva, in Shavian jest, full of hidden wisdom.

RENUNCIATION NEEDS STRENGTH

'Swamiji, may we inform the parents and parents-in-law that he is here? Perhaps, they will be relieved of their anxiety.'

'Oh, yes, why not? And, even if they come here and start crying over his sleeves, it does not seriously matter. If he has the inner strength of conviction, then he will stay in spite of everything. He appears to be full of spiritual Samskaras: else his Vairagya would have faded away long ago and he would have returned to the house. Mind, he has led a very rigorous life, and undergone a good deal of suffering during the last one and a half years. Still he is adamant in his resolve. Renunciation is not an easy thing. It comes only out of strong Purva Samskaras.'

SWEPT OFF BY A TYPHOON

'Swamiji, he used to read a lot of your works. In fact, we are sure that it is only because of that he left the world so suddenly, and in the face of the attraction of a young wife and child.'

'Yes, yes: I also asked him: 'If you were inclined spiritually, then why did you marry?' He said, 'It was only after the marriage I started reading your books.' Such is the Lord's will. Who can alter that?'

'Your books, Swamiji Maharaj, are like the winds of a typhoon: they sweep men off their feet, only to plant them firmly on the spiritual path.' After a pause, the visitor added: 'I, too read your books, Swamiji....'

His wife who was also in the group, interrupted, '....And, Swamiji,....we have been anxiously watching him, lest he, too, should renounce the world and run away.'

‘But, Swamiji, I have never felt such an inclination....’

Siva interrupted: ‘Only when there is a spark can it be ignited!’

But the visitor was engrossed in his own line of thought. ‘Swamiji, I have always felt that it is possible to realise God through Grihasthasrama also. I do not feel that the family life is in any way an obstacle to spirituality.’

‘Yes, yes: it is possible to realise God in and through the world. You have to live like a lotus-leaf on water.’

WHAT IS WORLD?

A railway engineer came in. He had a doubt to be cleared.

‘Swamiji, you say we should avoid a worldly man’s company. But, Swamiji, aren’t we all worldly men? If I, too am a worldly man, what do I get by labelling another as a worldly man and avoiding his company? I think this is possible only when I renounce the world and come here.’

‘What is here? Is this not the world? Is Rishikesh not part of the world? How can you renounce this world? Where will you go?’ These questions put the engineer in a very receptive and reflective mood. ‘What is meant,’ continued Siva: ‘by a worldly man is a man who is full of worldly nature. A man may live in the world, and yet be not of it. That is the secret. Never allow the evils of the world to get into your heart: enthrone God in the heart.’

FROM MECHANICAL REPETITION TO BHAV

‘I do try to meditate on the Lord in the heart and to do Japa. I find it very difficult. My mind always wanders. It has no taste for Japa.’

‘Go on mechanically repeating the name as a parrot does. In course of time, the Mantra-Shakti will awaken in your heart a real love for the Lord and His Name, the real Bhavana which will lead you to Bhava Samadhi. Persistent effort is necessary.’

6TH APRIL, 1949

PUNCTUALITY: SIVA’S DEFINITION

‘Where is Chidanandaswamiji? Where is Sivanarayanji?’ Siva was there on the Ganges bank: and the boys ran here and there collecting the Ashram group that would accompany Siva across to the Swarga Ashram.

Judge Saheb with a party of Swarg Ashram Sadhus had arrived at 7 a.m. to take Siva to Swarg Ashram. The party came singing ‘Sri Ram Jaya Ram Jay Jay Ram’ Kirtan.

At 7:30 Siva arrived at Sri Viswanath Ghat, ready to make a move. Within the fraction of a second he had checked up on all the things that had to be taken—fruits, money, books, magazines, pamphlets, etc. One or two of the Ashramites scheduled to accompany him were yet to come.

‘Swamiji, we had been told to be ready at 8 a.m.’

'That might be: but it is our duty to be well prepared half an hour ahead. That is punctuality. Then we would also avoid running about hither and thither at the last moment. Well, now let us go.'

For then Acharyaji had also come.

And, the boat sailed along, merrily, to the accompaniment of the Kirtan.

UTSAV BHAVAN

We assembled on the open ground near the Swarg Ashram office. After the usual speeches, Sri Upadhyayaji requested Siva to open the new Utsav Bhavan, designed especially to house a small altar of God before which would go on Bhagavat Katha, etc. Raghavacharyaji, the aged Shad-Darshanacharya, concurred, and said: 'In my view, among those present today Sri Swamiji Maharaj is the foremost, a saint and seer, full of the divinity whose birth we have today assembled to celebrate. I am very happy when, soon after I went over to the other bank of the Ganga to the Muni-ki-reti, Swamiji also went there and established his Ashram where he preached Rama-Bhakti and Nama-Bhakti, from where arose mighty waves of devotion to the Lord that uplifted humanity. Indeed, he is a great Mahatma whose blessings should be sought by all of us.'

Siva stood beside the door of the Utsav Bhavan, and roared OM OM OM. —Om is the seed of all auspiciousness and Siva never commences any function without it. Then his usual Kirtans ending up with the Maha Mantra Kirtan which has received a new life from Siva.

After a short speech wherein Siva eulogised the wonderful service that the founder of the Swarg Ashram had rendered to humanity, and with his own blessings 'May this Utsav Bhavan be a haven of peace and godliness to which all devotees could resort, purify themselves, and become Jivanmuktas!' he declared the Utsav Bhavan open.

FILLED FOR AGES TO COME

When all had seated themselves within this Utsav Bhavan, Siva sang a few most inspiring Kirtan Dhwani...and the Voice! Coming as it does from the very navel of this great Yogi, it rang out in sweet melody and indescribable power and filled the entire atmosphere. Siva's single voice reached farther than that of the entire gathering combined. These powerful vibrations would last for ages.

And, our cup of bliss was filled. At the conclusion of the function Siva himself stood up and distributed the Prasad with his own divine hands...he went round here and there taking the utmost care to see that none, not even the meanest and most neglected members, not even the slumbering child on his mother's lap, none was omitted.

TWO DISTINCT THINGS: KNOWING AND DOING

And, so the function came to a close and we left the Utsav Bhavan. There was rush again...this time it was to touch Siva's feet. This procession of men and women lasted for quite a few minutes, and others ran after Siva and took the dust of his feet.

'You have made it a great success. All the glory for today's grand function belongs to you,' Siva said to Upadhyayaji.

'No, Swamiji. It was all your grace only. Mahantji also had this idea. I got this idea also several years ago. It was through your grace only that it was fulfilled this year.'

'It is one thing to have an idea and quite another thing to take the initiative to do it. It is one thing to know: quite another thing to do. We know so many things: but hardly do we dare to do them. The credit for taking this initiative should definitely go to you. May God bless you all.'

Upadhyayaji would not take this hint. He insisted on accompanying Siva till the very bank of the Ganges.

'I hope,' said Siva: 'that this is only a beginning: in future you should arrange celebrate all the festivals here. People will be benefited: Sadhus will be benefited: and it will bring glory to the institution, too.'

'By your grace and blessings, Swamiji, I hope it will be so.'

7TH APRIL, 1949

FOLLOW-UP—AN IMPORTANT PURSUIT

'Have those blocks gone to Sankaranandaji?' queried Siva, as he came into the office.

'Sankaranandaji? But, I have sent them to Narayanaswamiji!'

Siva told one inmate who passed this instruction on to another, and it went to yet another....Losing itself in transit....Result: confusion and a thing intended for someone goes into some other's hand.

'All right. Please write to Narayanaswamiji to send the blocks to Sankaranandaji.'

After a while, Siva remarked: 'If I do not pursue every matter like this till its very tail-end, at once I find that things have gone wrong.'

Siva, who has been working at this strain for more than quarter of a century (why, even in Malaya he was famous for this thorough-going work), has to do it even today and the youngsters feel that the moment they pass the baby on to another, their responsibility is over. And, Siva never tires of service.

SHUBHASYA SHEEGHRAM

When you know a thing to be good, do it at once. This is Siva's advice to all. Who knows that tomorrow will be like? And, man's mind is so fickle and flippant that ere the day breaks again, it has its own revisions of ideas, and relapses into its old grooves. Even in regard to ordinary matters of detail Siva adopts this motto.

The service in the temple in connection with Sri Ramanavami was over: it was past midday. The Prasad that had been distributed at the temple had kindled people's appetite, and everyone was straining his ears to hear the kitchen bell.

'Vishnuswamiji, bring ten-rupee worth of pedas. We shall perform the opening ceremony of the two new Kutirs immediately.' And, Vishnuji ran.

Jnaneshwari Kutir built by Judge Saheb: and then Sri Gajanan Sharma's Kutir. Each took nearly fifteen minutes. And, the thrilling Kirtan Dhwanis and the very presence of Siva in our midst took away the weariness: and only the kitchen bell reminded that we had a stomach to feed.

STAY HERE

At night we were all at the desk. Siva came into our midst on his way back to his Kutir from the Bhajan Hall. Viswanathan caught his eye.

'What about Viswanathji? Have you decided to stay on here? Is there any attraction still for the family? What will your father say?'

'Swamiji, my father actually turned me out of the house when he found that I was getting into trouble on account of my association with a political party. He will not bother about it if I stay here or elsewhere.'

'Then, it is shameful to return to such a father! Stay here.'

Then, without even a word from V., Siva had chanted OM thrice and continued his Jaya Ganesh Kirtan.

'But, Swamiji, I might be permitted to go for a few months, for I have promised my friends that I will see them again.'

'What friends? Let them come here if they are so eager to see you.'

Here is a real test of friendship. Most of our worldly friends are not as friendly, not even a hundredth as friendly as we believe them to be. It is only our ignorance that creates this bond. When this friendship is put to the test, we find that this bond had never been there at all. How many disillusionments of this type does the average man get: and yet this Moha for friends never leaves him, and he is ever eager to make new friends and newer friends, forgetting every time that his older friends have become aliens to him already.

V. agreed to stay on.

8TH APRIL, 1949

AMERICAN PROFESSOR MEETS SIVA

Dr. Frederick Spiegelberg, Ph.D. an American Professor has come, accompanied by a Gujerati lady who has so long been a silent admirer of Siva.

The doctor explained his mission to India and said he had visited all the other Ashrams in the country. Particularly, he mentioned Anandashram, Kanhangad, of Sri Swami Ramdas.

'Swamiji, have you ever met Swami Ramdas?'

'No.'

'He has a very high regard for you. He spoke so highly of you and your attainments that I was all the time very eager to meet you personally.'

ONLY A SAINT KNOWS A SAINT

That brought to my mind a wonderful feature about Siva himself. His own disciples often behave in an unbecoming manner towards him. On the other hand, we find that renowned saints have very great veneration for him. Sri Yogi Shuddhananda Bharatiar, to have a glimpse of whose face people have to wait long at his Kutir in Pondicherry⁵, has written a thrilling biography of Siva. Sri Narayanadas Paramahansa, the gunny-Sadhu and great Mowni, who has declared that he has had direct Darshan of Bhagavan Narayana Himself, bows his head in veneration when Siva's name is mentioned in his (N.'s) presence. Sri Swami Ramdas, himself a renowned saint whose two books, 'In Quest of God' and 'In the Vision of God' give a glimpse of his own realisation and high spiritual state, has this reverence towards Siva. Why: people all over the world, saints of great reputation have this veneration. Sri Dr. Hari Prasad Shastri, Ph.D., a renowned disciple of Saint Dada Maharaj, and who is worshipped by his own English disciples as a Great Master, has almost a chela-like veneration for Siva. Sri Boris Sacharow, an eminent Yogi of Russia, and Sri Louis Brinkfort, another Yogi of Denmark—all have taken Siva as their revered Master. I can go on with this list ad infinitum.

Saints revere this saint: saints see God in this 'man'. And, ordinary people see man in this divinity. What a pity. Oh, Lord, open our eyes. Give us the Divya Chakshu so that we might see Thy Real Form which these Yogis see in their own inner temple.

INDIAN SPIRITUALITY IS ALIVE IN ASHRAMS

At night, during the Satsang, Siva requested the doctor to speak a few words.

'I have been deputed by my university in America to go round India and see if her ancient spiritual culture is still alive today. I have gone round: I have visited several Ashrams: I have contacted Government officials, too. I find that the spirit is still alive, very much so, in the Ashrams in India where, as in this, there is the living presence of a Master. It is a sad reflection to find that in the Government and public services this spirit is almost nil, whereas in the west you find greater traces of this spirit in those quarters.'

MY INNER RULER

⁵ Now the head of Yoga Samaj, Madras.

'Venkatesanandaji, you will have to talk a few words,' came the command. Now? I felt diffident: with hardly a few minutes to think about what to say! But after all, it is he who is going to do it.

Siva must have known the dilemma: for he began with a beautiful song 'Within you is hidden God!' and then followed it up with a few Vedantic songs. And while doing so, he had given me enough material to talk. All that I had to do was to elaborate his definition of 'Divine Life' as give in this famous song.

THE PROFESSOR IS CHARMED

The Satsang came to a close at about 9.20 p.m. But it was hard for the Professor to take leave of Siva for the night.

'Swamiji, I have seen many saints in India during this tour. But, what I greatly admire in you is that you have not the slightest trace of an inferiority complex from which the others suffer. You are so outspoken: and you are so full of humour that you capture our hearts. Humour is a thing that is lacking in philosophers and saints too, very often. That spoils everything and makes it dry pedantry.'

'Swamiji,' I told the Professor, 'is a musician dramatist, great humorist and dancer, too. You should see him dance. He is a fine actor: and he has dramatised the Upanishads. People who were unable to assimilate the Vedantic truths contained in them have got clear ideas from his Upanishad Drama which has been appreciated by our Governor-General also. He is full of humour.'

'Have you read my book: 'Philosophy in Humour'? ' asked Siva.

'No, I would very much like to.'

They resumed their seats. And, Siva began to sing a few poems from his book 'Philosophy in Humour'. The Professor and the Gujerati devotee were beside themselves in joy.

'You ought to sing these songs in America: and you will revolutionise the entire country. People will be simply swept off their feet. America needs this kind of instruction: simple and delicious. And the way you sing these precious instructions! It is simply marvellous.'

They left at 11 p.m.

9TH APRIL, 1949

YOGA MUSEUM: A GREAT IDEA

Early in the morning, Siva took the Professor round the Ashram.

The Yoga Museum he was very much interested in. The entire set-up of the Museum was explained to the visitors. The doctor of philosophy closely followed the beautiful design of the Museum.

'Please give me a sample of this Japa-mala-bag. With that I will start my own Museum in my University in America. This is a most wonderful idea.'

FIRST TIME I SEE ASANS

Vishnuji demonstrated certain very difficult Asans. The Professor was all-admiration: and he took slide-photographs of many of these Asans.

'Swamiji, I have heard and read so much about these Asans and Kriyas. But this is the first time I actually see that a man can perform such difficult feats of Yogic Kriyas.'

ALL ROUND PERFECTION

The Professor was himself a good photographer. When Siva took him to the Sivananda Art Studio and showed him the modern equipment of Padmanabhan's studio and dark room, the Professor remarked: 'This is the only Ashram with such perfect modern arrangements.'

'Is that so? Chitra Kala is one of the many Kalas: some others are music, dance, etc. They are all divine in their origin and divine one should aspire to keep them. They are holy and inspiring if they are kept on the high pedestal of sublimity. One should be efficient in these: for they contain in them an Amsa of God.'

'Further, the photographic and painting arts keep for posterity a record of present-day events. It is a great help for generations to come.'

The Professor admired the purity of Siva's approach to the fine arts.

11TH APRIL, 1949

NOTHING FOR THE ATMAN

'What are the Governors and Chief Ministers doing?' asked Siva, in the course of a conversation this morning. 'They all come and do some Seva in the temple: some should do Kirtan in the Bhajan Hall: others should carry water for the kitchen. Merely sitting at their desk in the office and signing papers will not do. At the end of it all, they will find that they have done nothing to realise their own Self.'

How true! People who engage themselves in social service or in the service of the nation, even though with a laudable motive in the beginning soon lose sight of the goal and stray away into selfishness and self-aggrandisement. As they approach the end of their life, they are filled with an inward bitterness (and, this, too, only if they have at some time or other had a spiritual inclination) at not having achieved substantial inner progress.

Throughout the active career of these people they are filled with the wrong notion that they are indispensable to the state or nation or society. But the Lord of Death has no such illusion: he snatches them away in the twinkling of an eye. What is the wonder of wonders—the world goes on, the nation lives, and society thrives in their absence, too. The world neither gains nor loses anything. These people were Maya's tools: if they had discarded her charms and worked selflessly for the good of humanity, at the same time plunging within their own Self and brought out the pearl of Atma-Jnana, Maya would have lost one of her victims, and the world to

which they would have handed over this pearl of wisdom would be definitely the better and richer for it.'

14TH APRIL, 1949

H. A. Y.? P. R.

Do you know what this means? Think. For thinking is good for the brain.

As they do with conundrums, I will give you some details about these letters. They form part of an autograph-blessings that appear on the cover of a book that Siva is sending a devotee as a present. And, this devotee has for a considerable time not been writing to Siva. Now, think again. For, deeper thinking along a particular line helps cultivation of the powers of concentration.

The interrogation mark reveals it: 'How are you? Please reply.'

You might ask: 'How does Swamiji expect the devotee to know this? If he is not sure that the devotee would easily understand it, then what use is it writing this much?'

This is the strangest phenomenon. If the reader understands, then the purpose is served. If he is unable to understand it, then also the purpose is served. The purpose is served the moment these letters are penned by Siva.

How? If he understands, he will reply. If he does not, then he will write to ask what it is: and naturally he will write all that Siva wants him to write!

In the process of thinking about this conundrum, already the blessed devotee has gained a lot. He has passed through his mind all the days that he was with Siva, the Upadesh that Siva had given him (lest it should refer to something of that Upadesh, that he has neglected), everything, everything indeed, from the date he met Siva till the date of the receipt of the book with these few letters inscribed on it. Thought deepens into concentration: and this, when coupled with Vichar, is productive of the most salutary results. He is sure to be revived—spiritually.

MESSAGE TO THE GUARDIANS OF YOUTH

Sri K. Raman Nair, Headmaster of Shoranur High School, has come and before leaving the place had collected a number of Siva's books. His wife made a quick survey of the entire book-shelf, the photographs and lockets and selected many of them: 'The children will like it.'

Siva came in. Raman Nair explained to him that he was on a mission of gathering information from authoritative sources about any improvement that he may carry out in the management of the school.

'Much of what the boy learns in the school today, he has to forget later on: very little of it is actually useful to him. The main thing—a spiritual training—is sadly neglected. Ethics ought to be the very foundation of the boys' career at school. At the schooling age the boy is easily pliable. You should try to plant in his fertile mind good seeds of spirituality, morality and ethical perfection. Then only will the school serve its purpose. Start the school with a prayer in the morning.

Encourage the students to study spiritual books of a non-sectarian nature. Gita should be taught. Yoga Asans and Suryanamaskar should be introduced.'

'Swamiji, I have already selected your pictures, and am taking them with me. Yoga Asana Chart and Suryanamaskara—I shall certain train my students in these. I am also taking some of your books. I shall encourage my students to study and digest your precious words contained in them.'

'And, start a magazine also. Ask the teachers and students, too, to contribute articles to it. This will help you a great deal. Convert your school into a college gradually. You have a wonderful philanthropic spirit. You can do wonders.'

'It is all possible only through your grace, Swamiji.'

MORE KUTIRS

Nowadays frequent enquiries are received here for estimates for the construction of Kutirs. Retired people are anxious to have the Satsang of Siva and of spending their retired life in the service of the great master.

'Say 'Yes' to this letter.' Siva gave a fresh enquiry whether a Kutir could be constructed at the Ashram.

Then, Siva added: 'We do not know how it will develop in future. Perhaps it will one day turn out into a Sanatorium. But anyway, all these retired people will be of great help to the institution, too: and, they will keep the work going. It is all God's will and no one knows in what mysterious ways help will come.'

16TH APRIL, 1949

THE GREATEST SERMON

Sadhana Week is in progress. Siva quietly joined the morning meditation class. When meditation was over, he stood up. He began to sing:

Sarvam Brahmamayam re re Sarvam Brahmamayam

'This is the last word of wisdom in the Upanishads. It is the cream of the Vedas. This one formula contains all that you need. Meditate on this one formula. You will attain Kaivalya Moksha.

'Sarvam Brahmamayam: all hatred, dislike, diversity, fear and other evils will vanish. You will see Brahman and Brahman alone everywhere. Names and forms will vanish. You will enjoy supreme peace.

'Meditation on the four Mahavakyas bestows on you the fruits of studying the four Vedas. But, meditation on this one great utterance of the Seers is equal to meditation on all the four Mahavakyas at one stroke. Therefore, repeat: Sarvam Brahmamayam.

'Negate the illusory names and forms. Kill this little I. Hate none. Dislike no one. Sing now: Sarvam Brahmamayam.'

'Ghrina will vanish. You will never dislike anything—no, not even evil. In the Devi Sukta, Devi is worshipped at....

Ya Devi Sarvabhuteshu Bhranti Rupena Samsthitaa

Ya Devi Savabhuteshu Trishna Rupena Samsthitaa

The Devi who is Shakti, mother, Santi, etc., is Trishna and Bhranti, too. Good and evil are both Her forms only. The Lord says in the Gita: 'Dyutham Chhalayatam Asmi'. He is described in the Rudram: 'Taskaranam Pathaya'. These clearly prove that hidden in all these forms it is He and He alone that shines. Negate the outer covering and sing....

Sarvam Brahmamayam

'In whatever condition you are, even though you have been starving for days together, even if you are on the roll of unemployment, even though you have lost everything in Pakistan, sing: Sarvam Brahmamayam. You will feel an inexpressible joy pervading your entire being. All the wealth of the world will perish. But the bliss that flows from the meditation on this Mahavakya is imperishable. It will revitalise you. It will give you peace and bliss. Live forever in the spirit of this one formula. You will soon become a Jivanmukta. May God bless you all.'

Then he had all people repeat in chorus....

Jaya Jaya Radhe Govind

and

Sita Ram Ram Ram

....before the assemblage dispersed.

DR. BRIJ BEHARI LAL

Dr. Brij Behari Lal of Saharanpur spoke on practical Sadhana and pointed out methods of practically living the divine life. Siva, at the conclusion of the doctor's speech, eulogised the doctor's humanitarian services at Saharanpur.

'Dr. Brij Behari Lal's lecture was full of words of wisdom. He has shown you how to live the divine life every day. His practical instructions are worth following. He is a very learned man: yet he has chosen to dwell on the practical side of religion than on the philosophical.'

'The same Atman is in all. Therefore, you should day by day develop equal vision. You should give up the practice of reserving the best of everything for yourself and giving away the stale plantain to the servants. You should feel that your own Self is in the servant, too. You should feed the servants first, give the best fruits to them, and if need be forego your own share. Then only will your heart expand. After a few days this zeal will fade away. You will relapse into the old habits. You will once again have to raise up the Bhavana. And, gradually, this trait will strike a deep root in you. Your heart will expand and you will realise the Self.'

SANYAS CALLS YOU

The Sanyas Flag was worshipped. Siva, in the course of a brilliant oration explaining the significance of the Sanyas Flag, said:

'The flag flutters in the air: it calls you all—'Come, embrace Sanyas'. One day or the other, you have to embrace Sanyasa. The Upanishads declare: 'Na Karmana Na Prajaya Dhanena Thyagenaikena-amritatwamanashuh. Nothing except renunciation can give you Moksha. If not now, at a later stage: if not in this life, in a life to come—before you attain the Supreme you will have to embrace Sanyasa.'

'Some people say: 'Why give Sanyas to young people?' Why? They are the fittest for Sanyasa. Only young people can practise intense Sadhana and Tapasya. What can an old man do? Just when he is about to die, someone will utter the Mahavakya in his ears which had already ceased to hear. Of what use is such Sanyas? Glory to the youthful Sanyasins who have dared to defy the worldly temptations and embrace the Holy Order.'

'Even you, ladies, ought to take Sanyas. There have been astounding examples in the Upanishads and Yoga Vasishta of ladies who possess Brahma Jnana. You are by nature nearer to God. You are loving by nature. You have many divine virtues. Only, you are more attached to children. That is your only weakness. If you try even a little bit, you can achieve the Supreme.'

'May you all realise the Self in this very birth.'

TEHRI'S CHIEF MINISTER

Sri Jyoti Prasadji, Chief Minister of Tehru-Garhwal State, was coming towards the Ashram. We received him and took him to Siva's Kutir where the party was entertained by Siva himself.

'Swamiji, I have received the packet of books that you have so kindly sent me. How wonderfully you write! Every word of what you say is only too true and uttered in your own direct style: and one is at once inspired by them, as they emanate from the very heart of a Self-realised saint. I have studied the books of all great men: but have not been able to find that particular charm in anyone else's.'

'It is all God's Grace.'

17TH APRIL, 1949

THE DEVOTEE'S ATTITUDE

Sri Sudarshan was in a complaining mood. The Sadhana Week did not satisfy her entirely: for she heard more of talks and discourses than of Kirtan and Bhajan. She is good at composing songs. She has composed many songs on Siva himself. Quickly in the afternoon she had composed her song of complaint. 'O Sadhaks, please ask Swamiji why he has not chosen to sing his lovely Kirtan Dhwani.'

Siva stood up on the platform after the Drama at night was over. Sudarshan asked for this Kirtan or that song.

'Ohji, all these are stale now,' said Siva. Look at the simplicity that enables him to say this from the lecture platform, facing a huge audience.

'No, Swamiji, to us they can never become stale.'

'All right, then,' said Siva. Then gushed forth Siva's favourite songs, one by one, and Sudarshan was visibly moved by Siva's grace and mercy.

Siva sang 'Song of Ities' and explained the meaning. Siva sent the audience to the heaven of joy when, in the middle of the song, he stopped and said in the same tune: 'I have forgotten the rest of the song,' and translated this into all the languages. A little while later, he recollected the entire song and continue to sing.

Try it once in your life and feel for yourself what a tremendous lot of courage and straightforwardness is necessary to do all this. It is impossible to evaluate this except through one's own experience. Fear of brickbats, fear of loss of name, fear of public criticism, and a host of other fears simply eat into the vitals of the man who finds himself in such a predicament. 'Dwiteeyaai vai Bhayam Bhavati—Only perception of duality creates fear'. Where is fear, of any sort, to one who has passed beyond this sense of duality? Siva sees his own Self in all—he has realised the Unity of Self—and therefore there is no fear for him, but bliss alone.

Next he turned to the song....

Chidanand Chidananda Chidananda hum

Har haime Atmas Satchidananda hum

I am Knowledge and Bliss, in all conditions I am Knowledge-Bliss Absolute.

'This is the greatest tonic in the world,' said Siva. 'In whatever condition you may find yourself, sing this song and realise its power to revitalise you, to rejuvenate you. You need not resort to drugs and tonics if you know this song. You will save doctor's bills if you sing this song.'

Next came the 'Song of Govinda'....

Goal of life	Govinda
Is God-realisation	Govinda
Attain this	Govinda
Through Japa Kirtan	Govinda
Through Mantra writing	Govinda

Quickly Siva turned to Sudarshan and asked: 'You have heard this many times. You are fond of this song also. But, have you ever thought of doing what I am telling you now? You never write the Mantra.'

'From today I will do, Swamiji.'

'And, send me the Mantra note-books regularly.'

And, he continued the song.

Siva was not feeling quite well physically. Yet, he continued the programme till 1 a.m. Thus had he demonstrated the efficacy of 'Chidanand' song. At 12.30 he was in a spirited mood. He sang sectional songs. A Punjabi tune....

Ladagai Ladagai Ladagai Ho

Akiyan Ladagai Shyam Sundar se

His own Tamil composition followed: and then a Telugu poem. After this, the two party Kirtan. The novelty this time was that he set man against woman. Ladies would say....

Radha Radha Shyam Bolo

....and men said:

Sita Sita Ram bolo

Now, it was Siva's turn to get dissatisfied. 'No, no: this is no good. There is no life in that corner. All big officers. Shy to do Kirtan. Now, sing again. Let me see who wins—ladies or gentlemen.'

This infused a new spirit in all. The sky was rent with the Lord's names.

'That is fine. The ladies have won. They have got all natural godly tendencies. They deserve to win. They are nearer God. Their nature is loving. They are fit for Bhakti Marga. They can realise God through Bhakti, even more quickly than men can do. Only, they are attached to children.'

21ST APRIL, 1949

PARADISE THROWN AWAY

On the 28th February, 1949, Siva wrote a poem warning earnest Sadhaks from falling into the hands of pseudo-Gurus who misguide their followers.

Today we have a practical example of what effect such contacts have on the Sadhaka.

L.L. Bhirud, a very earnest student of Yoga, one who has received much valuable help from Siva's teachings and thus had progressed satisfactorily along the path of divine life, writes:

'Received your kind gift of two books. I also got your loving letter. I am really very happy to note your enthusiasm in helping me. Today I want to write about the changes in me during the last few months.

After coming to Poona, I began to study....I first went carefully through....

which deals with Sadhana Chatushtaya. This book captured me at that time. But now I am studying Sri.... 's lectures. They appealed to me so much. Now I do not find any need of belief or Guru. I do not at all like Japa. I do not at all think it necessary to follow the commands of the masters, etc. simply because they are great. I have nothing to do with God. I never think about God. There is no need to think about Him. I want to follow the dictates of my own conscience. This is a very simple and direct way of approaching the so-called Reality. I shall consult others, authorities, but not accept their views unless I find truth in them. This, I

think, is a great change in me. To put into classical words, I am following Jnana Yoga. I hope you will still love me 'as I am'.

Certainly, there is a great change....but is it for your good or otherwise?

What was Siva's reaction on reading this letter? He smiled and said: 'Here is a clearer warning of what I said days ago. Here is a case to prove what I said. This is how innocent, diligent Sadhaks are lured away from the right path by miscreants who unsettle the Sadhaka's belief and leave him in the lurch. Never, never listen to them. Never even approach the room in which their books are kept. The association of these preachers is as beneficial to the Sadhaka as is the association of an evil-minded dancing girl to a wealthy zamindar. As the dancing-girl will drain the zamindar of his resources and then leave him in the lurch, so also these preachers will drain the Sadhakas of all the spiritual wealth they possess and then leave them in a very pitiable condition, where the Sadhakas will find that they have burnt their boats in mid-stream. Beware!'

23RD APRIL, 1949

MAHANTS! PLEASE NOTE

The Rawal Saheb of Badrinath temple has come from Malabar, on his way to Badrinath. Along with him came a Swami from Kalikamliwala Kshetra. After exchange of greetings, the Rawal Saheb settled down on a chair in front of Siva. But this Kshetra Swami was greatly embarrassed when Siva asked him to sit on the bench.

'No, Maharaj, I shall keep standing.'

Above all, these people who have lived in Rishikesh for the past twenty-five years not only know Siva to be great but have realised that he is great—they have seen him in rags, they have seen him as a stern Sadhu, they have seen him as a walking Gita, they have seen him as a great Yogi, and now they see him as The Great.

And, the Swami continued: 'Maharaj, this year I shall be going to Badrinath to be in charge of the Kshetra's free kitchen there. I require Swamiji's blessings.' Palms folded in front, eyes closed and the head swayed in front.

'Ohji, you are a very noble soul: that is why God has given you this opportunity. May God bless you. I will tell you one thing. Serve the Sadhus and Mahatmas there with Prem-Bhav. Do not run hither and thither, doing Dandavat Pranams to rich people, and entertaining them on Persian carpets, and then scolding and ill-treating Sadhus. Serve the Sadhus and God Himself will shower gold into your Khajana. You will attain Moksha Samrajya by this one service. May God bless you. OM Namō Narayanaya.'

Precious instructions are these to all those to whom God has entrusted spiritual organisations.

BE SELF-DISCIPLINED

It takes all sorts of people to make an Ashram: and Sivanandashram is noted for its catholicity of faith so that anyone professing any religion, creed or Yoga can become its inmate. And, there are some orthodox Vairagis who would prefer to take Bhiksha from the Kitchen and eat it on the Ganges bank. VVV was one of them. The kitchen manager had felt it rather inconvenient to serve these people with Bhiksha and to serve the others at the same time.

Siva called VVV and said: 'In whatever you do you should try not to cause the least of trouble to others. Well, if you wish to take Bhiksha and eat it on the Ganges bank, do so by all means. It is good. And, it would not be very difficult for the kitchen people to arrange it. But, you should have patience and discipline. You should wait for your turn. Never ask for extra-considerate treatment. Obey the rules. It will help you in your evolution.

'Even God follows certain rules self-imposed. Think of the universal laws—how nicely they operate. Think of the correlation of planets and with what rhythm and precision they move. Cannot God also leave the world, go and do Tapas in Uttarkashi? He has His eye on every atom of creation and attends to everyone's needs. He has to keep an account of everyone's Karmas and mete out the rewards and punishments in strict accordance with the Eternal Laws. You should acquire that much of self-discipline if you wish to evolve into God.'

And, I have heard that even in his Swarg Ashram days, when the Ashram authorities were ever eager to serve him in all possible ways, Siva would insist on being one among the crowd and decline to make use of the privileges granted to him. He would stand in the long queue, in the hot sun, waiting for his turn to take Bhiksha. He could as well have taken it at any moment 'side-ways': but he would never break the discipline of Swarg Ashram.

And, still they come.

25TH APRIL, 1949

JUDITH TYBERG

From far off America a sincere seeker after Truth intent on finding out the Reality in and through the maze of sects, creeds and schools of thought in India—Srimathi Judith Tyberg has come to Ananda Kutir.

She has great ideas. She was one of the founders of the World University Round Table of America of whose Religious Section Siva is the head. She intends to go back to America and spread Hindu Yoga.

After the evening Satsang Siva asked her to speak a few words, if she would like to do so.

'Me, Swamiji? I came to learn, to listen and to be with you and to inhale the holy spiritual vibrations that pervade the atmosphere of the Ashram. What I am going to say?'

Such is their attitude. Similar was Brig. Yadu Nath Sing's yearning, too. When he was here during the Sadhana Week, he described to me his mode of approach towards the saint of Ananda Kutir.

'It is a strange thing,' the Brig. said. 'I have stayed here for days together. Before I come, my mind is filled with eagerness to ask Swamiji about this and that. But, when I ultimately find myself in his presence, it seems as though that very presence is the answer. I have no need to ask any question.' And a true Sadhu among high-ranking army officers, you will at once see in the Brigadier a man of parts, noble and gentle, but not the least trace of the vanity of position.

26TH APRIL, 1949

JUDITH TYBERG SPEAKS

This evening, during Satsang, Siva requested Srimatha Judith Tyberg to speak and she was ready to do so.

She dwelt at length on the deplorable conditions in the West and emphasised the need for the quick and rapid spread of Eastern thoughts and the spiritual culture of the East in the Western nations. She felt that America was in need of it, and was ready for the message.

She had come to India to learn Indian Spiritual Science. She had studied the Indian philosophy and more than the philosophical portions of it which she was able to learn in the universities, she felt that the influence that actual living spiritual personalities, like Siva himself, had created in her lasting impressions and given her strength and courage to take the message of the East to America and say boldly, 'Here is a message from the living messiahs of the East in whom the ancient spirit of Vedanta still lives.'

Judith Tyberg felt that her quest for the living spirit in India had taken to Siva's Ashram at Rishikesh: and she said that during the few days of her stay here she has been able to learn a lot and absorb the message of divine life.

ASHRAM TRAINING

After listening to Siva's favourite and humorous Kirtans and songs at the conclusion of the Satsang, Srimathi J.T. was ready to leave for her Kutir. She said: 'Good night, Swamiji.'

'OM Namō Narayanaya! That is the Sadhu's way of saying 'Good night'. At every turn utter the Lord's Name. Even the mere Good-night forms part of Japa.'

'OM Namō Narayanaya, Swamiji. Yes, it is a nice way.'

29TH APRIL, 1949

RELENTLESS SERVICE

Before the class started, Siva himself had gone round the entire Ashram waking up all the inmates and all the visitors including J.T., so that they might attend the

class. Siva found J.T. fast asleep and so left her alone. But, the moment she awoke, she ran into the Bhajan Hall and quietly slipped in. Such is the liberty that people at once take of Siva, induced, no doubt, by his own spontaneous love and kindness: J.T. at the conclusion of the class, mildly put in: 'How is it that I did not wake, Swamiji? Did you wake me up today also?'

'Yes, yes': replied Siva, 'and you were fast asleep. I thought you were tired and so left you. Later I sent Vishnuji twice. Perhaps, you were too tired to get up. Anyhow, it is good you have come to the class.'

MUSEUM: A UNIQUE FEATURE

'So, you are leaving? OM Namō Narayanaya. Please come again and come every year. Spend a few months here. Take an aeroplane and you are here in a day.'

'I shall, Swamiji. In any case, I shall always depend on your blessings and kind thoughts to help me in my work in America. I have learnt a lot during my stay at this Ashram. I was greatly delighted to see the Yoga Museum. I have decided to set up a similar one in America. It is so simple and grand. The idea is simply unique.'

'Very good. I shall send you cuttings of pictures, etc. Though I may not be able to send you an exact replica, I shall try to furnish you with what all I can to make your museum complete, as the one here is.'

'Thanks very much, Swamiji. You are so good and generous.'

YOUTH CAN'T UNDERSTAND

Turning to Swami Chinmayanandaji, Siva asked: 'Is Shroff also leaving today?'

'Perhaps, no: Swamiji. His health was very bad last night.'

'What happened?'

'Swamiji, he easily gets upset over trifles. The problem of travelling by day in the hot sun, in a bus, worried him so much that he got blood pressure again.'

'Quite true. Only old people know their difficulties. It is a trifling thing to youth: but it is a real problem to an aged man like him, with all his weak heart and blood pressure. A young man cannot understand. I was doing double-somersault when I was young. But now diabetes, etc. make it difficult for me to walk, too. Age has its own limitations. You should try to understand and sympathise.'



MAY, 1949

1ST MAY, 1949

THE BOOK THAT STIRRED

At the night Satsang, Sri N. Parasuraman of Madura Divine Life Society related his experiences. His acquaintance, he said with unbounded enthusiasm and Satvic pride, with Siva dated back to 1937. During this great year in his life, he came across Siva's booklet 'Samadhi in Six Months'. 'This entirely changed my life. It stirred the depths of my heart. It made the deepest impression on my mind. I began to correspond with Swamiji. I got a most charming letter almost immediately: this letter I still preserve and read frequently. Since then I am trying to follow Swamiji's teachings.'

LEPROSY RELIEF

Visitors to Sivanandashram would invariably notice that outside the dispensary would assemble morning and evening a number of leprosy patients from the neighbourhood: and Siva's special instruction to the Sadhaka in charge of the dispensary has been to pay the utmost care and attention to this class of suffering humanity and to treat them with Narayana-Bhav. Thus, whereas the Sadhaka may omit to salute with folded palms a sick Sadhu, he would never forget this when a leper-Narayan approaches him. Siva himself has ever taken the keenest interest in the treatment of dangerous infectious cases: and the Sadhus of Rishikesh would relate with amazement how he would sleep with cholera patients, and serve them in every possible way, without the least thought of his own safety.

Rev. Taylor of the American Leprosy Mission was here yesterday with a U.P. Government official and requested Siva's assistance in the matter of leprosy relief in Rishikesh. Siva readily agreed, and later explained to us:

'The Government officials and also the State's Health Minister Dr. Gairola have always sought the assistance of Sanyasins for this work. Why? Because these helpless victims of the Prarabhda are neglected by all other sections of the community. A practising doctor would refuse to treat lepers: for his practice would cease, and with that his earning. People are afraid to go near leprosy patients. Only a Sanyasin who has renounced worldly life and who has no fear for even death can boldly undertake such humanitarian service.'

Arrangements were made last evening itself to visit the leper colony this morning. As usual, Siva was able to determine not only the main issues, but all the side-issues connected with it, in the twinkling of an eye. 'Dr. Subramaniam will accompany us. We will take out a list of the lepers, and classify them variously. We should separate the children who are not affected by the disease and take care of them. We should also render proper treatment to the patients who are in the initial stages of the disease and try to save them.'

'Dayananda Swamiji, please arrange for a tonga at 7 o'clock tomorrow morning. Please get Rs. 10 worth of laddus for distribution there. Go and tell the people in the colony that we shall be coming at 7 o'clock. Take some money also with you for distribution.' So, these are as important to him as the main work itself.

This morning as soon as the morning class was over, we started. Siva enquired if there were sufficient papers for taking down the names of the patients: how many pens have been taken and if we were sure that there was ink in them, etc. Such keen care and attention to details is essential if the main job is to be done efficiently and with ease. As soon as the tonga began to move, we had 'Japa Ganesha' Kirtan.

At the leper colony the people were called and a list was prepared. Siva took a keen interest in each case and was quick to detect the cases of children unaffected by the disease.

As soon as the patient had given his name, etc., Dayanandaji would hand him two laddus.

So, we stood there for nearly two hours noting down the names of the patients, the type they were suffering from, and whether it was of an infectious nature or not. When everything was over, Siva called two educated compounders who were also patients and instructed them to get from the Ashram charitable dispensary whatever medicines they needed, for injection, local application, etc. After making them all sing Kirtan, we left.

'You have no shoes? When you visit the colony, you should wear shoes,' Siva said to me: and, after a pause, he continued: 'If you depend on the Lord, He will provide you with invisible shoes.'

5TH MAY, 1949

A HAIR'S BREADTH TO SAMADHI!

Swami Chidanandaji had delivered a thrilling discourse during the morning university class, on the importance of routing out selfishness in the Sadhaka, and dealt with the various methods of achieving this end. At the conclusion Siva asked Sri Parasuraman if he had taken notes of the lecture.

'Swamiji, I am maintaining a diary of all that takes place here.'

'Hearing of a lecture is only the beginning of Sadhana. Just close our eyes now and think of how many times a day you have allowed the fullest play for your selfishness. Make a note of this in your diary. You will be astounded at your own spiritual state. Searching analysis will reveal to you the subtle forms that selfishness assumes. You must gradually endeavour to eradicate all these.

'Some people imagine that they have reached very near Perfection. They feel that there is only a hair's breadth to Nirvikalpa Samadhi. They had had the experience of Samrajnata Samadhi itself! They close their eyes and dream. For in everyday life you will find them full of selfishness, full of egoism and all the evil qualities.

‘When they close their eyes, some people will imagine that they see the Atma Jyotis. ‘Why does not Nirvikalpa Samadhi follow immediately?’—they will ask.

‘Others there are who claim to have seen Lord Krishna. ‘Lord Krishna came once, twice and thrice, too: but why does He not appear before me a fourth time?’—is their problem. These people only delude themselves. You must apply yourself vigorously to the eradication of selfishness. Surrender yourself to the Lord. Live for Him. He will then reveal Himself to you.’

TO EACH ACCORDING TO HIS NEEDS

Sri Swami Sivayogiji Maharaj of Karnataka, a learned exponent of the Veera-saiva philosophy, and a Mahatma of great repute belonging to the lineage of sage Basavanna, has come to the Ashram. He is doing a great deal of propaganda in the South: and he has an idea of starting a Yoga Ashram where one could learn the actual technique of Yoga (i.e., in addition to a theoretical grasp of the principles.) He has sought Siva’s help in this connection and his visit is mainly to get a blue-print from Siva of the lines on which he should proceed.

During the night Satsang, Sri Swami Chidanandaji delivered an inspiring discourse on the necessity of practising Sadachar which has been variously described by the founders of the various Yoga-Margas (as Yama-Niyama by Patanjali Maharshi, as Sadhana Chatushtaya by Vedantins, as Sadachara by Bhaktas, and as Chitta-Suddhi by Karma Yogins), as Sadachara is the very basis or foundation of Yoga Sadhana. C. explained that both the foundation and the culminating point of Sadhana according to the various points of view were the same: only the external appearance of the intermediary process seems to differ, though even here the internal achievements are the same. C. emphasised that the necessity of these fundamentals has been recognised and acclaimed by all the religions of the world. He incidentally mentioned that the glory of Karma Yoga lay in the fact that it is a system which does not allow the Pana Purusha to raise his head even for a second, and that it is a system which enables one to acquire divine virtues rapidly.

Swami Siva Yogiji who was then requested to address the gathering said that the Sadharana Dharma (like Ahimsa, Satyam, Brahmacharya, etc.) was universal, while there appear to be differences only in Vissha Dharma (rituals, etc.) Everyone should, therefore, practise these virtues.

(This portion of his talk so exactly coincided with Chidanandaji’s that it led one to wonder if C. had not divined the Swami’s mind. Strange are the powers of a Yogi.)

Continuing, Sivayogi Swamiji said: ‘The greatest service to Hindu Dharma has been rendered by Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj who has during the past twenty years spread the knowledge of the several Yogas throughout this country, and in foreign lands, too. And, he, too, has insisted on the need to direct one’s attention to the fundamentals and to the acquisition of Daivi Sampath which are universal principles. Swamiji has dealt with and clearly expounded every branch of Yoga so that not one Sadhaka will find that he has been neglected. Swamiji has catered to the needs of ALL Sadhakas everywhere in the world: to each one he gives

instructions on the method that is suited to the Sadhaka's temperament and taste. This is a unique feature in Swamiji's writings.'

Later Swami Sivayogiji revealed that he has been closely following Siva's writings in 'My Magazine'.

COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS

The assembled devotees had dispersed.

'Chidananda Swamiji, please explain to Sivayogi Swamiji our Yoga Museum. He wants some hints on the starting of a Yoga Ashram. Please give him some ideas. I shall also talk to him later. I propose to tell him that I will send you to his Ashram so that you can help him in organising the Yoga Ashram. What do you say? It is really a divine life centre only.'

'Yes, Swamiji. That will be done.'

This is cosmic consciousness in action. Saint or layman—no one will do this. Trade secrets are always trade secrets: and even if one wants to help, he will only talk. Without the least feeling of rivalry (on the contrary with the feeling of oneness) to help someone else with the same enthusiasm—'I am he' and 'his institution is mine'—we have only heard or read about. In Siva Trust has Life.

6TH MAY, 1949

OLYMPIC YOGA

The morning class was over. Ganga Prasad Sharda's presence drew Siva's attention. When Siva saw people getting up to leave, he said:

'Don't get up. Oh, Ganga Prasadji! Oh, Vishnu Swamiji! Both of you demonstrate your skill in the performance of Yoga Asans. Let us see who wins.'

Both of them got ready and came forward.

'Now, Ganga Prasad will demonstrate some difficult Asan. Do something which he will not be able to perform.'

G.P. demonstrated a most wonderful pose where the body had to be subjected to several difficult bends.

V. tried, but could not reach perfection.

'Ganga Prasadji, you have won. Now Vishnu Swamiji will demonstrate something which Ganga Prasadji will not be able to perform.'

V. demonstrated Shakti Chalan Kriya. G.P. could do that. Finally, V. also scored a victory as G.P. did not know Vayu-Bhakshana.

After this very interesting, amusing, and instructive contest, Siva said: 'These competitions have another effect also. When you practise alone or with less efficient people, you slowly develop a satisfaction that you are good. But, when you find someone who can do better, you feel ashamed. You should gradually learn to overcome that: and you should also ever yearn to achieve greater and

greater perfection. The goal is THAT and nothing short of it should produce satisfaction.'

DO IT: AND DO IT WELL

Ganga Prasada Sharda of Pilani is a painter, too. He had brought a wonderful drawing done by him. And, he had, not minding the cost, framed it in a thick frame, too.

'That is the spirit of a Karma Yogi,' said Siva. 'He does not leave things half-done. He completes everything. If Ganga Prasadji had simply given the painting unframed, there was the chance of this painting being spoilt. In spite of the fact that it would have cost him 30 or 40 rupees to frame it, he has done so. Now, it is safe.'

'Karma Yoga is not to do everything in a slipshod way, thinking that that is the way to remain unattached to the actions and their fruits. That is Tamasic negligence. Karma Yoga is to do everything efficiently and proficiently and yet to remain unattached to the fruits.'

HAUGHTY SADHU AND HUMBLE MAHARAJAH

After the evening Satsang a Sanyasin with an imposing appearance began to discuss with Siva the cardinal tenets of his cult and the practice advocated by his Guru and himself.

'Swamiji, from our point of view even Sravan Manan and Nididhyasan have no significance. Only our Sadhana is listening (mere listening without even trying to grasp through the mind what is being said!) in silence. We do not try to understand, because the Atman is beyond the reach of understanding. Our Guru has told us that that is the best method and that all other practices are meaningless. One day Truth will shine of Its own accord, without any effort on the Sadhaka's part.'

'Very nice,' replied Siva with his inimitable smile. 'But, the Sadhaka must be a super-Adhikari to grasp the Truth in this manner. To Janaka the utterance of Tattwamasi once was sufficient, and he realised the Self. But, even if we nowadays hear it millions of times we seem to be far, far away from It.'

After dwelling on several topics, Siva told us: 'The Maharajah of S. is a great devotee. His Sadhana is a continuous repetition of the name of Lord Rama through the twenty-four hours. He has attained great Siddhis in this practice, too. A devotee who happened to sleep on the Maharajah's bed had a vision of Lord Rama which he attributed to the Mantra-Shakti of the Maharajah. The Maharajah is well-versed in the Upanishads too. Yet, he would say: 'I am only an Abhyasi, not a Bhajani. I am quite unfit for Vedanta.' He was too humble to call himself even an advanced Sadhaka or a Japa Yogi.'

7TH MAY, 1949

TAPAS SHAKTI

Siva was showing Swami Sivayogiji round the Ashram. He showed him the room where the books were being stocked.

'We have somehow to manage here. Lack of funds, lack of sufficient accommodation—and we have to keep stocks of books in living rooms also, and there is lack of sufficient number of workers who will work for the welfare of the institution till the end.'

'It is extremely difficult to manage an Ashram,' agreed Sivayogiji.

'Yes, yes: you know very well yourself. These people come here renouncing family, worldly prosperity, etc. They wish to be independent. It is difficult to make them feel the responsibility of the work we are doing. People should realise the good an Ashram is doing for humanity at large, and therefore be ever eager to dedicate their lives to an institution. Generally, they come, live here for some time and, if someone utters a harsh word against them, or even otherwise out of their whim and fancy, they will say 'OM Namo Narayanaya', leave the Ashram and go somewhere else. Somehow, I please them, serve them and let the work go on.'

'Swamiji, it is all due to your Tapas Shakti that the institution has grown so rapidly and widely. No other cause could have contributed to this grandeur.'

MAHARANI OF MYSORE AT THE ASHRAM

News reached the Ashram in the afternoon that Her Highness the Maharani of Mysore would be paying a visit to Rishikesh. With his characteristic cordiality Siva had instructed everyone in the Ashram to prepared to receive Her Highness. Siva himself looked to the details of the arrangements.

Just as she arrived at the Ashram the boys were doing Ganga Arati. The pious Maharani watched the prayers with great devotion and fervour.

Later she was received by Siva himself at his Kutir. As they were entering the Kutir the gramophone was singing Swamiji's records. Her Highness and party listened to them with great joy.

Siva himself showed Her Highness and party round the Ashram—the temple, Bhajan Hall, Library, etc.

'Swamiji, the entire Ashram is simple, neat and grand. I have been following the growth of the institution. I do not know how you were able to achieve so much in so short a time. Only Ishwara could have done this.'

'It is all His grace.'

9TH MAY, 1949

ANOTHER MAHARANI

Yesterday's birthdate expenses were borne by Her Highness the Maharani of Sitamau. Every year the Maharani spends a couple of months in Rishikesh. The pious couple never miss to have Siva's Satsang at least once or twice every year.

This evening the Maharani came to have Siva's Darshan. She said that she was thirsting to hear Siva's inspiring Kirtans. She had brought with her a 'Mira Bai', a resident of Brindawan and a great devotee of Lord Krishna.

And, Siva poured out his sweet melody; the Maharani and party listened spell-bound.

The little boy of Swarg Ashram, Vaidji, who had been brought to the Satsang by his mother found the boy too irrepressible to allow him to sit quiet and listen. He could not sing: he was less than a couple of years old. Therefore, he got up and began to dance. Every time Siva changed the Kirtan, he would look inquisitively into Siva's face, 'How shall I dance now?' and then start his Nritya.

The power of living near a saint is great indeed—if you have a child's heart.

DON'T BE SHY WITH GOD

During the night Satsang, the new visitors caught Siva's attention. He called out to them one by one and asked them to sing Kirtan. An Advocate and another high official offered many excuses, but found that Siva would not yield.

'You don't know Kirtan?'

They could not say 'No'....for that would be telling a lie.

'I know, Swamiji.'

'Then, sing. What is the difficulty in saying Ram Ram Ram?'

Each one then poured forth his heart; shyness vanished: and at that psychological moment the devotee gets his entrance into the hall divine.

10TH MAY, 1949

RECIPE FOR BRILLIANCE

Hari Badri Narayan of South Africa, who is now a student of Lucknow University, had come to the Ashram for the summer vacation.

'Oh, Hari! Go on with your class lessons here, too. Prepare well for the next year. The first six months' lessons you should study well now itself. If you have a good grounding, you will be able to grasp the lessons quickly in the class. Even if you later have to be absent from the class owing to illness, etc., you will not be the loser. And, in the end, you will get brilliant success in the final examination. You should practise Sadhana also, and so some Seva to the Ashram. At the same time, you should prepare yourself for the next year's course.'

That is exactly what Siva himself used to do, during his college days. Out of his own practical experience he had found this method effective. Siva never tires of letting the entire world share the secrets of his success.

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ADVOCATE

The Advocate Saheb came late to the morning class.

‘You have come to earn something more valuable than all the world can give you. There you give your blood to earn a livelihood: here you have the inexhaustible wealth of spiritual knowledge. Do not miss a single opportunity of attending Satsang and learning life’s greatest truths.’

‘It is all the more important for you because you have chosen the law profession. As an Advocate you are bent on achieving success: you might be tempted to resort to falsehood, cunningness, etc. to achieve the end. Please do not be discouraged. You can be a spiritual aspirant even now. Enter the Bench. Or, become a Legal Adviser somewhere. Or, at least do not take up criminal cases. In any case, let not money be your goal. Always strive to practise truth, righteousness and try to serve the people.’

PRACTISE vs. BOOK-KNOWLEDGE

A Parsi boy who had come to the Ashram was attracted by the Seva that the Ashram Charitable Dispensary was doing: he desired to learn medicine.

‘OM Namō Narayanaya. I do not find you at all nowadays either in the office or in the dispensary. What are you doing?’

‘Swamiji, I am learning medicine.’

‘Learning medicine? Where?’

‘I am copying out your book, ‘Family Doctor’, Swamiji.’

‘That you call learning medicine? Would you like to copy the word ‘sugar’ on a piece of paper and taste its sweetness? Learn it in practise. Go to the dispensary and assist the present doctor-in-charge. You will know the names of the diseases and how to prepare each mixture. That is the better way to learn.’

This principle applies to everything, especially to Yoga Sadhana.

15TH MAY, 1949

VEDANTIC GREETING

‘Tat Twam Asi! Krishnananda Swamiji,’ greeted Siva as K. met him on the way to the Bhajan Hall for the morning class, at the same time bowing to him, with folded palms. K. reflected for a while what this might mean. Siva explained.

‘You want to know what it is? This is the new Vedantic greeting. The Europeans say ‘Good morning’: a South Indian says ‘Namaskaram’: a North Indian says ‘Jai Ram ji ki’: a Sikh greets ‘Sat Sri Akal’: a Sadhu greets with ‘OM Namō Narayanaya’. Now this is a new invention for Vedantins. They should greet each other with ‘Tat Twam Asi’ or ‘Jai Satchidananda’. They should bow to each other

also. Adwaita Vedanta does not prohibit prostrations and respecting one another. In Samadhi there is no 'other' to bow to. But, when a Vedantin is not always in Samadhi with the non-dualistic consciousness: and he should bow to all with the Bhavana 'Sarvam Khalu Idam Brahman'.

'This method of greeting will constantly remind the Vedantin of his own essential nature which is Satchidanand or of the great formula, the Mahavakya 'Tat Twam Asi'. The more people he greets with this formula, the more continuous will be the Brahmic thought. This will greatly help the Sadhaka in raising the Brahmakara Vritti, hasten the dawn of Brahma Jnana or Final Liberation. Tat Twam Asi.'

Padmanabhanji, now gone thin and weak, was helping Siva in picking out books for free distribution.

'You have gone so thin nowadays. You are not taking any food I think.'

'Swamiji, it is two months since he took proper food.' rejoined Dayanandaji.

'This is no good. You should take Mitahara always. You will now exhibit great Vairagya and give up food. Later there will be a reaction and you will swallow maunds of fruits. Such Sadhana is not of much use. You should adopt such measures as you will be able to carry through unto the last.'

SIVA GANGA PIYAVOO

In the morning was declared open the Siva Ganga Piyavoo. In view of the fact that there was another Piyavoo (a shed where water would be served to thirsty pilgrims) nearby, we had almost given up the idea of having one in the Ashram. In time, Siva reminded about it:

'No, no. That does not matter. Let there be another Piyavoo nearby. But, we should also have one in the Ashram. It is a great service to the pilgrims which should not be given up. Even if no one contributes for the expenses, let us spend out of the Society's funds and open the Piyavoo.'

There is a beautiful lesson in it. Often Karma Yogins lull themselves into a false belief that there are sufficient workers in the field and that they can 'retire' into a cave. Some workers neglect actual field service with the same plea, and seek positions of respect. It is a mistake. Even if there are a million people in the field, a Karma Yogin should not abandon his duty, his Sadhana of selfless service.

ANOTHER VISHNU

During the night Satsang, some of the people assembled got up in the middle. Torches flashed: and the centre of attention was shifted to an insect moving on the floor.

'What is it, scorpion?' asked Siva.

'No, Swamiji, It is another variety of....' Vishnuji fumbled for the proper word.

'Another variety of Vishnu?' remarked Siva and we all had a hearty laugh.

Truth in jest. Lord Vishnu is the Indwelling Presence in even the tiniest or the most venomous insect. See Him in all. Or, as the remarks were addressed particularly to Vishnuswamiji, see your own Self, Vishnu, in this insect, too. It is only another variety of the same thing called Vishnuswamiji. What a fountain of wisdom and philosophy in humour.

17TH MAY, 1949

DELUSION WITHIN DELUSION

Sri Ganga Prasadji with his party of students had made a lightning trip to Badrinath and had returned today. He had made a few rapid water-colour paintings of the Himalayan landscape at various places en route and was showing them to Siva at night. Wishing to see them clearly, Siva flashed his torch across the pictures.

‘What is this? I see only a jumble of colours.

‘Swamiji, if you put out the torch, you will see more of the beauty of the painting.’

‘Oh, the darkness adds charm to the pictures?’ He put out the torch. ‘This is delusion within delusion. This is one way of cheating people. Have you ever bought shoes at night? They will be glittering. In the morning you will be sorely disappointed. In the photograph the prospective bride will appear most charming. When you come face to face with her, you will be disillusioned. This is all delusion within delusion. If there is real beauty in an object, it should always be beautiful, in light or in shade. When you flash the torch of true wisdom on these shining objects you will at once perceive their hollowness and ugliness.’

22ND MAY, 1949

SURGEON FOR THE EGO

Dr. Kanakasabesa Iyer from Madras was introduced to Siva in the morning, as an eminent surgeon.

Without getting up from his seat, as usual, without so much as to enquire whether it would be convenient for the doctor, and after the several usual enquiries about his comforts in the Ashram itself, Siva turned to the group of visitors and inmates standing around him:

‘Would any of you like to consult him and utilise his services?’

What a complete absence of formalities and the artificial falsities of behaviour commonly known as etiquette! Siva’s Religion is the Religion of Love and Service. It is this Religion that fills him and is incarnate in him. Its irrepressible fragrance wafts around the moment the slightest movement of the wind is caused and an opportunity presents itself. Thus the only thought the presence of an eminent surgeon before him could evoke in him was ‘Any service?’

Siva Narayanji got himself examined. And, so on: one by one. Siva's mind must have been working very fast, trying to recollect people in the locality who had any use for this surgeon.

'Oh, Doctor Saheb, Jayadayal Goenkaji of Gita Bhavan has some trouble with his eyes. We shall go and see him.'

'Yes, Swamiji,' was all that the doctor could say.

Without the least loss of time, milk was brought for the doctor and his family, and after the doctor's breakfast, Siva and the doctor left for Gita Bhavan.

On return from Gita Bhavan (and for the first time, after exhausting all possible sources of service) Siva expressed his great appreciation of the doctor's knowledge and readiness for service.'

'You are a great surgeon. Can you operate on the ego of a man?' asked Siva.

'Certainly not, Swamiji. Well, I need the operation upon myself: and you are the surgeon for it. So I have come to you.'

23RD MAY, 1949

A DAY'S GAINS

After hardly five hours of rest, the Ashram was buzzing with activity at 4:30 a.m. this morning. A mild OM at the threshold brought Mrs. Mohanlal Saksena (wife of India's Rehabilitation Minister) and others who were staying with her, out of the chamber of the Goddess of Slumber. The lady and the children looked extremely fresh after what a city-dweller might have considered hardly a nap of a few hours.

The morning university class began with Kirtan, Guru Stotras, Shanti Patha and prayers. Ere the mind could have sufficient leisure to fall back into its favourite grooves, Swami Krishnanandaji began his learned exposition of Panchadasi, dinning into the ears of the listeners—One alone is true: Truth is thy own Self: that Truth should be meditated upon constantly forgetting the wrong notion that the body is the Atman. Close on his heels follow Sri Ramamurthy's Karma Yoga lecture, interestingly interspersed with stories, similes and illustrations, concisely and precisely telling the Sadhaka how he should behave in this realm of duality—for, by this time the rays of the sun have begun to illumine to the eyes of the mortal the vast creation of multiplicity and this talk on Karma Yoga gives the most timely reminder that 'Even this is the Virat Swarupa of the Lord: it need not frighten you or bewilder you: serve without egoism: do your duty: realise the Self through all this.' (On alternate days Sri Swami Chidanandaji delivers his inspiring lectures on Raja Yoga. Here again one is taught to feel that the perception of each external object, now gradually coming into the Sadhaka's vision as morning advances, can be controlled and sublimated by an inner process of control of mind, that culminates in Samadhi revealing the true nature of the Self.) From Unity to diversity: from diversity back to Unity again. That is the process.

Nor should one imagine that the students are ever kept in the dizzy heights of Vedanta and that the layman who listens to these discourses could sink into Tamas, unable to rise into Satwa. As soon as the Raja Yoga class is over, Vishnu Swamiji will call 'attention' and begin the Yogic drill. All done sitting—Yoga Mudra, Ushtasan, lateral twists of the spine, Paschimottanasan, an elementary physical culture, Uddiyana, Agnisara, Kapalabhati, Bhastrike (slow, internal and rapid), Sitali, Sitkari and eye-exercises. This round of exercises saves (those so inclined) from relapsing into Tamas, and adds to the Satwa of others.

These are immediately followed by Siva's inspiring Kirtans and songs, each word pregnant with the Self-realisation of the sage, thrilling, elevating and tranquillising. One is inclined to feel at this stage that all the previous items were preparatory stages to this grand culmination. Maha Mantra Kirtan, Maha Vakya Kirtan, Soham Mantra Kirtan, Gita Kirtan, Yoga-Vasistha Kirtan—it is then that you are thankful for the bending and twisting and breathing that you had just passed through, for they have enabled you to enjoy the thrill of the Kirtan and attune yourself to Siva, by driving away the Tamas that might still have been lingering in the body and mind. The final OM chanting enables you to feel actually the unreality of externals and the Reality of the Kutastha. With a prayer for the peace, prosperity and health of all (for after the spiritual drill in the morning, you are in a pure state with a powerful Will which you are taught by Gurudev to use for the good of all), the class concludes. Then follow individual or group Suryanamaskara, Asana training and practice.

Needless to say that Mrs. Saksena and children enjoyed this morning class immensely, indeed.

Later Mrs. Saksena and party were shown the Photo-Phonics Department and the Sivananda Art Studio; they (especially the children) witnessed with great delight, the movie films, projected through the editing equipment.

Soon after this the Yoga Museum. The significance of the arrangement, the meaning of the composition of the museum, etc., were succinctly explained to the party.

What a fund of knowledge does one gain in such a short time!

No wonder that a visitor remarked after last night's Satsang: 'I have never attended such a wonderful Satsang meeting as this!' Even during the night Satsang the mind is never allowed a moment to stray away. Beginning with Kirtans, Bhajans, study of the Gita, Upanishad and Tulasi Ramayana, the evening programme includes a lecture by Swami Chinmayanandaji on the Upanishads and concludes with Siva's Kirtans and Bhajans (in English, Hindi and Sanskrit). Siva often distributes a few of his spiritual vitamin tablets in short crisp and sweet poems, each one with a high concentration of spiritual truth, humour, and practical instructions! After Siva's Kirtan, there is OM-chanting, Maha Mrityunajaya Japa, Arati, and Peace Chant.

Someone described this as Indra Sabha. And, aptly so, for there is every kind of instrumental music, many vocal Bhajanists hailing from various parts of the

country singing the Bhajans of various great devotees. A wonderful mixture of indescribably ingredients, sweet, pleasant and God-intoxicating.

INDIAN PARLIAMENT AT ANANDA KUTIR

The sun was still young, and a calm pervaded the atmosphere near the Ashram. The tranquillity of the Abode of Bliss, with Mother Ganges perennially humming the Pranava, seemed to reflect the Peace Within of the Lord of Ananda Kutir (our Siva) who calmly and silently was going through the letters, signing them, and checking the addresses on book-packets.

It was a calm before a spiritual storm.

Dr. Gairola, the Tehri Minister of Health, came in and bowed to Siva.

'Swamiji, OM Namō Narayanaya: has not Sri Mohanial Saksena come in yet?'

'No. Is he coming?'

'Yes, Swamiji. He had promised to be here now and asked us to pick him up. By the way, our Congress President, Rashtrapati Pattabhi Sitaramiah, is here along with some other Congress leaders.'

'Please ask them to come to the Ashram.'

The Minister, with the help of a couple of Ashramites, at once brought in the Rashtrapati. Thakur Krishnan Singhji, Education Minister of Tehru, and Sri Sampurnanandji, Education Minister of the U.P., and Sri Paripurnanand were also with the Rashtrapati.

Even as he was entering the D.J. Hall, after being received outside it by Siva himself, the Rashtrapati was attracted by the Suryanamaskar and Yoga Asan Charts. The party seated themselves in the Hall, facing the Ganges and the Himalayas. First, books started slowing around to them, Siva silently selecting for each one the books that would be most welcome to him.

(Messengers had gone about fetching tea, fruits, sweets etc.!)

The Rashtrapati's first remarks were: 'Swamiji, the more we learn, the 'smaller' we seem to become. What I have learnt and experienced during these seventy years has, I think, enabled me to begin life. I personally believe in Samskaras and that nothing is lost.'

'Yes, yes: you continue the evolution in the next birth.'

By the time the Rashtrapati had obtained two sets of Suryanamaskar Photographs, and they had all taken their seats for the Prasad and coffee that were awaiting them, another party consisting of—Sri Mohanial Saksena, Union Minister for Relief and Rehabilitation, Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament, Sri T. Prakasam, ex-Premier of Madras, Sri Prof. N.G. Ranga, A Congress leader, Sri Thirumala Rao, M.P., had also come in.

Books and Prasad flowed competing with the Ganga. The Rashtrapati was astonished.

'You seem to have a Kamadhenu here,' he exclaimed.

Sri Sampurnanandaji replied to him: 'It is all the glory of Swamiji's Tapasya. What cannot Tapasya achieve?'

Now the Parliament was in full session at Ananda Kutir. Discussion, questioning, heckling, humour—all were given full, informal play. One Minister vied with the other in claiming that he was keenly interested in the visit to the Ashram. Sri Sampurnanandaji was emphatic: 'I am in charge of the Ecclesiastic Portfolio. Both Hinduism as well as Christianity are my concern. So, I have come to visit this great religious institution.' Tehri Ministers replied to this with a smile: for they have always considered the Ashram their own. To Sri Mohanial Saksena the Ashram is his own home and the abode of one whom he adores and admires.

As these discussions were going on, Sri Thirumala Rao quietly slipped away and joined Siva for a private talk and a 'closer view' of one whom he had always admired from a distance.

The debate was in full swing. Ultimately everyone concluded that they had all done the wisest thing:

'It is a God-given opportunity for all of us.'

Prof. Ranga's gaze was attracted by the Telugu books in the almirah. 'Doctor Saheb! There are Telugu translations of Swamiji's works also.'

Calmly, and with all the seriousness of a seasoned Parliamentarian, Sri Thirumal Rao rejoined: 'Why, Swamiji is an All-India figure, nay, his influence has reached beyond India's shores, too. He is a world-figure now.'

Someone noticed that Sri Mohanial Saksena was merely witnessing the table. When the cup of coffee was taken near him, he quietly said: 'Today is Ekadashi. I am fasting.'

For a high-ranking Minister to say that! No wonder: he is a great admirer of Siva, one of whose main teachings is 'Fast on Ekadashi.'

After the discussion on the merits and glory of Ekadashi Vrata among the members and Ministers was over with the Rehabilitation Minister adamant in his resolve....

Siva whispered to us: 'We shall do Kirtan for a minute.' Sri Thirumal Rao at once caught up with the idea and made the announcement. Siva began with OM thrice. Immediately Sri Ananthasayanam Ayyangar sat cross-legged in his chair, in the customary Indian fashion while praying.

'Hare Rama' Maha Mantra, quickly followed by the Song of Admonition. Silent nodding of the head with half-closed eyes while Siva sang....

Time sweeps away Kings and Barons

Where is Yudhisthira, where is Asoka

Where is Valmiki, where is Shakespeare?

Where is Napoleon, where is Sivaji?

Can you expect real Santi if you waste

*Your time in cards and cinemas,
In novels newspapers?*

The leaders were suddenly awakened to the realities of life when Siva thundered....

When your throat is choked at the time of death, who will help you for your Salvation?

The Rashtrapati, who was till then reclining against a pillar, suddenly sat up, as if to ask: 'What is it you are saying?'

Then followed instruction: 'The Song of A Little'.

Later Gita Kirtan, Upanishad Kirtan and Yoga-Vasishtha Kirtan.

*Jeeve Kalpana, Jagat Kalpana,
All is Kalpana, Deerga Swapna*

Sri Prakasham in a perfectly prayerful mood, nodded assent. Then Soham Kirtan ending with....

*Sarvesham Swasti Bhavatu
Sarvesham Shantir Bhavatu
Sarvesham Purnam Bhavatu
Sarvesham Mangalam Bhavatu
Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah Sarve Santu
Niramayah, Sarve Bhadrani Pasyantu
Maa Kaschit Duhkha Bhag Bhavet
Om Santih Santih Santih
Asato Maa Sat Gamaya
Tamaso Maa Jyotir Gamaya
Mrityor Maa Amritam Gamaya
OM Purnamadah Purnamidam Purnaam Purnamudachyate,
Purnasya Purnamaadaaya Purnamevaavasishyate
Om Santih Santih Santih*

This conclusion of the Kirtan impressed all, for that indicated the true Jnani's attitude 'Savra Bhuta Hite Ratah' (devoted to the welfare of all.)

As the party was leaving the Ashram, Padmanabhanji came up with this battery of cameras. The whole gathering formed into a group. Click....click. 'Thank you'—bowed P.

Someone remarked: 'All these cameras, too?'

The Rashtrapati was ready-witted: 'Swamiji has developed a modern Ashram on our ancient ideals.'

25TH MAY, 1949

MAHARAJAH OF SITAMAU

Siva was having his lunch when the Sitamau Rajah was seen coming towards the Ashram in a boat. He had sent word previously that he would be coming to Ananda Kutir today to have Siva's Darshan. Even without finishing the lunch Siva got up and walked up to the Ghat to receive the Maharajah.

Straightaway the party wended its way to the Mandir. They sang the Kirtan in chorus, led by Swami Chidanandaji. The Raja Saheb offered bael leaves and flowers to Lord Viswanath in great devotion and sang a few inspiring hymns in praise of the Lord. Coming out of the temple, he bowed to Siva and said:

'I desire this one boon from the Lord and from your holiness. May devotion ever dwell in my heart. May I strive to become a true Bhakta. May I ever have Smaran of the Lord, my Lord Rama.'

The Raja Saheb then went round the temple. He noticed the big marble slab on the walls of the sanctum sanctorum put up to commemorate the inauguration of the Viswanath Mandir Moola Dhana with a generous contribution of ten thousand rupees which he had made in memory of Her late Highness, the Maharani of Sitamau.

'And, even this act was made by me only with this one motive at heart. May I have devotion to Lord Rama. I felt that Swamiji's Ashram Mandir founded here through Swamiji's Sat Sankalpa would fulfil that purpose. The worship done here would bring about the peace of the departed soul and our Kalyan also.'

Raja Saheb believes only in devotion, though, as he said while Chidanandaji was explaining the Yoga Museum, he had mastered the Prasthanatrayi. 'I want only devotion. I do not want Mukti even. I fully believe in the meaning of the stanza....

Abhimanam Surapanam Gauravam Rouravam Samam

Pratishtha Sukrivishta Trayam Tyaktva Bhajhetu

Abhimana is like Surapanam (drinking of toddy): respect in the worldly sense is equal to Raurava hell: getting established in name and fame is equal to a pig's faecal matter: one should renounce the three, and then worship Hari.

Siva greatly admired the Raja Saheb's humility.

Milk and fruits were brought. But the Raja Saheb went on repeating: 'I have come here only to receive Swamiji's blessings that I may have devotion to Lord Rama.' He then touched Siva's feet and departed.

Save later said to us:

'My children! See the Raja Saheb's humility. And, his thirst for devotion to His lotus feet. That should be a Sadhak's motto.'

'It is no doubt true that Bhakti Sadhana consists in remembering the Lord constantly. Very few people will be able to do this and this alone, without doing anything else. See the Raja Saheb himself. He has been a student of Jnana Marga: he is well read in the Upanishads, Gita and Brahma Sutras. And, remember that he has been carrying on the business of a State. He has been maintaining his own family. Side by side, he has been carrying on his devotional practices. That is the secret.

'Karma Yoga should be nicely blended with Jnana and Bhakti. Do not be frightened if during the course of your work you sometimes forget the Lord, your mind stops the repetition of His name, and you seem to lose the Bhava. God is the Antaryamin. He will understand inner motive. You need not tell Him what you are thinking of. He will give you a greater abundance to devotion and Bhav. Early in the morning and at night say unto the Lord in prayer: 'Oh, Lord, whatever I do is your worship only. Please be gracious enough to accept.' This synthesis leads one to the goal very quickly.'

26TH MAY, 1949

FULL-BELLIED PRAYERS

The Sadhu Bhojan arranged by Sri Gauri Prasadji of Swarg Ashram was in progress. Sri Narayanaswamiji was continuously singing some Stotras and Mantras. Siva asked Atmanandaji to recite a few hymns. The meals were over and the Manager said: 'Ganga Mayya ki Jai'. Siva's voice rang forth from his seat: 'Ohji, wait a bit.' All resumed their seats.

Siva asked an old South Indian woman to sing a few Tamil songs in praise of the Lord, of Vairagya, and of devotion. A South Indian young lad well versed in Hindi sang a Hindi Bhajan. This was followed by another Tamil verse. Siva then prompted a Punjabi mother to sing a Punjabi Bhajan. Every time someone finished, the Manager will say 'Ganga Mayya ki Jai', and every time Siva would stay the dispersal of the crowd. Last came the turn of a Marathi mother. 'Sangitla, some Bhajan of Tukaram.'

The 'Satsang' in the dining hall lasted longer than the dinner itself. The diners who assembled at 10.30 dispersed at 11.45. In sophisticated society, too, dinners last that long. But, what a difference! When you are joyous, when you have satisfied your appetite, when you are 'full', you should utter the Lord's name and sing His praise. Instead, people waste these precious moments in idle gossip and chit-chatting. The mind during that period is calm and 'satisfied' and fresh desires and longing have not risen yet: that is the best time to sing His name and remember Him. That is the secret which Siva has revealed today. May all hosts take the hint.

LADDU AND MUD-BALLS

‘Atmanandaji, please take some Laddus....(Siva gave him some)....Do we have the same Bhavana when we look at this as when we look at mud-balls?’

‘Swamiji, we have heard that they are the same: we have an intellectual understanding. But, how difficult to see one in the other?’

‘And, yet, people wish to rise at once to Vedantic Sadhana. They do not want Bhakti. They repeat ‘Sivoham’ and ‘Soham’. Till the Sadhaka actually feels and sees that Laddu is a mud-ball, he is not an Adhikari for Vedantic Nididhyasana. It is good to study Vedanta and to try to raise up the Brahmakara Vritti: but the Sadhaka should also engage himself in Nishkamya Karma Yoga and Bhakti, too.’

SONG OF ITIES

Siva was in full form this evening during the Satsang. He read the humorous poems from his ‘Vedanta Jyoti’: people often roared with laughter. Then he sang a couple of Tamil songs; then Hindi Bhajans, at the same time playing on the Harmonium. Then he suddenly sprang up and roared:

‘The Lord has enumerated in the Gita several virtues which every Sadhaka should develop to perfection if he wants to attain Mukti. Most of the virtues depend upon one another. Find out the quality that you lack; consciously develop it. Introspect. Analyse. Eradicate the opposite evil quality.’

He sang the Song.

‘If you sit at a particular place and at a particular time for meditation daily, the meditative mood will come automatically.’

‘Simplicity: have always the motto: Simple living and high thinking. Gandhiji was revered throughout the world even though he was clad but in a loin cloth. The fullness of awakened divinity should shine through you. Merely putting on beautiful clothes will not do.’

‘When inside there is dirt and ugliness, merely putting on costly dress is sheer hypocrisy. You try to deceive yourself and God. Clean the heart: purify it: then people will worship you.’

Siva noticed a Rishikesh Sadhu who disapproves of the use of English language, sitting in the audience.

‘Oh, Swamiji Maharaj, (In Hindi) I am only repeating what the Lord has said in the Gita. You read it in Sanskrit. I have put it in English. The idea is the same. The purpose is the same. Only a difference in mode of expression, in a superficiality—the language.’

‘English also will be the common language in India for another 20 or 25 years: afterwards also it will be one of the main languages here. People will want to go overseas for higher education and research. Man is not satisfied with a little income: nor with a little knowledge. He wants to earn thousands and is eager to expand his knowledge.’

Then he looked at us. We had been asked to keep ourselves in readiness to sing Nama Ramayan.

I KNOW WHEN YOU SHOULD BEGIN

'No, not now. You should be ever prepared. When I say 'begin' then only can you begin. But, be always prepared.'

The remarks referred to a song: but I take it to be a command for the entire song of life. A Guru knows when his disciple should do what, when he is fit for particular Sadhanas. Disciples often delude themselves into a belief that they are fit for Nirvikalpa Samadhi and that their Guru is obstructing their progress by insisting on work and worship of God. They run here and there, lose themselves in the dense jungle of doubts and difficulties and ultimately perish. Beloved Sadhaka, stick to the lotus feet of the Guru and do his bidding. He knows best and you will attain your goal.

Siva then sang Kirtans, interspersed with instructions.

SOLUTION FOR WARS

'You should sing with Bhav. Sraddha, faith and a belief born of conviction are necessary. Husband pretends to love his wife; wife pretends to love her husband. There is no real love at heart. Similarly, between father and son; between friends, too. Real love is the heart's love. Develop this divine love. That is the only way to end quarrels, riots and wars.'

SPEND THE NIGHT IN YOUR OWN KUTIR

Sri Swami Suk Devanandaji who has a big Ashram on the other side of the Ganges—one of the oldest friends and admirers of Siva—had been invited to the Satsang today. He had delivered an inspiring discourse on the necessity during Kali-Yuga of the performance of Karma Yoga. The assembly dispersed: and Sukdevanandaji could not get the motor-boat to go across. Chidanandaji was offering the guests bed, etc. to spend the night in the Ashram. Sri S. wanted to go via Lakshmanjhula. Siva at once saw the point.

'Yes, that is a very good idea. Even though it means additional strain and walking a couple of miles, and loss of an hour's sleep, you will have peaceful rest afterwards.'

This is an object lesson for all Sanyasins.

CONSERVE PRANA: INSPIRE, LET THEM PRACTISE

A member of S.'s party acquiesced and added: 'Yes, Swamiji. Further, Swami Sukdevanandaji has to attend the morning class in his Ashram, too.'

Siva said: 'Sukdevanandaji! You have lectured enough: worked enough. Please take care of your health. If you go on lecturing like this for hours on end each day, you are wasting your life-breath. You should simply inspire people: then they should practise. Later on all that you need do is to silently watch your disciples' progress, occasionally you can deliver discourses, too. They should practise and

realise themselves.’ It was friendly advice from sage Siva that went straight to the heart of Sr. Swami S.

DECIDE: DO IT AT ONCE

Another member of Sukdevanandaji’s party raised some objection, and suggested that they might all spend the night at Ananda Kutir.

‘Swamiji, once you decide, stick to it. Sukdevanandaji is going: you all follow him. Stick to your decisions. Do not waver.’

How many of us fail in this respect! This tenacious adherence to decision is SIVA: and that is one of the secrets of his great achievements.

GIRL ABANDONS PARENTS AND FOLLOWS SIVA

Thus came to a glorious conclusion the day’s function arranged in memory of the late Sri Gyaneshwari, a grand-daughter of Judge Saheb, in whose memory a Kutir had been built at the Ashram. G’s mother, too, was present during the whole day’s proceedings. She was greatly pleased.

‘Gyaneshwari was a saintly soul. Her devotion to Krishna was equalled only by Mira’s. She was Mira herself. She left just when we were arranging for her wedding, to join her Lord. It was she herself who later, (after she had passed away), asked Judge Saheb to build a Kutir for her in Swamiji’s Ashram so that she could be always near him. It was she herself who had arranged all these functions which have drawn Swamiji’s grace upon her departed soul. She wanted to follow Swamiji. She has fulfilled her own wish.’

THEN AND NOW IN KASHMIR

A Professor from Kashmir who has migrated to India (Punjab) has come with his family. Siva at once recognised him as one whom he had known during his (Siva’s) Kirtan-tour in Kashmir.

UNPRECEDENTED CROWD AND SIVA’S AGAD BHUM

‘Swamiji, how well do we all remember your famous Agad Bhum song and dance. In spite of all that has happened since those days of peace, plenty and prosperity, the memory is still fresh in us of the eager throngs of men and women and children who would sit through whole days listening to your sweet, stirring Kirtans. I was only a small boy then: but I have the most vivid memory of this one thing in my life.’

His father who had listened on with approval to his son’s talk, now put in his: ‘And, what gatherings! Swamiji, in all my life in Kashmir I have never again seen such a mass of humanity assembled together.’

I was inquisitive: ‘Did the figure run to thousands?’

‘Thousands?’—the old man felt disappointed. ‘Not less than ten thousands every day: and that looked like a sea of heads that swung to and fro in the fashion of waves, to the tune of Swamiji’s Kirtan. It was a sight for the gods.’

The old woman I could positively see was lost in a reverie: the picture of Kashmir, then, stirred and roused up by Siva's Kirtan, perhaps floated before her eyes—and she was satisfied within herself.

27TH MAY, 1949

OUTSIDE MAYA: INSIDE BRAHMAN

Sri Dipchand Pollar of Calcutta and Sri Rai Bahadur Sri Duttji (President and Joint Secretary of the Kali Kamliwala Kshetra) had come to the Ashram to take Siva's advice on certain Kshetra problems.

When they had explained their difficulties, Siva said: 'Some amount of criticism has always to be ignored. But when there is wide criticism, know that there is something wrong in the management. Then, we should try to rectify our own internal defects. The general feeling of respectable Sadhus should be recognised, honoured and attended to. But, ignore them who criticise you out of sheer malice,'—was the gist of Siva's advice.

As they were coming out of the kutir (on the first floor above the old Anand Kutir, the dispensary rooms where the discussions were held) an elderly Sadhu was passing that way. This Sadhu was a great devotee and was fond of Japa and Satsang, though the generality of his Gurubhais believed in Vedantic Sadhana alone. Smilingly, Siva greeted him! 'OM Namō Narayanaya, Swamiji Maharaj.'

'Swamiji, you have made this an imposing building by adding this upper-storey.'

Alluding to the Vedantin's derision of mundane affairs, Siva said: 'It is all Maya, Swamiji Maharaj. And, yet, this Maya is very necessary. For, in this Kutir Sadhaks will sit for Dhyān and realise the Self. Through their Sadhana they will become Brahman, too.'

It looked like a commentary on the 11th Mantra of the Isavasya Upanishad: 'Conquer death through Avidya: and with the help of Vidya attain immortality.'

SCORPION IS KILLED? DON'T KILL

Chinmayanandaji's Upanishad discourse was in progress. A scorpion was noticed near the desk. Vishnuji ran for the customary tongs. Someone flashed a torch on the poor creature. It curled up its tail and assumed the 'alert' position, ever-ready to give its assailant a taste of its tail.

A young man in the group ran forwards and without a warning took out the contents of its bowel with the butt end of his torch. To him, the problem was solved.

'Don't kill!' rang Siva's voice from behind him.

The young man stood glancing alternately at the scorpion and Siva, as much as to say: 'This scorpion? You want me not to kill this?'

'It is a scorpion, Swamiji. It will sting someone.'

‘Scorpion or cobra: don’t kill. Let it go away untouched or take it alive and throw it away unharmed. Even if a cobra enters your house, you should not kill it. You should leave the house, instead. These poisonous insects do not come often into your house and of their own accord they don’t trouble you. God has given them that instinct to avoid human habitation: for their own good, as well as for the good of man. When they happen to stray into a dwelling, they should be shown the exit; but no harm should be done.’

‘Killing forms a Samskara in you. It is very difficult to eradicate these Samskaras later on. See: all this Sadhana is directed only at the eradication of the Samskaras embedded in your mind. Once there is complete Vasana-Kshaya then the Light of the Atman shines of Its own accord. Therefore you should be particularly careful not to repeat these acts which tend to produce wrong Samskaras.’

In a thoughtful mood the young man left Siva’s Kutir, after the Satsang.

30TH MAY, 1949

I AM A SAINT!

Last night’s hero reappeared in the morning after the morning class, again: and his countenance indicated the mental conflict, ‘To kill a scorpion is not practice of Ahimsa?’ This had taken a salutary turn, too and the problem now appeared to him as ‘Sivananda vs. himself’. Why should he be instinctively impelled to kill the scorpion, whereas even the very thought was alien to Sivananda?

Siva noticed this the moment his eyes fell on the young man.

‘Ohji, no harm is done. The Samskaras are already there. They try to express themselves and thus strengthen themselves, every time an opportunity offers itself. It might so happen that very often you will find yourself powerless to restrain such expression. But, every time these Samskaras get the upper hand, sit down after the event, calmly analyse your own conduct, regret, repent, and resolve to correct yourself. Slowly and gradually these Samskaras will get thinned out and then they will be annihilated. The evil thought of killing will afterwards never arise in the mind at all. That is the state of a saint.’

After a while, Siva added: ‘It is possible, if you diligently practise. Saints do not drop from heaven. They are made by constant practice. I, too, was killing scorpions, once. Strive and attain perfection.’

Between these two sentences, there is an unsaid sentence: ‘And, now I am a saint.’

CHANGE THE MIND

Vishnuswamiji wants to go to Uttarkashi and explained that a change would give him more strength to do work when he returns; incidentally, he could also learn certain advanced Hatha Yogic Kriyas at Uttarkashi from an expert there.

‘Why do you want a change? What is it that needs a change? Change the mind. Alter the mental attitude. That is the most important thing.’

Everything is everywhere is Vasishtha's emphatic declaration. All that is needed is a change in the mental attitude of man himself. Once need never run from place to place in search of anything.



JUNE, 1949

4TH JUNE, 1949

CONVOCATION ADDRESS

A newly-graduated Tamil pundit came to Ananda Kutir to have Siva's Darshan. Siva utilised the opportunity to deliver a short, but thrilling convocation address, to him and through him, to the thousands of his type that go out of the universities year after year.

'Everyone already has the Abhiman of youth. When the hot blood of youthful vigour runs through man's veins, he can hardly be convinced that that period of life will soon pass away and he will soon have to lean on a stick. To add to this Abhimana, now you have got a University degree. In ignorant people this generally adds one more layer that veils the truth from their vision. A wise student of Yoga like you should do away with Abhiman altogether. Work without Abhiman. You will shine as a great Vidwan and a real Vidwan or one who possesses Atma Vidya.

'You should do Saraswati Upasana. You will then gain Her grace and through Her grace a powerful tongue, and a brilliant intellect. You will be able to inspire and elevate people. This is very important.

'Whenever you find an opportunity, speak to persons and address gatherings. Always dwell upon a spiritual, moral or religious theme. Inspire people and turn them Godwards. That is the best manner in which you can express your gratitude to the Goddess for Her blessings.

'Write: and write original ideas and thoughts on Upanishads, Gita and Vedanta. Never indulge in silly, trash thinking. You will attain great glory.'

COOLNESS UNDER FIRE

What sort of Victoria Cross should one award to Siva? A soldier on the field of battle, if he keeps his head cool under fire and carries on the fighting till the very last breath, is awarded the Cross.

The financial statement of the Society showed a precarious position. Bank balance had come down to the 'nil' figure. There were still debts to be cleared. The problem was placed before Siva.

'Close it down. We have done enough work. Five or six of us will take Bhiksha from Rishikesh and meditate in the Kutirs. As long as there is medicine in the dispensary, we will serve the sick. As long as there are books in the League we shall distribute them freely. Give away everything to those who need. Put in an announcement in the magazine and issue a circular to say that the Society has been compelled to stop work.' Then he sat up and a list was drawn, of the Ashramites that might have to be told to make their own arrangements for Bhiksha, etc. Siva himself attended the meeting which was convened to tell all Ashramites of the position.

Very soon after this, Siva began to distribute fruits and almonds to workers and visitors, as he said 'to compensate for the curtailment imposed on them by the financial condition of the Society': and books began to flow more freely and in greater abundance to seekers, to do the service while there is yet time.

5TH JUNE, 1949

MYSORE MAHARANI AGAIN

A car arrived.

And, Siva was already out of the D.J. Hall to receive Her Highness, the Maharani of Mysore, on her way back from Sri Badrinath.

Sadhaks were busy and in a few minutes the Mysore party were enjoying a light but refreshing repast of fruits, sweets and coffee. Books and magazines had already begun to flow round. The entire party went for Ayurvedic Pharmacy products.

We fetched chairs and benches outside the D.J. Hall: but the austere Maharani preferred to sit on the bare ground. The moment Siva had an inkling of her intention, he quickly stooped down and removed the stones and pebbles that were on the terrace and made room for Her Highness to sit. The Maharani and party, needless to say, were wonderstruck at the ever-readiness to serve that Siva had. It is a silent sermon.

6TH JUNE, 1949

'I CAN SIT HERE A WHOLE NIGHT'—MAHARANI OF MYSORE

In the evening the royal cars returned to the Abode of Bliss. Siva's abode on the bank of the Ganges has a charm that none can resist. And, the Maharani's pious and devout nature has brought her back to Siva's Kutir.

At Her Highness's request, Siva took her to Swarg Ashram, etc. On their return, the evening Satsang started.

Time fled: but everyone was oblivious of it. Half past nine: someone whispered. Siva's sharp ears caught it and his keen intelligence, in the twinkling of an eye, grasped the significance.

'You want to go?' Siva turned to one of the young members of the party. The sage in him assumed the ancient role of the Master of masters. 'Wait for a while. There will be more Bhajans, more Kirtan, a short Drama, a discourse....all very interesting programme. Why: if you attend a cinema, you easily reconcile yourself to the loss of sleep and feel content to go to bed at 1 o'clock. Satsang is infinitely more valuable than that....'

The wise Maharani at once interrupted Siva: 'Swamiji, I will stay. If they want to, let them go. There are two cars. They can take one: I will stay. Why: in this Satsang I can sit till the morning listening to your Bhajans, Kirtans and poems.'

The younger members of the party chimed in chorus: 'We will stay, Swamiji. We don't want to go.'

Just look at the direct method of approach which Siva always adopts and conquers the hearts of all. High or low he has the same vision: he identifies himself with the people with whom he has to deal: and at once all formalities are abandoned. Those to whom he addresses himself feel not in the least distressed at the overbearing attitude he adopts. They are at once enchanted by the depth of his interest in their true welfare: and they yield without hesitation.

I was myself the target of such a frontal attack. When I was at the Ashram as a visitor and when I, at the time of taking leave of Siva, remarked that the entire place was heaven, Siva instantly exclaimed: 'It is all built for you only: stay here. Who asks you to go? Resign your job from here.' I was greatly embarrassed: and from that day till his commands were obeyed to the full, these peremptory orders were hovering about the mind drawing me closer and closer to this astounding personality who would dare to take the greatest liberties with the most unknown strangers.

And, the Kirtan came to a close after a thrilling programme with Siva himself taking the greatest share of it with his humorous poems and songs. The party was entertained with milk and fruits. The Maharani was unwilling to leave. True to her words, she dispensed with the rest of the party and stayed nearly till midnightand even then only, after expressing her desire to spend a couple of quiet days at the Ashram in Siva's Satsang and in the contemplation of the divine.

8TH JUNE, 1949

MAHARANI COMES TO STAY

Sure enough, this time with only a couple of attendants, Her Highness has come back 'to spend a couple of days at the Ashram and to have Siva's Satsang'. She arrived late in the evening yesterday and spent the night in the quiet retreat of the Ashram.

Yesterday was Nirjala Ekadashi: and Siva had fasted, as usual, without taking even a drop of water. In spite of the obvious strain on his system, he got up at the appointed time and began to attend to the needs of the Maharani, himself.

One notices this trait in Siva all at once. Heads of religious institutions, as soon as they find that they have won a little name and fame, segregate themselves from the Common Man and make themselves unapproachable to him. They take the cue from the governmental institutions, and appoint under them a hierarchy of secretaries and assistant secretaries to filter visitors and devotees through.

The other extreme, too, has its obvious disadvantages. If one whose name has spread far and wide and whom many people are eager to see and talk to every day lives always 'in the open', he is likely to have a difficult time. He would be able to do no work: and rest would be unknown to him. Siva, the Wise Sage, has adopted the golden mean. At certain periods of the day he is available to none: neither to a

beggar nor to a prince. At other times he is available to all, either to a beggar or to a prince.

And, so Siva, in spite of the fact that the entire Ashram with its band of selfless workers is ever at his service, chose to attend on the Maharani himself in order to teach by example. Fetching them water: bringing them coffee and light tiffin for breakfast; arranging to supply water to the Kutir in which they had been lodged, supervising the sweeping of the verandah of the Kutir, etc. etc.

Her Highness felt a little embarrassed in the beginning. This great sage serving them like this! But the spontaneous attitude of familiarity that Siva adopts towards one and all soon dispels this embarrassment.

Even so it happened on a previous occasion. The Maharani of Singhai was reported sick. And, Siva was in Lucknow at the time. At once he entrained for Banaras to nurse the Maharani, who was a great devotee. The sick lady was fond of her 'hookah': and soda was her constant need. Her own attendants would often fail to attend to her needs. Siva would surreptitiously see to it that the hookah was near to where she was at the time....either in bed or in the study or in the drawing room....and that a few bottles of soda were always placed handy.

While the Maharani lay in her bed shouting at her servants for soda, Siva would quietly walk in with a bottle, opened and ready for drinking. And, this service went on, surreptitiously for some time....till the junior Maharani found out and carried the news to the senior.

Surreptitiously, I said. Serving people of affluence has an obvious material reward. Those who serve are conscious of this: and intentionally, to curry the favour of the Big Man, they would perform such services as helping him on to his coat, fetching the stick or the hat, sometimes the shoes, ostensibly that it might catch the eye of the big man. That is not selfless service. Therefore, it is prominent by its absence in Siva, whose essential nature is to serve selflessly.

Similarly in the case of the Maharani of Mysore also, Siva quietly arranged for all that she and her party needed. Once she remarked, 'Swamiji, let the servants do that. You should not bother yourself to do all this.' Prompt was Siva's reply: 'No, no: please don't stand on any formalities. I am your own son.' Similar was the reply to the Singhai Maharani also: 'Ghar-ka-ladka' (son of your own house) Siva would assure the person he serves and thus win his heart. This went home with the Singhai Rani to such an extent that when at Ganga-Sagar Siva had to carry the senior Rani on his shoulders from the shore to the boat, and when he offered his services to the junior Rani and she declined them, the senior reprimanded her, saying: 'Why do you feel shy? He is our own Swamiji.'

And, Siva is an adept at finding out, even before it is expressed, a person's need. He noticed that the Mysore Maharani wished to be alone in the Ghat while she bathed. One or two other persons (including a senior official of the Tehri State) were near the Ghat. Siva at once went up to them and asked them to go away. And, Her Highness had her bath. Then, stone-like she sat on a stone on the bank of the Ganges, in meditation. In the meantime, Siva had arranged for her breakfast, for her clothes to be dried properly, etc.

There is a peculiarity about him. As one thing is being done, his mind will leap forward to a dozen succeeding things and he will begin attending to them, too. Thus, one after another the programme will flow on smoothly. The lady doctor who had accompanied the Maharani was taking her food in the Pangat along with Siva. As they were taking their meals Siva called Dayanandajio and asked him to have the Kutir on the Ganges bank swept clean, a cot place in it, and over it a mattress and a pillow, for the lady doctor to take rest after the dinner. What we would generally do would be to think about this when the need started us in the face and then willy-nilly make some arrangements, always unsatisfactory.

The Maharani had a long conversation with Siva in the evening as she is leaving tomorrow morning. She said: 'I have no mind to leave this place at all.'

PEN-FRIENDSHIP, VEDANTIC SELF-INTRODUCTION

Judge Saheb had come to see Siva. After a few minutes' talk with him, Siva suddenly called out to Ram Rup Tiwarji (an Advocate) and introduced them to each other.

'You should be like the German, Tiwariji. You should come forward and introduce yourself. That is the spirit of Vedantin. (To Judge Saheb) Tiwariji was once a Vedantin. Gradually his heart has been turned towards Karma Yoga and Bhakti. Now he is a Synthetic Yogi.' He left them to converse with each other and went his way.

This is done through post also. One Sadhaka is introduced to another: a junior is asked to take the help of a senior, and the latter to help the former. We were surprised once to get a letter from Dr. Sundari of Mangalore that she had received a letter from a European lady requesting the loan of certain of Siva's books. Siva had already introduced them to each other.

GURU IS THE REAL FATHER

Dinner was about to finish. To Siva's left were sitting, first the lady doctor accompanying the Maharani of Mysore, then Sri Ram Rup Tiwari and his son. As Siva looked to the left at the rows of diners, he suddenly noticed something in the boy's throat.

'Tiwariji, your son has got goitre?'

Tiwariji was taken aback. He rubbed the boy's throat gently. The boy said it hurt him. Chidanandaji who was standing nearby confirmed the diagnosis.

'Swamiji, I was under the impression that it was mere fat,' said T. 'But now it appears that you are right. What a pity, Swamiji, all these years I have not noticed it! (To his son) How long has this been the matter with your throat?'

'For a long time,' replied the boy.

'And, imagine,' added T. 'I had not noticed it either. It was Sri Swamiji Maharaj who first noticed it.'

'Take this doctor's prescription for the boy. (To the lady doctor) Prescribe something very effective for this boy.'

'Yes, Swamiji, I shall.' And the doctor suggested some patent medicines. It was further a hint to the doctor, and to us all. People generally complain that they do not get 'opportunities for selfless service': when they go about looking for service they return disappointed, with the feeling that everyone seems to have been provided for, and their services are not needed. But, if only one keeps his eyes and ears open, he is bound to find umpteen opportunities for rendering service. Here, for instance.

DON'T HOLD A PIN WITH YOUR TEETH

I had to do some urgent despatching work. From a bunch of papers I had to dislodge some to be thrust into an envelope. I pulled out the pin, held it between the teeth (obviously as a result of the force of habit, but apparently to avoid loss of time in picking up the pin again from the desk), while I sorted out the papers, Siva's eyes were quick to notice this, though I was far away from his table.

'Ohji, don't keep a pin in the mouth. You will unconsciously swallow it and then come to grief.'

Here is a super-parent's care of his spiritual children. Household-fathers should learn a lesson and take a genuine interest in the welfare of their sons and all children generally. This is one step in Divine Life.

'ANANDA' IS NOT A MERE GLORIFYING SUFFIX

'Saswathanandaji,' called out Siva, to give him some instructions. But, he continued in an entirely different strain.

'Even before embracing Sanyas formally, you have added on the 'Ananda' suffix. It is all right in a way, for you have been here for quite a considerable number of years now. But you should understand the significance of this term 'Ananda'. It means that the bearer of that name has found (or at least is sincerely endeavouring to find) 'Ananda' or Bliss within himself, in his own Self. Well, to such a man no external forces ever matter. Even if he is beaten with a shoe, he will only smile: for he has dissociated himself from the body, and the inner Ananda is ever there.

'But, the other day you lost your temper at a man calling you with an insulting word. Even supposing he called you 'donkey', did you at once develop four legs and a tail and did you become a donkey actually? It was a mere sound. You should have merely smiled at it and ignored it. It does not matter. Past is past. In future at least, you should be careful. Watch the mind. If you lost your temper 100 times last year, if you lose your temper fifty times this year, it is a great improvement. Perfection is not attained in a day. Always reflect on the significance of the 'Ananda' suffix and the principles of Sadhu-hood.'

The incident occurred almost a month ago. Siva kept studiously silent and did not open the topic at all with either party in the fray. He made both feel quite at home and gave them to understand that he has not even noticed the quarrel. A lesson he had to teach: but he would not do so while the emotions were in a surging state. He let a month pass, gave both parties sufficient time to cool down and forget all about it: then quietly comes up with his instructions. Look at this great

considerateness even towards erring souls. Siva has, I should say, excelled Lord Jesus who admonished Magdalene on the spot.

9TH JUNE, 1949

YOUTH: TAKE NOTE!

A letter has been received from Sri N. Subramanian Unni of Srivandrum. Sri Unni says:

'My prostrations at thine feet. Having come to know of the Divine Life Society and Swamiji Maharaj, through the local branch of the D.L. Society, I feel myself blessed from that moment and I hope to be lifted up from the ocean of Samsara by Swamiji Maharaj. My eyes are now opened and I realise how I have practically wasted my 64 years of life. I am now very anxious to turn a new leaf and taking refuge at thy feet hope to be saved and taken to the goal in this very birth itself.'

After reading this letter aloud, Siva remarked:

'This is a very sincere man. Look at the genuine repentance he has given expression to in the letter. Even this does not happen to most of the people today who lead a sensuous life right to the grave. They waste their entire life: and it will be long time before they are granted a human birth again.

'Wiser is the man who perceives the dangers of old age, death and transmigration while his senses are vigorous and he enjoys the bloom of youth. Repentance in old age does not take one very far. It is better, therefore, that youth is trained to look at life from the right angle and to take note of the fleeting nature of the pleasures of youth. One should take to the spiritual path while one is young. He is a Dheera. He will attain Jivanmukti if he follows the precepts of his Guru and applies himself, heart and soul to his Sadhana. And, in youth this steady and tenacious application to Sadhana is easy.'

Incidentally, look at the marvellous work that some of the Society's branches are doing. They are the rays of this resplendent Sun of Wisdom—Siva—and wherever they are they dispel the gloom of ignorance and open peoples' eyes.

LISTEN: ENJOY: LEARN!

No strained silence: nor a stiff posture: not an awe-inspiring presence; but a love-inspiring smile; not a dreary discourse, but sweet music spiced with humour—who will not like to learn at Siva's feet?

The Secretary of the Notified Area Committee had come with some of his friends—a doctor, a professor, etc. Tea was served. And, Siva took up a copy of his 'Vedanta Jyoti' and began to sing in his thrilling voice, a few poems, here and there. Over a cup of tea they listened.

There is none of the artificial atmosphere that prevails elsewhere on such occasions: this nerve-racking business is not suited to the modern man. The student sits on a chair, on a level with the Master. He is enabled to feel that he is

the Master's equal: the Bhava that Lord Krishna encouraged in Arjuna and Uddhava. In this familiar pose, the heart and the mind of the student is wide open. There are no reservations. No formalities. The lesson goes right in and digs itself into the very inmost cavity of the heart.

A song containing very serious philosophy, some important item of Sadhana.... the student listens, all attention and serene. It is not continued: for again, the student will lose the lively-interest and will get moody. At once, a humorous poem is taken up. The student roars with laughter. In that merry moment, the lesson slips in.

At the end of this most novel discourse, the Master presents a copy of the book to the student; and he promises to read it again and again.

Dr. B.L. Atreya, Head of the Department of Philosophy in the Banaras Hindu University, had come day before yesterday: and he, too, liked this discourse immensely.

10TH JUNE, 1949

DOCTOR WANTS MOKSHA

An aged doctor was conversing with Siva in the office. His problem was: 'How to attain Moksha?'

'Moksha for a doctor is very easy,' said Siva, and the doctor was amazed at this bold assurance. 'Renounce the desire to earn wealth. Desist from accepting money from poor patients. Never extract money from anyone. Have the pure motive of serving the Lord in the sick and the suffering. Reflect. Meditate. Find out the defects in the mind. Root out the subtle hankerings after pleasure: for they goad you to place this service on a mercenary basis.

'You can do this Seva more effectively if you renounce the world and join some good religious institution. Start a dispensary or a hospital as a part of this institution and begin serving the poor and the suffering. Always have Narayana-Bhav. Greet every patient as Lord Narayana Himself come to give you an opportunity to purify the heart. Take genuine interest in the patient's recovery. After the service is over, say: 'Brahmarpanamastu, and dedicate the action and their fruits to the Lord as your worship. You will attain Moksha very quickly.'

The doctor bowed in great reverence, determined to put every bit of Siva's instructions into practice.

Oh, Doctors! Read Siva's biographies. He was also a doctor, much as you are today. Find out for yourself through a deep study of his life what the features were that distinguished him from you all and opened out for him the gateway to God-realisation. Follow him. And, attain the blissful pinnacle of glory where he stands today.

11TH JUNE, 1949

FOR THE GODS TO HEAR

Evening Satsang today was held on the verandah of Ramashram Library. Siva began the Kirtan in his own characteristic way, with Ganesha, Saraswati and Guru Dhwanis. Then some of Siva's disciples sang choice Dhwanis. Later, the Vairagis followed with their various musical instruments. Then the ladies.

Everyone was athirst for more and more from Siva himself. Many Kirtans flowed like sweet nectar from Siva's lips. When he began 'Jaya Siya Ram Jaya Siya Ram', the Vairagis automatically began to sound their cymbals and beat the drum. Quickly Siva stopped them with the remark: 'Please don't beat the drum now. My Kirtan is a simple one: like the simple kitchadie⁶.'

Siva's Kirtan is of the Dhyana type. Siva always emphasises that the Sadhaka should merge himself in the Lord within while he does Kirtan: and musical instruments are often a hindrance to it, as they distract the mind towards them. Nevertheless, Siva does recognise the utility of these instruments for certain temperaments of devotees and on certain occasions (like Akhanda Kirtan continued throughout the night.)

Then Siva led the chanting in chorus of the Mahamrityunjaya Mantra, with the preface: 'Today is the birthday of Devender, son of Lala Baij Nathji. Let us, therefore, repeat the Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra for the health and long life of the boy. This Mantra is truly a Mantra-rajā: it bestows on us health, long life and prosperity, and also Moksha in the end. It is a very powerful Mantra. It drives away death, disease and misfortunes. When you repeat the mantra mentally pray to the Almighty 'May Devender be blessed with health and long life! May your blessings be showered on him, on the entire family, on us all and on the whole world.'

Mark Siva's attitude. Man prays for himself: saints pray for all. He himself is included in the 'all'; and, at the same time, the Bhavana enables him to realise that he is the All. Such prayer has a miraculous effect: it achieves the dual-purpose instantly.

The Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra was followed by Samashti-Kirtan of 'Sita Ram Ram Ram', 'Jaya Jaya Radhe Govind', Vittala Vittala Jaya Jaya Vittala', and Rama Nama Jaya Kirtan.

⁶ *Kitchadie is a North Indian preparation of rice, dhal and vegetables,- a simple but highly energising food.*

Then Siva said: I will now say LONG LIVE. You will all respond with DEVENDER. In the loudest tone possible, so that the sound will be heard throughout the fourteen worlds, so that all the gods of the universe might hear and obey!

The entire audience obeyed!

The grateful parents and the boy himself joyfully touched the lotus feet of Siva with the crown of their head.

13TH JUNE, 1949

JIVA AND ISHWARA, BOTH ARE ILLUSORY

'Here is a patient who suffers from blood-poisoning: the virus of a pseudo-Guru has entered his blood!' Siva handed a letter from a good devotee of the Lord, very fond of doing Japa, and of other devotional practices.

He had fallen a victim to the preachings of the modern pseudo-Gurus. He is bewildered because some preacher has told him that the Ishwara whom he is worshipping is also an illusory object, a product of delusion.

Yet, the sincerity of the Sadhaka is to be admired. For, at once he writes to Siva for final clarification. He has a taste for Japa and cannot give it up.

'Jiva and Ishwara may both be within the pale of Maya. But, Ishwara is Suddha Satwa. The entire creation is within Him. He pervades all the universe. He is verily Brahman Himself! They are deluded who speak of Ishwara in derisive terms and who decry worship of Ishwara. What is more: Ishwara can give Krama-Mukti. A worshipper of the Form of the Lord attains Sayujya with that Form, and eventually attains liberation. The mind will not all at once be able to grasp the Formless. It needs a prop in the beginning. Therefore, worship of a Form and repetition of the Name are most essential. Later on that Ishwara Himself will lead the aspirant to the meditation on the Formless Absolute. What can Ishwara not do? This pseudo-Guru thinks that Ishwara, too, is in ignorance even as he himself is. What a pity! Aspirants should beware of such pseudo-Gurus and avoid them as they would avoid venomous cobras.'

14TH JUNE, 1949

GLORY OF SIVA'S PROXIMITY

Swarg Ashram Vaidji, living on the top floor of the same building in which Siva lives, has passed away. He had a virulent attack of smallpox which took his life. The passing away was peaceful. A householder's body is generally cremated. But this noble soul had his consigned to Mother Ganga, in the fashion of Sanyasins. What a great honour. No other form of end would have earned him this merit. Surely, in his case the smallpox was a blessing in disguise. People dying in distant parts of the country are blessed by their ashes being immersed in Ganga. Vaidji, however, had his body itself consigned to the holy river. No wonder: he had lived in close proximity to Siva's lotus feet for the past nearly 15 years. He led the life of

a householder: yet, the very act of living near such an illumined soul earned for him at the last moment the honour of a Sanyasin's end.

THE GREAT MYSTERY

As we bowed to Siva on his entering the office in the morning, he asked: 'Did you know about Vaidji's departure?'

'Yes, Swamiji: the vaccinator will be here just now, Swamiji. It is better for Swamiji also to get himself vaccinated.'

'Oh, no: it won't come.'

'Swamiji, it seems that Vaidji treated a smallpox patient recently. He must have caught the infection then.'

'That is only a Nimitta. Why did it not spread to others also? It had to be like that. How did I have scabies? When a man has a sudden attack of typhoid, how do you account for it? These infections spreading, etc., are only Nimittas. The truth about it is a great mystery.'

Gahanaa Karmano Gatih

Siva himself once carried a smallpox patient on his own shoulders to the hospital. A cholera patient's bedside was Siva's abode for some time during the Swarg Ashram days of the sage. Even now nothing could prevail on him to shift his abode for even a temporary period from his Kutir which was directly below the smallpox patient's residence. Why: we could not persuade him to take his daily bath in the Viswanath Ghat, a little ahead of the place near his Kutir, near which the patient's clothes were daily washed by his family. 'Abhayam' is the saint's nature. He has conquered death. Even the dissolution of his body depends on his own will.

LEPROSY TO VEDANTA

Sri B. Ganguly, Leprosy Relief Office of the U.P., and Sri B.M. Nautiyal, Medical Office of Health in the Tehri State, have both come to Siva to seek his help in connection with the leprosy relief work that they wish to undertake in Rishikesh. G. was struggling to express the inexpressible feeling of gratitude that filled his heart for the spontaneous and deep interest Siva had taken by personally visiting the leper colony, collecting detailed statistics and forwarding them to him, the Tehri Health Minister, Rev. Taylor, etc.

'To tell you the truth, Swamiji, last time we came here it was just because Dr. Gairola asked us to see you, and I, too, had a soft corner for Sanyasins in general. But I was overwhelmed by the spirit of cooperation and ready assistance that I saw in you. You have rendered to me and to the nation at large more help in this work than I could dream of. And, I shall not forget that it was in addition to the multifarious activities you are carrying on here.'

Then the official discussion started. Siva appreciated the government's scheme and himself suggested several sites for the proposed construction of a pucca government colony for leprosy patients.

Then Siva entertained them to tea.

'Here is some good food for you both,' said Siva: and the doctors turned towards Siva. At once Siva began to sing for them several poems from his 'Vedanta Jyoti'. The doctors like these poems so much that they, too, were inspired to use medical-metaphors for Vedantic thoughts.

'Swamiji, we can to seek your help in connection with the leprosy relief scheme. But, it looks as though you will infect us with this Vedantic virus.'

The other doctor remarked: 'Every pore of Swamiji's body is constantly emitting powerful Vedantic-bacteria which at once attack anyone who comes near him, however robust in health he might be.'

When Siva mentioned to Dr. Ganguly that one J.C. Chatterjee, a Professor of Philosophy, intended to settle down in Swarg Ashram, and asked if G. had known him or studied his works, the doctor humbly put in that since his life mostly centred around villages and as his work took away most of his time, he did not have much time to read books and keep himself abreast of the times.

'That is much better. For, you will later have to forget all that you learn now. The only knowledge worth acquiring is Atma Jnana. And, for this you need read only Vedantic texts.'

15TH JUNE, 1949

DELAYED ACTION 'BOMBS'

These bombs will not explode immediately when they come into contact with the earth, but would wait and explode at a later hour, when the people least expect it.

Siva also uses, in his ceaseless battle with the forces of Ajnana, all the modern devices to carry the battle to a successful termination. For instance, when the news of the atomic bomb was brought to him, he at once invented his Atmic Bomb of infinitely greater power. 'An atomic bomb can only destroy a city: but the Atmic Bomb will destroy the three worlds, it will pull down the citadel of ignorance,' he wrote.

Similarly, he has the delayed action bomb also. Read the letter reproduced below:

Sri Swamiji Maharaj,

I had been to Ananda Kutir in May, 1947 and had the good luck of your Darshan and some Prasad. At that time I got your book 'Yoga in Daily Life'. Soon after I was transferred from Rishikesh and then, somehow or other, I could not go through the book. Now I have studied it thoroughly and am very much impressed by its teachings. I now desire to have a deeper knowledge of the subject.

There is some indication of a correspondence course in one of the letters published in the said book. Please let me know all about it.

Please also tell me as to how I can become a member of the Divine Life Society. In my heart of hearts I have acknowledged your pious self as my

honoured Guru. I hope you will kindly favour me with your valuable advice at this moment as also in the future.

—Dr. T.N. Mathur

The above letter is an effective answer to some people who criticise Siva that he indiscriminately preaches, throws away his books into the hands of unworthy persons, and indiscriminately initiates young men into Sanyas. This betrays only impudence. Siva's knowledge is cosmic: we are short-sighted. His vision pierces the veil of time and the most distant future is the Present to him. You and I cannot even appraise the present! Bow to the dust of his feet. Follow him. Raise not a word against him.

WHAT IS IN A NAME?

To Siva every name, every address, wherever he find it, is all-important. Behind every name there is the Nameless. Every name is in delusion waiting to be awakened to its Nameless Swaropa. As has been hinted at elsewhere in this volume, Siva's address book is his treasure: read this letter received today:

Revered Swamiji,

Yesterday I received the autographed copies of your books. The gift was extremely unexpected. That, however, adds to the sweetness of the gift and the large-hearted kindness of the donor. I pray I shall prove worthy of the present.

The world has heard about you and your teachings. I am not known to you. I wonder to what I owe this kindness from you. How did I catch your notice? Possibly it is my signature in the letter sanctioning paper for the Jubilee number of 'The Divine Life'.

—P.V.S. Sarma

The letter beautifully takes you on the horns of the dilemma on which the writer sits bewildered. Have you ever found yourself in such a condition of mind? It is an oppressing joy, a blissful misery, and a thrilling depression. The man feels like bursting into tears of joy.

This I call Siva's magic. Quietly a couple of books slip through his hands. The postman delivers them to the addressee. We cannot fathom the mind of the sender. But we see evidence of the intensity of the sender's Sankalpa when we come to the receiver. His very heart is stirred. He at once finds himself in an entirely different realm altogether. That is what they call the Spiritual Touch that Awakens.

22ND JUNE, 1949

DR. J.C. CHATTERJEE

Dr. J.C. Chatterjee, a learned professor of philosophy, who had for several years made America his home preaching philosophy there, has come to have Siva's Darshan. After the preliminary greetings Siva had the Museum shown and

explained to the doctor. C. greatly admired the Museum. He came back to the office. Siva whispered into a Sadhak's ear: 'coffee'. The old man caught the idea! 'No, no: don't bother now.'

'It is all right, Maharaj: just give me this last chance, please!....'

'All right, all right,' smiled the 78-year-old professor: 'You are an incorrigible!' Such a compelling hospitality the professor had enjoyed during his previous visit to the Ashram, too.

Coffee was brought. Along with it a couple of sweet-dishes, biscuits and fruits.

'What a dinner you are giving me! All right: since you have said that it is your last chance.'

'Last chance? Yes: I meant last chance for the day!'

Side-splitting laughter among all those assembled: and in uncontrollable mirth the old man even spilt a little coffee.

'I do not know how you have been able to do so much work. You have truly done a tremendous lot of work. The innumerable books....the Ashram....the Mandir. Really marvellous. I have been wanting to go round the Ashram since I came here last: but something or other has always stood in the way. My admiration has considerably grown now that I have actually seen the fruits of your stupendous endeavours.'

'No, no, no. I have done nothing,' said Siva and became silent.

Siva has described himself as a Mahabhogi, Mahayogi and Mahatyagi. To do such a lot of work which has earned the appreciation of countless leaders in the world and which has raised countless children of the Lord to heights undreamt of by them, and then to proclaim: 'I have done nothing', is an astounding feat which is possible only for the Mahatyagi strictly adhering to the precepts of Lord Krishna in the Gita.

What has an uneducated, imbecile and worthless man to renounce? And, is it not ironical if he repeats parrot-like: 'I am Akarta, Abhokta'? A Sadhu enters Rishikesh 25 years ago with nothing but a multi-pieced rag: serves everyone he comes across without any selfish motive whatsoever: shuts himself up in his room for days together living on dry bread and water—if he rises to world eminence, sits on the summit of a sky-scraper, every brick of which was laid by him with the sweat of his brow, and says: 'I have done nothing,'....know that such a person is the Living Bhagavad Gita and the Living Vedanta.

Coming down to business, C. said: 'Swamiji: I want your help. We must conquer Russia, for Communism today threatens to wipe out all noble culture from the East. You alone can help.'

'Why: even though you say you are aged, I see in you the spirit of youth. You have already conquered America. Russia is child's play for you. You are J.C. Chatterjee, aren't you? Jesus Christ Chatterjee! What! And, make your conquests!'

The Doctor was completely taken aback by this remark, and said: 'Swamiji, how do you know that? I used to initial some papers in America J.C.C. and say that they signified 'Jesus Christ Come'. How strange that you should have said the very same thing.'

Small wonder: what can be hidden from one in whom the rivers Past and Future have drained themselves out in the ocean of the Eternal Present, and in whom the walls that separate 'here' and 'there' have been pulled down revealing at one glance the All?

The Doctor continued: 'You are specially suited to the work of capturing Russia. For, you are a very powerful magnet that has attracted these iron-filings of young fellows. I see bright, very hard-working, brilliant young men.... (He turned round and saw that one or two of us were watching)....No, no: I should not say that in their hearing. Young man! What I am telling Swamiji is not for your ears. You are all very wicked young men with no brains at all!.... (and added in a low tone to Siva)....otherwise, these young fellow will get puffed up with pride. Now, as I said, you with these young disciples are the only fit person to conquer Russia.'

'When you start the University here, Doctor Saheb, you will get plenty of young men of talents. I am your grandson. I will always be ready to serve you. I have only a few geniuses here. Omkaranandaji....that is a brilliant poet. He is my right hand. He is very young. But a real genius. He is a journalist, a brilliant writer. And, a fluent orator, too. This young man, too, is a very good writer. He renounced a high position in the government of India. Swami Chidanandaji, who explained the Museum to you, is another eminent writer and lecturer. He is a saintly person with a magnanimous, kind and generous heart....' and so on, Siva went on describing his disciples to the Doctor.

Do you see the difference? The human being sees human beings in others susceptible to all human weaknesses e.g., pride egoism, etc. The Doctor is a great man, but a human being. No so, with Siva. He is divine. Only divine virtues are apparent to him. He sees divinity in all. He rejoices in glorifying others. What a spirit he thus infuses in everyone: and how miraculously his words awaken the hidden powers in the young folks!

The Doctor was about to leave. He had collected all the biographies written by various scholars and Yogis, on the life of Siva.

'I do not know what to say of you. Your name itself has a great significance. But, I would slightly alter it and say you are Sevananda. Because, you take such a great joy in serving others. You are a great magnet, too. Magnet-Sevananda.'

23RD JUNE, 1949

LANGOT BANDHA OR KAUPHEN MUDRA

Perhaps you have never heard of these two—one a Bandha and the other a Mudra.

They have been evolved by sage Siva at the Ananda Kutir Yoga-Vedanta Forest Research Laboratory.

An aged gentleman came into Siva's office this afternoon. He explained to Siva how, even though he had a desire to visit the Ashram for a number of years past, he was unable to do so because he could not get leave. We all looked up in wonder: this old man has still not retired?

Siva asked the question. And, he replied: 'Swamiji, what to do? I have to protect fifteen children and my wife. 8 sons and 7 daughters. All my life I have spent rearing up these, one by one. Therefore, even after retirement I have had to take a job.'

'You have never practised Langot-Bandha, I think.'

'No, Swamiji. And I have never heard of the name so far. Please explain it to me.'

'Nor Kaupeen Mudra?'

'No, Swamiji.'

'Obviously not: if you had, you would have saved this worry in old age. Langot Bandha and Kaupeen Mudra differ only in minor details. Essentially they are the same. They mean observance of physical celibacy.'

A cough-like laughter from the old man during which he exhibited the few lucky remains of what were once rows of teeth.

'This Bandha and this Mudra have thousands of uses, and many varieties, too. Grosser the variety, grosser the use also. But, even the grossest form—a mere physical observance of Brahmacharya, has great utility. It will save many families from starvation, help to reduce the dowry-burden from the head of fathers of girls, and the school-fees budgets of many a young man.

'The subtler forms have infinite uses. When this Langot Bandha is taken to the mental sphere also, then the practitioner's brain-power increases, intellect is sharpened, and intuitive perception developed, too. When this Langot Bandha becomes man's nature itself, then the Kingdom of God is opened to him and he becomes soon a great sage. Even the Upanishads and the Gita have sung the glory of this Brahma and this Mudra.

'Therefore practise this.'

26TH JUNE, 1949

DISCOURSE ON PRANA

Dr...., M.A., Ph.D., was Siva's guest this morning. They sat in the office discussing Yoga. Each admired the other's conquest of old age and the youthful energy with which they worked. The doctor was astonished to find that Siva, in spite of his age, was extremely busy throughout the day, from 3 in the morning till late at night.

The discussion went on to Creation, Maya and Samadhi.

Siva said: 'Man is maintained as an individual through the force of Vasanas which keep the Prana in motion. Vasanas agitate Prana! And Prana maintains the body with its senses. These Vasanas are stored up in the mind from time immemorial. The grossest form of Prana is the breath. Subtler is the elemental Prana. Still more subtle is the Cosmic Prana which is termed Hiranyagarbha. It is from this Cosmic Prana that everything has emanated.

'Now you have understood the intimate connection between Prana and the mind (Vasanas). One depends for its function on the other. Therefore, if you learn to control Prana, you can control the mind, through Pranayama. When you still the Prana and when it ceases to oscillate, Samadhi supervenes. All Vasanas are fried in toto: you achieve Moksha.

'The Upanishads speak highly about Prana whose subtlest form is Hiranyagarbha. By worshipping Prana as Brahman, they say, you can live a full life of a hundred years. You can do a lot of selfless service and practise much Sadhana if you have thus a long life. The Isavasya Upanishad also exhorts us to live the full span of a hundred years, doing the enjoyed works. OM.'

'Swamiji Maharaj, during all my life I have never spent such a fruitful hour as I have in your holiness's presence. I have learnt during these few minutes more than I have in all the rest of my life. By your Ashirvad I do hope to be a useful citizen and a good Sadhaka. Namaskar.'

AN ETERNAL STUDENT: NO DISGUST!

Swami Keshavananda, disciple of the late Swami Pranavanandaji, has been here for some time and tonight the entire evening Satsang programme was his item-exhibition of lantern slides depicting some important topics in the Gita, Ramayana, Mahabharata, etc. Siva had already witnessed the slides. Yet, he was the one member in the audience tonight who was most interested in the item. After the Satsang had come to an end the gathering had dispersed, leaving on the verandah of Siva' Kutir only Sastriji and another inmate of the Ashram, besides K. and Siva himself. There was a discussion on the slides.

'Swamiji, it has a mass appeal. Woman and children would like it very much. This has a greater attraction for the layman than mere intellectual discourses. Children would witness it any number of times without getting bored.'

'I, too,' said Siva. 'I have already seen this. But, I can see it daily and listen to Swamiji's explanations daily. Not only the slides: even ordinary discourses, talks, lectures and Kathas I can go on listening to any number of times. I never feel disgust. Every time I will try to find out new points and learn new lessons.'

In this is wisdom: in this is Brahma Jnana.

NEVER LOSE AN OPPORTUNITY

Over a cup of milk and fruits K. was talking to Siva. Siva after admiring the marvellous idea of the magic lantern show, said: 'It is a brilliant idea you have evolved: that of tapping the ground with the walking stick for the purpose of asking the assistant to change the slide. Why not say OM instead? As soon as you have done with a slide, say OM and he will change.'

'I am grateful to your Holiness, Swamiji, for this suggestion. I shall certainly put it into practice. It is wonderful. Every change of slide would provide me with a repetition of the Pranava.'

TREAT EVERYONE AS YOUR SELF!

'You should have two disciples who should travel with you. Then you can do this work more efficiently. You will not have to bother about arranging them, and to instruct novices each time.'

'Swamiji, I have tried that also. But these youngsters nowadays are more intent on exploiting and cheating than on genuinely serving and evolving. I have been cheated several times by people who wanted to become my disciples.'

'You should conquer them by love. You should treat them as your own Self. You should give them greater comforts than you enjoy yourself. Mahants nowadays quietly enjoy all sorts of comforts, eat all sorts of delicacies, and deny them to their disciples. The latter soon get disgusted and they leave the Master.'

This is precisely how Siva has conquered the hearts of his disciples. Sri Swami Swarupanandaji once told me that when Siva was on his lecture tours, he would go on lecturing and singing Kirtans for hours together, and when the organisers of the function provided him with a cup of milk, a little curd or ghee or some fruits, he would quietly pass on most of it to his associates then (Swami Swarupanandaji and Swami Atmanandaji). Even today it is the common experience of all those who bring 'offerings' to Siva: they are often bewildered, for the very things that they consider extraordinary and meant only for Siva himself, he would immediately pass on with a smile to the 'children' at the Ashram, and later explain to the offering devotee that it is all the same.

In this connection, what K. himself, when he had received from Siva a Prasad of Rs. 20 offered with great devotion, love and recitation of Santi Mantras by Siva himself, said is significant:

'Why does he give me this money? I never expected it. Nor could I ever think of asking him....He has set an example to me. We should all be like him and develop our heart to such an extent. Swamiji has no need to do all this. He has achieved whatever there is for a man to achieve. But, even as Lord Krishna has said in the Gita, he does things only with a view to setting an example for others to follow.'

27TH JUNE, 1949

SAMSKARAS: ASSOCIATION OF THOUGHTS: DISCIPLINE

Morning University class again provided Siva with an opportunity for Upadesh. The Panchadasi study was over. One or two people in the group quietly left the class. They were not obviously interested in the next item—Hindi. Thanks to this unwise act, they benefited themselves, benefited all of us, too. For....

Siva called them and said: 'Understand the law of Samskaras well. You may not now be interested in Hindi. You may think: What is the use, I do not understand

anything. But, even a mere hearing of the words repeatedly will provide indelible impressions in the mind. Listen to this story.

'There was a maid-servant in the house of a Hebrew priest. As she went on doing the household work, she would listen to the priest's scriptural recitations. She understood nothing, not even the words. Years later, she developed a double personality. When she lost her senses due to illness, she began unconsciously to recite the Hebrew prayers. The doctors were astonished. But, when she regained consciousness, she said she understood nothing of those same verses. These were recorded in her subconscious mind. They will manifest themselves in due course of time. Nothing is really lost.

'Some others, I have noticed, do not like Panchadasi and so do not attend that period. It is a sad mistake. Even if they do not grasp the meaning now, the hearing has its own effect: in due course the meaning will flash itself upon their conscious mind.

'Further, even if I do not quite follow the Hindi passages, to me the period has its own uses. I learn some words. Besides, whenever I come across some passages like 'The fool prattles', etc., at once all thoughts associated with 'fool' and 'prattling' will arise in the mind. Even the case of certain fools who imagine themselves very wise but would declare, 'This world is very real. I can prove it through scientific explanations' comes to the mind. The mind is properly exercised. A new spiritual groove is formed. The intellect sharpened and made very subtle. It always tries to spiritualise all topics. It associates all things and thoughts with spiritual matters.

'Another equally important consideration is—discipline. Coming and going whenever you like disturbs the class. You set a bad example. If all people begin to do like this, then the class cannot go on. You must observe discipline in all such gatherings. Form the habit from now.

'Sri Krishna Prem (Mr. Nixon) would sometimes not attend Nagar Kirtans which were usually long and tedious and involved much physical strain. When I would ask him 'Why did not you come' he would reply, 'Swamiji, I was not feeling well: and if I came I should stay till the end and go round the entire city—that would not be possible, so, I preferred to stay away. Look at his sense of discipline. Discipline is very important in spiritual life. Even the gods observe discipline. Ishwara also binds Himself by his own discipline. He could give Mukti to all in a minute. He could change the course of the world in the twinkling of an eye. All Eternal Laws are based on Him only. Yet, He subjects Himself to the Laws.'



JULY, 1949

8TH JULY, 1949

BETWEEN FASTING AND FEASTING

The sumptuous Birthdate Feast was over. This time the glory of celebrating the Day goes to Sri S.R. Padayachie of South Africa, a very devoted Bhakta of Siva to whom it is attainment of Mukti to be of any service to Siva or to do anything that would conduce to the furtherance of the Mission.

The few visitors who were nowadays accustomed to the sight of the Ashram workers taking their roti and dhall in improvised 'towel bags' and vessel at noon, quietly walking in and out of the dining hall generally silent and solemn, were inwardly happy to find that today the hall had put on a festive appearance and was filled to overflowing with pious devotees and serene Sadhus taking a hearty meal of delicious preparations.

Master Satchidanandaji relieved the visitors' 'tension' and for a few blissful moments there was a very pleasant exchange of views on this glorious being who presided over the destinies of Ananda Kutir.

'Maharaj-ji' began Satchidanandaji, 'What is this feast compared to what it was on the Diamond Jubilee Day or the recent Sadhana Week days? I remember now. Just before the Diamond Jubilee, when we were busy making preparations for the day, I was bringing from Rishikesh huge vessels for preparing food for the numberless devotees and Sadhus who were expected to take part in the function. The old Tehri Maharajah's car had got stuck on the way from Rishikesh. We all helped to restart it. When the Maharajah noticed the cartload of big vessels being moved into his territory, he was astonished and asked me: 'Where are you taking these?' 'To Sri Swami Sivanandaji's Ashram,' I replied. The Maharajah remarked: 'Only Swamiji is able to conduct poor feeding and Sadhu Bhojan on such a large scale nowadays when there is food scarcity everywhere. Really Tapas has great Shakti.' All this is done by Swamiji by his mere Satsankalpa. It is all his play. In all these seven years I have lived here I have silently watched with amazement the rapid growth of the institution. I have seen with my own eyes the desolate place, full of bushes and thick jungle get transformed into the beautiful Sivanandanagar. I have seen the postal bags to and fro Ananda Kutir grow in bulk. I have seen also the impoverished Ashram kitchen where one or two Sadhaks would in silent joy, the joy of Seva, take their daily bread rapidly grow into an Annakshetra where hundreds have taken food to their heart's content every day.

'Between these great festive days, the days of ease and comfort, and the other days of calm endurance of the taking of a few pieces of bread and a cup of dhall—there does not seem to be much of a great gulf of difference for them! We feel it sharply. But Siva and his young men take it so easily as though it was all a continuous feast.' The pious old devotee could not restrain his tears.

'That is because,' came the reply from a youthful Sadhaka, 'Swamiji does not provide food only for their body. This is only a side-issue. You can't help it. The vehicle has got to be preserved, cleaned and 'oiled'. Swamiji's main aim is to provide a sumptuous feast for their soul. No finances can obstruct this. So, the feast is continuous. And, Swamiji's message reaches the farthest corners of the world. I heard it said by one of the senior officials of the Tehri State that once, when the late Maharajah had been to London, he paid a visit to the British Museum and asked for a good book on Yoga. The Librarian at once produced a volume of *'Practice of Yoga—by Swami Sivananda.'* 'By whom?' 'By Swami Sivananda,' replied the Librarian. 'I see he lives in the Himalayas, perhaps within the boundaries of your Highness's state.' The Maharajah blushed with the proud realisation that his State's renown had spread to the Capital of the Empire (through the writings of a saint) long before his august personage could carry it there.'

'Oh yes, yes. That is the secret. You are right. When you shift the centre of your love from body to soul, you are continuously happy and contented. That is Swamiji's secret of achievement, too. Dry bread and Ganges water was nectar to him when people used to scramble into the Kshetra during Bhandara (feast) days for he was intent on feeding his soul. Once a devotee gave him Rs. 5 for his milk: and he at once printed a pamphlet out of the amount....himself carrying on with his dry bread and water. That was real Tapasya. No wonder today the entire world is aware of his message.'

IN UNITY LIES STRENGTH

'Call such meetings of all the workers frequently. Make everyone feel that he is very essential for the running of the institution. Encourage everyone to think of the work. No one should feel that he is merely the fifth wheel to the coach. Everyone should be the head of his department. At the same time everyone should be induced to take a living interest in the entire work. Appoint Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries to each department. And, this should never be allowed to become a mockery: that is the mistake often committed by organisers who tend to make those whom they appoint to responsible positions nothing more than their puppets. Each office-bearer in the Society should have real power to control his department and to take a hand in the general affairs of the Society. Everyone should respect everyone else and so joyously contribute to the service of humanity,' concluded Siva when he was informed of the decisions of a meeting in the evening in pursuance of Siva's instructions, to discuss certain problems.

Succinctly, Siva, the master psychologist, has brought out a Sanyasin's approach to the problem of organisation. Trust everyone. Repose entire confidence in all. Suspect none. Suspicion kills enterprise and dullens enthusiasm. Faith and trust promote their growth. Again, a domineering attitude towards juniors makes them nervous and cripples their faculties. A spiritual camaraderie, a brotherhood of Sadhaks, without the obnoxious distinctions of function-born superiority and inferiority—that is the aim of Siva. He has all along preached (and emphasised it by his own example) that no one should regard anyone else as his or her inferior in any sense. A scavenger who removes the refuse on the road, a doctor who

removes the refuse in the human system: a servant-boy who cleans the vessels in the kitchen and a philosopher who cleans the vessel of a Sadhak's mind—all, to him, perform the Lord's work in their various capacities. All are equal. No work is superior: none inferior. The Jiva in everyone yearns to relieve itself of its vestments and feel its own Selfhood of All. This should be the attitude of all—Ministers, Prime Ministers, Presidents, Monarchs, Directors and all officers all over the world. Then only will there be real contentment everywhere.... contentment is very essential to progress.'

9TH JULY, 1949

SIKH AMONG SIKHS

Sri Mam Raj of the Tehri State brought in the Government of India's Food Commissioner, a middle aged Sikh gentleman. As they were discussing the purpose of the Food Commissioner's visit, etc. and his visit to Srinagar that day, Siva quietly thrust into each one's hands a few of his books. It is common knowledge that he does not wait to listen through even the visitor's talk but simultaneously goes on autographing several books and passes them on. Siva never allows himself to procrastinate. And, he is an Ashtavadhani: so that he could do all things at the same time. He would be conversing with the visitor, giving directions to the Ashramites and signing books—all at the same time and with equal attention and zeal.

Mam Raj described their adventures up and down Srinagar (a place about sixty miles towards Badrinath in the Himalayas, from Rishikesh.)

'Swamiji, it was raining. And, the roads were impassable. Mountains had started breaking down. We had a very risky ride. Once we almost tumbled into Ganges. It was only your grace and blessings that brought us here.'

The Sikh accompanying the Food Commissioner was happy to see that in Siva's 'Lives of Saints' Guru Nanak's life had been included: and that in Siva's book, 'World's Religions' Sikhism had found a succinct exposition. 'Maharaj, you have done for your religion what the leaders among Sikhs themselves ought to have done. You are the foremost among Sikhs.'

'It is all one! All religions speak of the One God. There is no difference on fundamentals. Only superficialities differ. We ought to ignore them and cease to quarrel with one another. The details and the ceremonies and the rituals are only for our own good. We should practise them and adhere to them. But, we should not make that the bone of contention and cause riots. Each man should follow his own religion, realising and appreciating the unity of the fundamental tenets of his religion with those of all others in the world.'

The Food Commissioner, a devout Sikh, fell into a tranquil exposition of the tenets of his religion. As soon as he mentioned Kirtan as one of the fundamentals of Sikhism, Siva began....

Sat Nam Sat Nam Sat Nam Ji

Wahe Guru Wahe Guru Wahe Guru Ji

....and the entire hall was resounding with the Kirtan Dhwani immersing all in the Calm of the One God—Truth.

When he found that Kirtan had already found its master in Siva, the F.C. turned to Japji Saheb and found that there, too....

‘Japji is the best pocket book of spiritual essence I have seen,’ exclaimed Siva. ‘It is full of divine wisdom. In fact, it is out and out Upanishadic.’

Naturally, the F.C. fell to admiring Siva for his vast knowledge of Sikhism and then turned to quoting Guru Granth Saheb. At the very mention of the name Siva began to recite the Mula Mantra which thrilled the Sikhs.

As soon as the recitation was over, Siva explained: ‘You see this Mula Mantra of the Sikhs contains the very essence of Hindu Upanishads and the core of the teachings of Lord Jesus or Lord Muhammad. All these great prophets of the world have had the same realisation of the Infinite God.’

When the F.C. came into Siva’s presence and was entertained to tea, he had hardly expected that he, in whose presence he has had the privilege of sitting, was the He in whom all religions had their culmination. Siva’s Kirtan, however, enraptured him. Siva’s discourse on the unity of religions and the oneness of God appealed to him. But what followed perhaps had the effect of....let’s see.

It was raining outside. An old man (a Sindhi) tottered in soaked to the bones and his coat almost turned into a cotton-pulp. I was standing at the intervening door. I intended to make him wait in the D.J. Hall Annexe, to let him undress himself, etc. Hardly had he reached the door....his shoes, wet and heavy, dropped off, and the man was in a semi-conscious state. ‘Where is my Gurudev? Where is my Lord? Please show him to me. Please....please....my dear. Where is he?’ In silence I bowed to his feet....what a flower of devotion to the Guru....and, led him in. In his hurry, he did not even choose to take off his cap. Perhaps nothing but Gurudev was in his mind. He fell on his knees. He hugged Siva’s feet, embraced them, kissed them, took their dust and sprinkled them on his forehead and body. Folded palms, eyes half-closed shedding tears of an inexpressible joy, he sat down in the attitude of devout prayer looking up to the face of Siva as one would look up to Him.

‘Hey Bhagavan, you are my only Saviour. Please bless me. Turn your eye of grace towards me. I am a lowly wretched creature. Through your grace alone can I tread this path of righteousness. Show me the way.’

Siva turned to him. What passed then is neither for mortal eyes, nor for finite words....something that surpasseth understanding. After a few minutes like this, the old man bowed again and departed. Only then did he remember that he had not brought any offerings with him for Siva, the Sanyasin. As I was leading him to the door, he thrust a couple of rupees into my hand and said: ‘Please get some fruits for this and place it at my Gurudev’s feet.’ I could understand the devotee’s heart well enough: he had offered to Gurudev what best he could—his own heart full of faith and devotion—himself. What need hath his Lord for fruits and coins?

When he turned to the world, he thought of its customs. It is just as well that he followed them, too.

The Sikh brethren were watching this with wonderment, bewilderment, perhaps with advantage. They were wise men. For a wise man every incident, every situation abounds in lessons of the greatest moment. They could have compared notes: weighed in their own heart-balance the comparative gains of this old man full of humility and devotion and their own.

The F.C.'s words reflected the effect that this incident had on him. 'Swamiji, there is a saying in Granth Saheb: 'He who turns your mind towards God either by his preaching, his conduct or by his mere presence, he is your real friend. He who turns your mind away from him is your real enemy. During the hour I have spent in your august presence I have felt greatly elevated, inspired and exalted. I have found inner peace and an inexpressible joy in your company. You are my true friend, and guide. Bless me that I may be true to my religion.'

The other Sikh brother felt that this great opportunity of meeting perhaps the foremost saint in India today should be well utilised: and he asked: 'Swamiji, how did this Maya arise in Brahman?'

'Ask Brahman Himself!' was the crisp reply which went all around into side-splitting laughter. Siva continued: 'This is Ati-Prasna or a transcendental question. You will find this question coming up to your mind in various forms: 'When did Karma begin? When and why was the world created? Why is there evil in the world? Why did the Unmanifest manifest itself? etc. etc.' The same question is asked by Rama in the Yoga Vasishtha and Vasishtha says: 'You are putting cart before the horse. You will not be benefited by an enquiry into this question at all. Meditate and realise Brahman. You will then know the answer to this question. The problem itself will have dissolved by then.' No one can answer this question. When Knowledge dawns the question itself vanishes. Therefore, there is no answer to the question at all. Brahma Sutra says:

Lokavat tu Lee'a Kaivalyam

It is only to pacify your doubt. It is really not an answer: for there can be no answer. Yet, the question will arise in the case of every seeker after Truth. You cannot help it. You will have to use your discrimination, pacify the doubt, and then through intense Sadhana and meditation realise God. Then the doubt will vanish. A great Yogi and Jnani was worried with this doubt for twelve years. Then he told me: 'The worry is over now. It troubled me for twelve years. I could not find an answer. So, I have given up that pursuit and have taken to meditation, Japa and Kirtan. Now I find peace and progress.' Faith in Guru, Granth Saheb, Kirtan, Japa, meditation and practise of righteousness—these will enable you to progress in the spiritual path and will take you to That where there is no questioning possible.'

With bowed head and folded palms the officers took leave of Siva profusely thanking him 'for the precious gifts of these books which shall be my greatest treasure hereafter,' and for his inspiring Upadesh.

10TH JULY, 1949

GURU POORNIMA SANYASINS CHOICEST GROUP

Very early in the morning, in Brahmamuhurtha, in the traditional fashion, out of the mortal sheaths of Sridhara Rao, Natesa Iyer, R.V. Sastri and Brahmachari Satchidananda, arose the effulgent immortal torch-bearers of wisdom, the spiritual children of Sivananda and the messengers of Siva's Wisdom—Chidananda, Brahmananda, Mounananda, and Satchidananda. They shone in a lustre that at once gladdened the hearts of those who had the Darshan of the rising suns. At the very touch of the master, at a word of supreme wisdom from his lips, at the omnipotent Sankalpa of Lord Siva's universal heart...their life-spark had burst into a conflagration of immortality, burning away at once the finite, little self clothed by the five sheaths, and limited by the phenomena. Sacred thread and tuft of hair consigned to the Ganges, they shone in garments presented to them by Guru Siva as the four great Sanatkumaras in the presence of Dakshinamurthy. The shower of rain turned the barren landscape of Himalayas, scorched by the heat of summer, into a rich bed of greenery. Ganga Matha roared along OM OM OM blessing the children of Her Lord. The rising sun smiled, happy to witness the renunciation of the four great spiritual giants. The great Rishis and the Brahma Vidya Gurus who (naturally on the Guru Purnima day) joyously greeted the dawn of the day, were infinitely pleased that a Blessed Four had joined their group to carry the banner of Wisdom Service Renunciation.

Siva beamed with joy. 'A select group,' he said. And, added: 'Kings, Prime Ministers and millionaires should come and embrace Sanyas. They should stay here for some days: listen to Krishnanandaji's Vedanta lectures, do Akhanda Kirtan, listen to the chanting of the Rudram and Chamakam in the temple, take Bhiksha of roti and dhal from the kitchen, serve lepers at the dispensary and attend Satsang at night and there listen to the study of Upanishads, etc. One man's heart will soon be changed: he will embrace Sanyas. Others will soon follow.'

Siva is a Prophet. His vision is not impaired by time or space. What he has said today, the most auspicious day of the year, will surely come to pass soon. India will be spiritually ruled by Sanyasins very soon.

There is another difference. There is a real link between the first laconic expression and the second one. The Select Group who got themselves initiated today are indeed Kings, Premiers and leaders of men. Very soon they will lead the leaders, rule the kings, and will be primates guiding premiers, at whose feet millionaires will shed their vanity of wealth and bowl. Such is the glory of renunciation.

YOUR SPIRITUAL WORTH?

A very high dignitary has come. Siva seated him in the office, entertained him with sweets and tea, gave him some books and quietly left him and his party there and walked off, without even putting on his shoes and taking the umbrella. One would run about and dance around these people, for their material worth.

Pannalalji's Gurudev is his God. He worships his picture. He repeats his name. His faith in Siva no one can excel. He is not very rich. But at a single mention of any of the Ashram needs he would sacrifice his all to fulfil. He quietly whispered into my ears: 'Write to the Lahore Press. As soon as the book, 'All About Hinduism' is ready I shall pay for the entire consignment and take delivery. I have just now got some money, by Gurudev's grace. I shall spend it all on this book.' He is the man who increased his monthly donation to the Ashram when his salary was cut. And, he firmly believes that all his material prosperity and spiritual advance he owes to Siva's grace.

The great official party was proceeding towards the Ganges Ghat for a boat to cross the river. Siva asked them: 'You cannot walk on the water?'

Meaning: renounce the vanity born of your high official position. Treat your servants and subordinates with more consideration. You can command them to obey: but can you command the Ganga?

T.V. PURUSHOTTHAM

Yet, all millionaires are not arrogant, and to those who have a spiritual worth Siva runs unasked. This is the sign of God. T.V. Purushottham, a millionaire of Madras, had expressed a desire to be initiated by Siva into the Ishta Mantra. He is old and is unable to walk. Siva arranged for the Puja in connection with the initiation to be done in P.'s own room in the Ashram. Siva, too, went to the Kutir in which P. was lodged and performed the Diksha. Look at this: Guru condescending to go to the disciple and initiating him. If you have a spiritual thirst Siva is your own....and he is ever eager to serve you.

During the entire day hundreds of devotees prostrated before him and worshipped him. Siva, too, offered flowers to them and worshipped them always uttering 'Sahasra Sheersha Purushah'. This is Virat worship. This is the sign of a sage of Self-realisation. He sees That everywhere. To Siva the entire world is his own Form. His own manifestation—the Virat.

12TH JULY, 1949

WHO IS A SAINT?

We saw how Siva arranged for the Mantra Diksha of Sri T.V.P., the aged devotee, and himself went to the disciple's room to initiate him.

P. wanted to attend the night Satsang in Siva's Kutir. And, at night he took a wearisome few steps from his Kutir to Siva's across the road, on two human crutches provided by Siva. He cannot sit on the ground. It is physically impossible. Siva noticed this and at once provided a chair for him, whereas he himself sat on the ground along with the other Satsangees. Siva is a strict disciplinarian and would sweetly and kindly train even Europeans to sit cross-legged whenever they happened to attend the Satsang. But, where the real need arises, the one supreme importance given to the fulfilment of the pious wish of the devotee swallows all other minor observances.

P. had almost reached the verandah where the Satsang is held with his shoes on before his son could remind him of the custom to leave the shoes at the threshold. P. tried to turn back, apologetically. Siva perceived the situation at once.

'No, no. It is perfectly all right. Come on: sit down on the chair. You can have the shoes on. Why, all of us have this filthy 'shoe' all over the body and we take it with us wherever we go.'

P.'s tears of joy rained gratitude that filled his heart to overflowing.

As P. left the Kutir after the Satsang, he was filled with a strange sublime emotion, a queer revelation.

He said: "This Swamiji is a real saint. I have never met the like of him ever before in my life, even though I have met great spiritually advanced persons. How kind he is. I had the idea that Swami X was a big saint. But, would he ever have taken all this trouble to initiate me in my own Kutir? Did he ever give me so many books, and so freely, to read? He attends to my physical needs as though he is my own mother. He selects books for me and gives them to me for my study, free. He places a chair for me to sit while he sits on the ground. And, most of all, imagine the wit and wisdom with which he permitted me to enter the Satsang with shoes on. What a mind of wisdom he is! He compares the skin on our body to the shoe. What a perfect simplicity of truth. How much Vairagya this one idea creates in our mind. People would give up adorning this skin and beautifying it with ornaments and cosmetics if they know how this man-of-God looks upon it: as a mere shoe. This man is a saint. No one else that breathes on this earth today. I can't compare Swami R....or for that matter anyone I have seen, and I have seen quite a lot of them, with this child-like saint who is God Himself.'

20TH JULY, 1949

SERVICE BESTOWS MOKSHA ON YOU

Srimathi Bhagavathi Devi, wife of Rai Saheb Ram Prasadji of Delhi, has 'donated' a well on the bank of the Ganges for the use of the population of Muni-ki-reti during the rainy season when Ganges-water gets too muddy to be used for drinking purposes. Sri Swami Sankaranandaji of Ram Ashram had sponsored the move and had supervised the construction work also. The well is now ready. Sri S. had arranged for a Kirtan to be held in the Ram Ashram last evening to celebrate the opening of the well for public use. Siva graced the function with his august presence, with his disciples. His inspiring Kirtan-Dhwanis thrilled everyone present.

This morning Siva performed the actually opening ceremony of the well. He drew the first bucket of water with his own holy hands and distributed Prasad to those who had assembled there. During the course of this function, Siva said:

'Srimathi Bhagaathi Devi and Rai Saheb Ram Prasadji, as also Sri Swami Sankaranandaji have earned the gratitude of us all and of the people of the entire locality by this great humanitarian service. Now people will get crystal-clear

water even during the rainy season. Diseases will be averted. They have earned the love of the Sadhus and pilgrims, too.

'Service purifies the heart and makes it fit for the reception of divine light. Not only that, service bestows Mukti on you. Service motivated by desires obtains heaven for you: and after the merits are exhausted in heavenly enjoyments, the Jiva returns again to this mortal earth to undergo pain and pleasure, and to strive for Moksha. Selfless service, on the other hand, releases the soul from transmigration. From here the Jiva goes to Brahma Loka and there enjoys unending bliss. It attains Krama Mukti. At the end of the present Kalpa, the Jiva gets its final release or Moksha. There is no return to this mortal plane, to this world of pains and sorrows, to this burning hell-fire of Samsara, for the Nishkamya Karma Yogi. It is verily Moksha here and now: release from birth and death here and now. Therefore, serve selflessly and free yourself.

25TH JULY, 1949

PATRIOTISM: FIRST STEP IN VEDANTA

The death anniversary of Suman, one of the foremost patriotic leaders of Tehri-Garhwal, was observed in Muni-ki-reti: and, as usual, the venue was the Ashram itself, and the chairman, the soul of Sivanandanagar, Siva himself.

Kirtan was conducted and there were a few speeches and songs in praise of the heroic Suman by men of the locality.

Siva's Pranava-Nada reached out to Suman in the other world and gladdened his heart. And, Siva said:

'Patriotism is the first step in the ladder of Vedanta. It is only when you annihilate narrow selfishness that you are fit to learn Vedantic Truths and to meditate on the Supreme Self. Zeal for service and emancipation of the nation expands the heart, kills the narrow selfish instinct, and in a way attunes man to the Divine Will. The Lord's Will always brings good to the whole world. The patriot yearns for the good of the nation to which he belongs. Soon he will go beyond this, too, and yearn and work for the good of mankind the entire creation: he will then have Liberation.'

'One of the surest distinguishing marks of a Vedantin is his fearlessness, bravery, daring. So long as there is the least trace of selfishness, man cannot have fearlessness. When you realise that you represent a Cause and not any egoistic desire, you acquire the bravery which laughs at death. The Cause is not subject to the limitations to which this body is: the Cause survives this body: when you identify yourself with the body, there is conquest of death itself. Be you all brave and fearless like Suman, the hero whose anniversary of death we observe today. Strive, strive every moment to become like him. You can.'

'We pray for the peace of the departed soul of Suman who died a martyr's death, fighting for the cause of the nation's freedom. In reality, there is no need for this prayer. Suman has attained the Veera Swarga: no more is there a return for him. When selfish, egoistic desires have been annihilated the Jiva does not have to

transmigrate. From Veera Swarga or Brahma Loka, the Jiva will have Krama Mukti: there is no return to this world of joys and sorrows.'

'Therefore, this prayer-gathering is in reality intended to remind us all of Suman's life of complete dedication, and to inspire in you all that selflessness and that devotion which filled Suman.'

'You should also celebrate his birthday every year. You should organise his admirers and try to bring out a short biography of Suman's life. This will provide enduring incentive to the young men of all times to follow the footsteps of their leader.'

PERENNIAL ZEAL FROM WITHIN

A young Ashramite who was working hard and with great zeal had gradually grown melancholy and unwilling to work for want of enthusiasm. Siva heard of this and quickly remarked:

'How long can anyone buttress another's enthusiasm? Each worker will have to draw his own inspiration from within and keep the fire of his zeal ever alive and bright. We are all engaged in the service of humanity, in the practice of Karma Yoga. We serve ourselves through such service: we purify ourselves and we will attain Moksha through service. If we grow Tamasic, no one except we ourselves would be the losers.

'The work Sri X was doing will now be taken up by others. Work will go on. But his talents will get blunted out of disuse. I am ever-ready to develop everyone's talents at any cost. I always encourage young people with talents and bring out their hidden talents. If you all lend yourselves to that treatment then you will all become world famous. If you refuse to adapt yourselves to circumstances and adjust your ways and thus deprive yourselves of the opportunity to grow, then you can't blame anyone except yourselves for your stagnation.'

Inspiring words, these: coming as they do from one whose own life is a more eloquent illustration of this philosophy, they have a great force. We who live under the shelter of his lotus feet, in his protecting care, and his ever-appreciative heart, cannot even imagine that gigantic will that resolutely kept the flame of zeal for service of humanity alive in Siva during his Swarg Ashram days, especially, and that conquered every kind of privation and suffering, and, after extracting their deadly teeth through Vichara and an abiding spiritual yearning, used their very hide for ascending to the summit of God-realisation.



AUGUST, 1949

5TH AUGUST, 1949

ANANDA KUTIR, EIGHTH WONDER OF THE WORLD

For,....said Sri Swami Satyatmanandaji of Tulsi Mutt, during his conversation with Siva on the Viswanath Ghat this evening:

'You have captured here several Vibhutis of the Lord. He is Himalayas among mountains: you have Him here towering all round. You are living at His feet. He is Ganges among rivers: and here He is perennially flowing alongside the Ashram, and eternally humming the Pranava: and this Pranava is also He Himself. The blue expanse of the Akasa ever reminds us of the Infinite. The resplendent sun which is His Vibhuti shines in all His glory on the Ashram without any obstruction whatsoever: so does the Moon, another Vibhuti. You have installed Lord Vishnu and Sri Sankara in our temple and the Pratishta of this temple you have performed in the divine month, Margasirsha. The temple of Siva is in the midst of a bael-forest where Siva loves to dwell. In the Ashram there is a continuous Japa of the Maha Mantra—in that Japa Yajna He is manifest. The crowning glory is that you have enshrined here the Adhyatma Vidya which is His manifestation: and from your Ashram issues a perennial current of wisdom of the highest kind. Tejas and Satwa shine on your countenance: the very rapidity with which the Ashram has grown indicates that you have Java (Victory) as a part of your being the result of ceaseless endeavour which is also His aspect. Swamiji, you are silent. This Mouna, too, reminds me of His Vibhuti: you are a Jnani and your Janana, too, is He Himself!

'All the Vibhutis of the Lord are here. See: even the perceptible Vibhutis are so many. Who knows how many subtle Vibhutis there are here? This indeed is the Eighth Wonder of the World.'

7TH AUGUST, 1949

SECRET OF SUCCESS

A few of us were sitting on the floor of the D.J. Hall despatching Birthday invitations. Siva peeped in: and, as though on second thought, walked into the Hall and greeted us: 'Tat Twam Asi.'

We saluted him silently.

'How many have you despatched so far?'

'Nearly a thousand, Swamiji.'

'This year it has not been done scientifically!' This nearly startled us. 'The invitations should reach the people in the first week of the month. The ground should have been prepared previously, by the despatch of leaflets and pamphlets. The average householder is busy nowadays with his own bread-winning activities.'

He needs constant reminders, constant encouragements, and constant opportunities should be offered to him at his door for his evolution. We should not sit back on the chair and think 'If he has a charitable temperament, let him find out ways and means.' No: we should voluntarily place before him opportunities of doing charity. And that, too, in a scientific manner. If the invitations reach the people in the first week, many would avail themselves of the opportunity to perform charity. If it goes late, they might have spent the money and thus an opportunity would be lost.

'And, by this scientific approach the institution also will grow. Why do we want the institution to grow? Not for our own glorification. But, for the service of humanity only. Such should be the attitude of everyone of you. Then you will take greater interest in work, for with the change of mental attitude the work becomes a Sadhana and the surest way to purify yourself and attain Self-realisation.'

With the blessing, Siva left us to resume his work. After a few minutes he came back with a few addressed copies of 'The Divine Life' and his 'Bible'—the huge book in which he notes down addresses of people and associations of every description.

'Please post this,' he gave the copies of the magazine. Here are some of the addresses on the wrappers, written in Siva's own hand:

1. The Rawal Saheb, Badrinath.
2. The Officer-in-charge, Free Dispensary, Badrinath.
3. The Post Master, Badrinath.
4. The Secretary, Badrinath Temple Committee. Badrinath.
5. Free Reading Room, Badrinath.

You and I will not do this. None of these people have asked for the Magazine: and there is no knowing whether such addresses exist at all. Especially the address 'The Officer-in-charge, Free Dispensary, Badrinath', beat my intelligence.

'This also, Swamiji?' I asked.

'Oh yes, yes: why? You suspect that there may not be any such person in Badrinath. I have a faint idea that there is a free dispensary or some such thing for Yattris in Badrinath. But, don't worry about the exact name and all that. It must reach someone. And, that Some One will be benefited.'

Siva has lived up to this precept—to the very letter and spirit. Recently a stranger walked into the Ashram, stayed there for a couple of days and requested Siva's permission to despatch a few hundred packets of books, etc. to high officials, Ministers, business men and Ambassadors. I had known a few of these 'great' personalities: and I was sure that most of them will not look at spiritual books. Yet, the visitor was boisterous in his enthusiasm: and Siva was even more! When it was announced that nearly Rs. 800 worth of books had been sent free, Siva's face showed supreme satisfaction. Here was an opportunity of sending a book free to one man (some man), one prospective Sadhaka (in this birth or the next!), and Siva would never let it slip. Money? It will come. Books? No, they never go to

waste: someone must read them: and we will bring out new editions! When such is the attitude, I think failure would flee before his undertakings.

WHAT IS INDIVIDUAL SADHANA?

In the office, Siva's gaze fell on Rajan.

'Oh, Rajan, you do not attend either the morning class or the evening Satsang? You are not feeling well?'

'I am all right, Swamiji. But, I do Japa and meditation in my room. I never waste a single moment. I am always engaged morning and evening in my personal Sadhana.'

'No, no. It should not make you neglect attending morning and evening classes. In what way is this personal Sadhana superior to common meditation, Japa and study? You will learn many new things from the morning lectures. Your mind will be alert. People generally imagine that they can meditate in seclusion. Very few can. Do not delude yourself with wrong notions. I have seen what sort of individual Sadhana people do. They only sleep. You will get up at 4 in the morning and so some vigorous Japa for a few minutes. Later, you will slightly relax....and you will only know when the tea bell rings, at 7 a.m. Who prevents you from doing your Japa? Even during your work you can do Japa. If you cut short your gossiping programmes, you can do a lot of Sadhana. Please attend the morning and evening classes hereafter.'

12TH AUGUST, 1949

THE BOUNDARIES OF DIVINE LIFE

All was quiet in the office: everyone, including Siva, intent on the work on hand.

Quietly, a thick, short, young and toothless youth stepped in, clad in full Khadi. It was Panikker.

And, quietly, he touched Siva's feet and sprinkled the dust on the crown of his head, worshipped the feet with a 100-rupee note and sat down on the bench.

This has been a routine with him for a few days past.

'Are you married?' queried Siva.

'No, Swamiji, I came across your writings much too early in life to commit that error. I have remained single: but you have always been with me.'

'But, you never wrote to me.'

'Swamiji, my only desire was to have your Darshan. I never wrote to you. But the letters of your name I had inscribed on the tablet of my heart. I do not say that I have not had my struggles: but faith in you has always been my staff and difficulties have melted away the moment I thought of you.'

Siva was by this time engrossed in his letters. As Panikker got up to leave, Siva quietly picked up two Prasad packets from the table and handed him. After touching Siva's feet in reverence again P. left.

And, perhaps, there are millions like him, who have taken Siva as their Guru and God, worship him and lead the divine life, but whom the Society might not have known at all. Where are the boundaries of Divine Life, of Siva's influence? The Society's records cannot show.

THE AUTOGRAPH THAT SAVED

It seems we are in for a good treat today. Krishnayya enters the Hall the moment P. left it. Siva made the usual enquiries.

'Swamiji, my health is completely all right now. Two months ago I was laid up with typhoid. My condition was very bad. It almost looked that I could live only for some days more. A parcel arrived from here. The Doctor had forbidden me to read. But, I asked my people to let me see what it was. Unwilling to refuse my request, they showed me....and it was a book by you. I took it in my hand, pressed it to my eyes and head, and opened it. My eyes rested for a few minutes on your autograph and blessings. I did not read the book then: I could not. But that very moment there was a turn for the better in my health. And, I am here today. It is only your blessing that has enabled me to fulfil my great ambition in life—to have your Darshan.'

SILVER SANDALS FOR THEE

Even while K. was talking, a Sadhu had come into the office, holding in his hands a pair of silver-plated sandals of the orthodox type. He placed them near Siva's feet and sat down gazing on Siva's lotus feet in silence.

Siva turned to him: 'Where from do you come, Swamiji Maharaj?'

'Bhagavan, I have come from Banaras. I am in a Mutt there. I had an intense desire to take Sanyas. A Grihastha devotee in Banaras with whom I was living performed Viraja Homa for me. Then he asked me to go to you for Diksha and Upadesha.

'You will stay here for some days?'

'If I have your commands, Swamiji, I would like to leave tomorrow morning after Diksha?'

'Come, then: I will initiate you now itself.'

'Bhagavan: please place your lotus-feet on these sandals. These will be my refuge and protection throughout my life. They will represent you for me, even as Rama's sandals represented Him for Bharata.' Siva stood for a few moments on the silver sandals, uttering 'Sivoham' 'Soham' 'Satchidananda Swarupoham'.

Then both of them left the Hall. Siva took him straight to the Ganges Ghat and initiated him into the holy order of Sanyasa.

13TH AUGUST, 1949

SADHANA FOR EVERY MAN

A Telugu couple were on pilgrimage. They came into the office, sat at Siva's feet for some time and then while departing, requested Siva for some 'Upadesh'.

Siva turned to the man: 'Do Japa, Kirtan, and Dhyana in Brahmanuhurth. Study Gita daily. Observe Mouna for at least two hours. Fast on Ekadashi. Be charitable. Above all: see God in everyone. Whatever you see and touch is God alone. If you have this Bhavana always you will get over all evils—Kama, Krodha, etc.,—you will develop a compassionate heart and you will attain Moksha soon.'

SADHANA FOR EVERY WOMAN

And, the lady came up for Upadesh. Siva told her:

'Do Japa, Kirtan and Dhyana also. Serve your husband. Bring up your children in a saintly way and mould their character properly. Study Gita. Observe Ekadashi Vrata. Do not quarrel with anyone.' At the last remark, everyone began to laugh. And, Siva added: 'Ladies cannot remain without quarrelling, I think! Then, gradually reduce the number of quarrels.'

STAY WHERE YOU ARE

R.C. Joshi had an offer from a Naturopathic Institute of an appointment as Private Secretary to the Chief there. He was already the Assistant Traffic Superintendent in the O.T. Railway. Siva asked him to recount all the privileges he enjoyed in the Railway.

'It is sheer folly to give up this and jump to the Naturopathic Institute. Stay where you are. God knows which place is best suited to you. You are enjoying princely privileges in the Railway and you have the greatest opportunity of doing intense spiritual Sadhana. You will shine as a high railway official soon, as you are still very young. The first month's salary on promotion as District Traffic Superintendent you should send here.'

On learning that he has to send the major portion of his salary to his brothers, etc., Siva remarked: 'I am more than your brother. I see that not a pie that you give is spent in wasteful channels. Every bit goes to the spread of knowledge—a divine service. When the time comes for you to leave this body, you will have the supreme satisfaction that you have done something for a divine cause: will your brothers help you in any way at that time?'

NO LOVE FOR DONATIONS

Lest the read should entertain the false notion that Siva is hankering after money and that was the motive behind instructing J. to stay where he is, I should like to add here a conversation that took place nearly five years ago when I had come to Ananda Kutir to attend the winter Sadhana Week.

Siva asked me to talk in the Bhajan during one of the gatherings. I explained how during my official career as a servant of the Government of India....

Siva, a member of the audience, at once interrupted—'But you are drawing a Deputy Collector's salary.'

I have derived peace and inspiration from Siva's books, letters, and literature, and how the seven days' stay at His Abode had given me all the strength that would keep me strong—physically, mentally and spiritually—till I got back to Ananda Kutir.

On the parting day, I was coming down the hill with Siva, and as I mentioned earlier in this volume, casually remarked: 'How I wish, Swamiji, I could stay here itself.' The response of the sage was immediate: 'Who asked you to go?' etc.

If he had any thought about the donation I could afford to send to the Society, with no one but myself to depend on me, he would never have said that: and I would not be here today. My next visit to Ananda Kutir very soon after this was as a renunciate.

THOU ART BEYOND THESE!

'Go and take food. The bell has gone,' said Siva to Swaminathan of New Delhi, who had come to attend the Janmashtami celebrations.

'I shall take food later on, Swamiji. I take only rice and curds. I have given up salt, tamarind and chillies.'

'These are thoughtless actions. You will only waste away your body and your energy. You won't have strength to do any Sadhana. Go and take Sambhar today.' (Sambhar is a South India preparation containing all the three!)

'That will upset my system, Swamiji.'

'What YOU have given up, YOU can take, easily. Start taking everything, then.'

S. nodded. Perhaps he had understood the deepest significance of this aphoristic utterance (Sutra). You give up: you take up: you enjoy: you suffer, etc. Mark that in all these cases YOU are the same. That, in essence, is the teaching of the Upanishad: Tat Twam Asi. Not any of these changing conditions which constitute YOUR play. You are the Player, quite independent of the Play. You took on the ignorance which produced the Samsara: at any moment You can discard it and re-assume Your Satchidananda Swaroopa.'

ACTION, NOT MERE WORD, WILL SATISFY ME

Then, Siva turned to me: 'I have asked that Swamiji from Banaras to stay on. He is a very learned Sanyasin. Yourself, Premanandaji and a couple of other inmates, should study Sanskrit under him. You should complete the Prasthanatraya at least before he leaves the place.'

'Yes, Swamiji,' was my habitual reply.

'Mere saying 'Yes, Swamiji' will not do. You should DO so. For a few days you will be vigorous: then the class will stop!'

18TH AUGUST, 1949

APPLIED GUNATRAYA VIBHAGA

Sri Venkata Krishnayya is leaving today. He prostrated at Siva's feet and promised to open a branch of the Society at his place, and to convert his private collection of about 800 spiritual books into a public library under the auspices of the Divine Life Society. He said: 'Even now I am lending books to those who ask for them.'

'That is the Rajasic type. When you open the Divine Life Library, you should convert it into a Satvic one. You should be aggressive in your thirst for the dissemination of spiritual knowledge. Even if one is disinclined to read them, you should thrust the books in their hands and let the knowledge spread.'

Everyone was amused at this interesting application of a great truth. Sri K. asked: 'Swamiji, I shall certainly try to follow what you have said. But, tell me the classification and definition once again. I will note it down.'

'The Satvic Branch will seek out Sadhaks and help them: seek out worldly-minded men and through love and persuasion redirect their steps towards God. The Rajasic Branch will clear the doubts of those who approach it. But, the Tamasic Branch will neglect even this. Even if a Sadhaka knocks at its door, there will be no response.'

'To which category of Yoga Teacher do you belong?' asked Siva, turning to Vishnudevanandaji.

V. remained silent and introspective.

'If you go to the roof of everyone, wake him up and teach him Asans, you are Satvic Teacher. If you merely teach the man who asks you for it, you are Rajasic. If you don't do even that, you are Tamasic.'

Ramamurthy relieved V. by giving the reply: 'Swamiji, he is of the Rajasic type with a leaning towards the Satvic. Once he knows that we are interested in Hatha Yoga or Vayubhakshana, he would come to our room every day and see to it that we are regular in our practice.'

Siva appreciated this diagnosis!

SECRET OF SERVICE—MENTAL ALERTNESS

'Oh, Viswanathji, did you give that visitor from Nagpur curd with his food?'

'No, Swamiji: curd was not available: therefore, I gave him good buttermilk.'

Siva smiled, as he always does when he has something startling to say. 'If you want to be a Karma Yogi, you should have an alert mind. You should be ever-ready to improvise. I will teach you a good method of preparing curd within a few minutes. Take some milk and mix some lemon juice or citric acid, add some sugar or salt. There you are! You can't make out how it was made.'

NIP IT IN THE BUD

Siva noticed that I was turning the trunk also in an effort to turn the head. 'What has happened?' Stiff-neck! Treat it immediately. Vishnuji, please give him hot fomentation. Nip it in the bud.'

Similar is Siva's spiritual teaching also. Nip it in the bud. When you have a stiff-neck (arrogance and other evils) give the good hot fomentation of S.B. 40 (Divine Injection Shoe Beating 40 times) and nip it in the bud. If you allow it to grow in you, you will be permanently deformed. You will never be able to bend.

CARE OF CHILDREN

The dinner bell had gone and Ramamurthy went to the kitchen and brought up his Bhiksha. Siva noticed the tiffin-box and surmised that that contained R's food. He asked R. to show him what he was eating. 'Only so little? You, too, have a baby stomach? Why do you carry it? Why not take it here itself?'

'Swamiji, if I take food now, I immediately feel heavy and can't do any work for about an hour afterwards. Therefore, I take my food at about 1 p.m.'

'That won't do. You are simply ruining your health. You should not eat stale food. Hot, hot! Eat plenty and while the food is hot: then sleep if your body needs rest. The body will adjust itself to all sorts of your whims and fancies: but in course of time, it will break down. Take proper care of your health.'

28TH AUGUST, 1949

BACK TO THE LORD'S NAME

After straying away into the folds of pseudo-Gurus, whose glittering words allure the credulous seeker away from his path to the Goal in an astonishingly short period of time, Sri Bhirud has today rejoined Siva's divine life fold! Today he writes:

Dear Swamiji,

OM Namah Sivaya.

Salutations and prostrations. I am really very much thankful to you for the kind and loving care that you take of me.

I am very glad to let you know today that the clouds of misunderstanding have already begun melting. I am much more open to you now than I was some months ago. May God bless me with clear understanding and intuition and help me to follow the path of spirituality with more vigour and zeal.

OM Nama Sivaya is really a gem. The repetition of this Mantra at once changes the vibrations of all our bodies and brings up harmony in its train.

Siva at once welcomes him back to the divine life fold. Siva's super-rational love at once envelops the aspirant. It encourages him. It lightens the contrite heart

and lessens the agony of separation. Once again, Siva's touch of love enlivens the Sadhaka, infuses joy and peace into him and kindles the fire of love of God and devotion to His name.

29TH AUGUST, 1949

LEARN TO BEHAVE

A high official has come. He was talking to Siva in the office. In the meantime, the Ashramites were busy arranging for the visitor's entertainment. And, the officer was chatting with Siva between sips of tea.

'Swamiji, would you mind if I smoke?'

'Oh, no: certainly you can smoke.'

The officer lit a cigarette and remarked, happily: 'Swamiji, you are indeed very catholic. I have visited several other Ashrams where they would positively prohibit one from smoking inside their premises. They are all narrow-minded.'

Siva merely smiled.

After the officer had left, he remarked: 'If I do not restrain them or behave unpleasantly towards them: if I permit them to do what they please, then I am catholic. What a fine mentality this is!'

'A man should learn to behave as he should, not as he likes. That is the secret of success and popularity. It is the mark of culture. You would then achieve control over your senses, too. If, for instance, this officer had the good sense to refrain from smoking while he was on the bank of the Ganges, he would certainly have gained a good spiritual Samskara: he would have obtained a certain amount of control over his senses, and developed his Will to a certain extent. But, the evil habit is allowed to get the better of man. He has become slave to the evil habit.'

BRIGADIER YADU NATH SING

'Look at Yadu Nath Sing,' continued Siva. Brig. Yadu Nath Sing has come to the Ashram for a couple of days' quiet Sadhana on the Ganges' bank.

'He does not smoke: he does not touch liquor. That is why he has become highly popular in the Army. There is Major-General Sharma. And, Major-General Parameswaran Pillai—they are all saintly personalities, though they occupy very high positions.'

MILITARY TRAINING: BEST FOR SADHANA

'I think soldiers are eminently suited for obtaining Atma-Sakshatkara. The moment they enrol in the Army, they set aside their very life as a mere nothing, and place DUTY as their idea. They are ever-ready to give up their lives. Who will do that? None of these big officers.'

'They have courage—one of the foremost qualities a Sadhaka should possess. Lord Krishna, too, has placed this Abhayam first in His list of Daivi Sampath. What can a weakling achieve? One might pose to be a big Sadhaka: he might

repeat 'Aham Brahma Asmi' all the twenty-four hours. But, at night, if a rat runs near his bed, he will shiver with fright! What Atma-Sakshatkara will he get?'

'And, the Military Schools train the boys to be punctual, to be truthful, to be honest and to develop the spirit of service. The British have these qualities in abundance. Doon School is today famous for its best training of students. Look at Mani, that little boy who came here the other day. A B.A. or an M.A. cannot stand before him in general knowledge or boldness or sharpness of intellect. That is how he has been trained. That is why parents long to get their sons trained in such schools even though they have to pay heavy bills. The British might have gone away from India. But they have left some very laudable tradition by establishing such school in India. The majority of Englishmen possess such noble qualities. They know the value of time. They know the value of the Word—they stick to their promise. They work sincerely. They would not evade. Some Indians are crooked, cunning and evasive. If they undertake to work, they would find out ways and means of evading it: if they have to work for eight hours, they would be taking their time easy, going for tea every hour, for smoking every half-hour, and chit-chatting most of the time. But, an Englishman would work when he works and play while he may play. Such training the pupils got in schools like the Doon School. They turn out courageous, truthful, honest and ideal citizens. Indian Schools also should take a lesson from them. The schools should take more interest in the up-bringing of the boys than they do now. The ordinary school in India today might charge very little by way of tuition fees: but it takes as little interest in the boy's welfare. The boy goes to the school when he likes, develops every kind of evil habit under the very nose of the masters: and it is small wonder that our schools and college turn out citizens who lower the moral standard of the nation.'

So saying, Siva was coming near the Post Office when he noticed a lot of rubbish stored up in a corner just outside the Post Office. A broken chair, several gunny-bags, waste paper and what-not.

'Ohji, what a beautiful way of maintaining the Ashram. Please have it cleaned properly. (Turning to us) He is a Vedantin. Sarvam Khalvidam Brahman—is his motto. Then, why clean this rubbish? That should not be the attitude. Only if we keep our inside and our surroundings clean, will the real meaning of Sarvam Khalvidam Brahman reflect in our Antahkarana.'

30TH AUGUST, 1949

AN EXAMPLE FOR ARMY GENERALS

Brig. Yadu Nath Sing is very punctual and regular with his meditation, Swadhyaya, etc. He eats with everyone in the Ashram. In fact, he leads such a simple life of Sadhana while at the Ashram that Swami D. once asked him (thinking that he might be a sepoy) what his pay was: and nearly jumped off his feet, when he was told coolly by the Brig., 'Three thousand'. The Brig. is a lover of discipline and he conforms to Ashram discipline while he is there.

He admired Siva for the very same quality. 'Swamiji, you seem to be the first to come in the morning and even classes, and you are very regular at the office, too.'

'Yes, that is most essential. Unless we set an example we cannot expect others to be punctual with their daily programme, and zealous in their work and Sadhana. If the Brig. sits comfortably on a sofa in his camp and merely orders about his battalion, the war would be lost. On the other hand, if he himself leads the army on the battle-front and himself mingles with the soldiers of his battalion, then the effect will be miraculous: every soldier would fight with fanatic enthusiasm and zeal and victory would be assured. Everywhere it is the same rule. The leader should be an all-round ideal: and his exemplary character and conduct should inspire everyone to follow him.'



SEPTEMBER, 1949

5TH SEPTEMBER, 1949

SERVICE AND MEDITATION

A short discourse by Siva in the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University class was a thriller in the morning.

‘There are two methods of getting rid of evil Vrittis and acquiring virtues. One is to meditate on the Lord or the Atma. The Lord or the Atma is the very source of all virtues: and meditation on Him is sure to rouse those virtues in you. Evil or negative Vrittis can be overcome by this method. But, this method is only for a very advanced Sadhaka who can really meditate on the Lord with great concentration of the mind.

‘That needs continued practice for a long time and great Vairagya. Such advanced Sadhaks can meditate for a long time at a stretch. You will know that they are advanced Sadhaks when you approach them—by the lustre of their eyes, by their calm and serene disposition, by their expression of joy and by the magnetic aura that surrounds them. You cannot bring about these without much prolonged Sadhana.’

‘If a beginner, on the other hand, says ‘I am meditating for five hours’, he is deceiving himself and others, too. He is either building castles in the air, or converting his mind into the devil’s workshop. For him there is the method of service.’

‘Selfless service also can eradicate the evil Vrittis in you and enable you to develop virtues. This is the easier method: and, for a neophyte the surer one, too. You are at once conscious of the process of transformation. You consciously develop the virtues and curb the evils. By serving the sick you develop compassion: by the innumerable forms of selfless service you acquire all the virtues that are the very foundation of advanced Sadhana.’

‘Even a neophyte should not give up meditation on this score. Meditate for half an hour. Then, go out and serve. Try to negate the ego: try to get rid of evil qualities: try to develop virtues. Again, meditate for half an hour: now, the evils which you have to conquer will automatically present themselves to you—and conquest would be easy through Vichar and Viveka.’

‘Thus, for along time the two—selfless service and the other through meditation, and this two-fold method of developing virtues will bear fruit very quickly and you will all become Jivanmuktas in this very birth.’

MIRACULOUS RELIEF

Batra, a Punjabi refugee teacher, related the following experience of his:

‘Swamiji, I was employed as a teacher in one of the refugee camps. The headmaster ill-treated me very much. He was jealous of me. Once he tried to implicate me in the wrong admission of a student in the school. I was very sore at

heart. I did not know what to do. I did not get sleep that night. At about 12 midnight I sat up in my bed and determined to meditate on your Holiness for a solution. Very soon I saw a brilliant flash of light: in that I saw you, Swamiji. It was very, very clear. And, you commanded me to tender my resignation of the job. I offered my resignation. The matter somehow went up to the Secretary and management of the school. They would not accept the resignation: I explained the whole thing to them. They at once understood me: I was absolved of responsibility in the case, and the headmaster, too, was at once transferred to another school.'

PODDAR AND GOENKA

The mansion on the other side of the Ganges attracted the attention of a visiting family. Siva explained:

'That is the Satsang Hall of the Gita Press, Gorakhpur. Jayadaya Goenkaji of the Gita Press comes here every year during the summer and holds a Satsang which is attended by many people. He has excellent arrangements for families and devotees intending to stay there.'

'He and Sri Hanuman Prasad Poddar are the very soul of the Gita Press. You might have heard about 'Kalyan' and 'Kalyana Kalpataru', the two magazines—one in Hindi and the other in English, conducted by the Gita Press. And, they have published very many wonderful editions of the Gita: Upanishads, Ramayan, etc. They have rendered great service to the cause of dissemination of spiritual knowledge.'

'Jayadayaji is a great devotee of the Lord. Though he and Poddarji are in white clothes, they ought to be considered Sanyasins only. They are deemed the Gurus of the Marwari community. They are held in high esteem by the Marwaris. All the twenty-four hours of the day, these high-souled persons engage themselves in selfless service to humanity and in Hari Bhajan.'

'They are an ideal which every householder should try to keep before him. Their exemplary life should be an eye-opener to everyone. You, too, can and should become like them. Devote yourself in service and Hari Bhajan. Never waste a single moment of the day in useless pursuits.'

'TURN THE OTHER CHEEK'

A visitor has brought his young son to see Siva. They live in Bombay. This man had curious notions about Yoga and Sanyasa that he would always criticise Siva and his activities! Siva knew this, too. But, this knowledge only endeared him all the more to Siva. Such is Siva's overpowering 'bind' love!

* * * *

Today the gentleman's son is a criminal. The boy bolted away with a lot of money from his relative's house. The boy is barely fifteen: and the father did not know what to do with him.

* * * *

Without a moment's hesitation, Siva offered his solution. He talked to the boy for over an hour on ethics and morality, about the glory of earning one's living by honest sweat of the brow. The boy was completely changed. He begged Siva's pardon: and he promised both to Siva and his own father that he would never indulge in theft and pilfering ever after in his life. Some other visitors thought that the boy should be brought to books and then an application should be made to the Magistrate to have the boy sent to a reformatory. Siva counselled as follows:

'If you take the case to the Court, then all of you, including the ladies of the house, will have to appear as witnesses. It is a shameful thing for a mother or a sister to appear in a court against her own son or brother. If the boy is convicted, then the impression would do him great harm: a positive theft-Samskara will be formed in his mind. And, even if he is put through the Reformatory it will be very difficult to reform him. The boys of the reformatory are also of the same class. Their association might even worsen his character. Further, if the Magistrate does not agree to send him to the reformatory, but sends him to the jail, then the boy's career is doomed.

'Pardon him. Treat him with love. He promises to take up work and live as an honest, dutiful citizen. Give him a chance to do so. Pray to God. He should also do regular Japa and Kirtan. The Antaryamin will surely hear your prayers and mould the character of the boy properly.

Thus did Siva save the boy: and he saved the honour of the family, too. What a magnanimous heart. 'Return love for hatred'. Here is one who actually lives this doctrine. And, he has always said: 'Do not do a single good act and then try to see if the other man has changed or not. He might even look at your goodness with suspicion. You should go on doing good to him, at every turn, and till the very end of your life. He is bound to feel that love you have for him, and feel for his own shortcoming....sometime or the other.'

SEE NO EVIL

A lady from Denmark has written to Siva, narrating the story of her brother who left her ten years ago after misbehaving himself in all manner of ways. He was fond of pilfering: he would cheat the family members themselves: and he was the home of many other vices. The lady is a disciple of Siva. She had read Siva's books and imbibed his spirit of universal love. Yet, she could not solve this new problem, and so she wrote to Siva and asked: 'Should I allow him to stay with me: or, should I do something to him by way of giving him some money and ask him politely to go away?'

To sage Siva everyone is divine. Evil does not exist in his vision at all. Therefore, at once he wrote back:

'Welcome your brother to your house. Forget the past. See no evil in him. Trust him. Love him. You should treat him in such manner that whatever misgivings he has about the reception that might await him at your house should at once be dispelled and he should feel quite at home in your house.

'Psychologically, this will have a tremendous effect on the delinquent. Even the worst criminal if he is treated in such a loving manner can at once be converted and reformed. It needs courage born of a conviction that all are essentially divine: and Love supreme. Once you have this conviction and his love, you will work wonders.'

I have seen other 'saints' who have declared that they have seen God. They are so different from Siva in this respect. One saint had a disciple whom he had ordered never to touch money. This disciple went on a pilgrimage of Uttarakhand. He was taken ill. At a moment of great need he had to accept some money from a Bhakta. He confessed this to the Guru and begged his pardon. But, no: the Guru banished him from his presence forever: 'I will never see his face again.' This attitude is alien to Siva. Says Siva:

'Everyone makes mistakes. Everyone is a sinner. There is only a superficial view of Man. Deeper within there is the Self, the Ever-Pure Atman. When you learn to perceive Him, all these superficialities will vanish. Mistakes and sins will vanish from your sight. Brahman alone will remain. You will see Brahmin alone everywhere.' That is his philosophy in a nutshell: and the first person who has practised this philosophy to the letter and the spirit is Siva himself.

SANYASINS CAN EAT BISCUITS?

'Call everyone from the office,' said Siva to Vishnuji. And, Siva seated himself outside the dispensary. He was on his way from his Kutir to the Bhajan Hall for the evening Satsang.

One by one we went to him, to receive a handful of biscuits.

'Oh, Esanandaji, you also have some biscuits. But, can a Sanyasi eat biscuits?'

And, Siva continued, in reply to his own question: 'T. used to say to people who go to Uttarkashi from here: 'He has Ananda Kutir Samskaras. He cannot live in Uttarkashi.' But, here Sanyasins and Brahmacharis are doing Seva night and day. They should have proper food and conveniences. You must have what is essential for the body. Only you should not give yourself away to luxury.' Chaddhaji was intently listening to Siva. Siva turned towards him and remarked: 'I have no belief in the Sanyas that you believe in.' Siva's conception of Sanyas is something novel and dynamic. Service, absolutely selfless, untiring and dynamic service, which Sanyasins alone can do—that is his idea. That is what he himself is.

7TH SEPTEMBER, 1949

MRS. NEHRU

Mrs. Brij Lal Nehru and Sri Goswami Ganesh Duttji actually inaugurated the Birthday celebrations this year, today itself. They arrived at the Ashram at 1 p.m. and were cordially received by Siva himself. They were entertained to tea and light refreshments by Siva. During the course of the conversation, Goswamiji told Mrs. Nehru: 'Today is Sri Swamiji's Jayanti also: and so it is an especially auspicious day for us to have his Darshan.'

Someone present pointed out that the Jayanti is actually tomorrow.

'But, we have come today for his Darshan: for us, his Jayanthi is today.'

Siva had, in the meantime, autographed several of his books and handed them over to Mrs. Nehru. Overwhelmed with joy, she remarked: 'Swamiji, your books will by themselves form a good library. You have done good Prachar.'

'Swamiji's is the Gita-ideal,' said Goswamiji. 'He works in the spirit of the Gita. And, the teachings of the Gita are embodied in him. He works unattached and without the least expectation of a reward. He has led thousands of people along the right path: he has illumined the heart of many. Wherever you go, you find his disciples.'

'Your holiness had invited my husband to come here. Owing to several reasons, he could not come this time....' said Mrs. Nehru.

'Yes, yes: kindly ask him also to pay a visit to this place at the earliest opportunity,' said Siva.

While they stood up to take leave of Siva, Goswamiji asked Siva: 'Please tell me some Seva that I can do to you.'

'I ask for your blessings. That is the best Seva you can do for me.'

12TH SEPTEMBER, 1949

THE HEALING BALM

From Rameswaram comes a letter from Sri X whose daughter is in a strange plight. Indecision is the main complaint. She refuses to marry the boy chosen by her parents: but later regrets. She has an unknown dread for marriage. She herself recognises the trouble: but does not know to get over it. And so, she wrote to Siva. Here is Siva's consoling reply:

Sri....

OM Namō Narayanaya. Adorations and salutations. Thy kind letter.

I am conducting prayer, Kirtan and Mrityunjaya Mantra Japa for your health, peace and prosperity. All your difficulties will banish.

Be bold. Be cheerful. Study well and pass B.A. There is a brilliant future for you. You are born for higher things. May you shine like Meera or Queen Chudalai or Sulabha.

Be regular in your Japa, Kirtan, prayer and meditation, and study of the Gita. This is very, very important. This is a great, general and spiritual tonic.

I shall serve you nicely. Kindly follow my instructions. Obey the instructions and commands of your parents who are your well-wishers. You will be happy. Whatever they decide, you will have to accept.

In this world one does not get what one wants but we have to be content with what God wants to give us.

May God bless you. With regards, Prem and OM,

—Sivananda

14th SEPTEMBER, 1949

A STUDENT'S TRIBUTE TO SIVA

Here is a letter from Sri R. Mani of the Doon School (the son of a High Court Judge):

Revered Guruji,

Thank you very much for your kind blessings and your lovely book. I cannot express my joy on a piece of paper, on finding out that your blessings contain something sweet. There are a few people who bless others and do not give them any advice. I am sure your advice will one day make me a great man. My parents were overjoyed to see the book, so were my brothers and sisters. I am now at School. I hope to get another piece of good advice from your holiness.

—Your obedient student, R. Mani

And Siva's reply:

Sri R. Mani, Doon School.

OM Namo Narayanaya.

Adorations and salutations.

I am in due receipt of your two kind letters.

Go to bed early. Get up at 4 a.m. and study your lessons. They will be indelibly impressed on your mind. Study for one hour in the early morning hours is equal to study for four hours after sunrise. Pray: do Japa of SRI RAM: and Kirtan for 10 minutes before you retire to bed, and also as soon as you get up from bed.

Be patient and persevering. Avoid bad company. Obey elders, teachers, and parents. You will have success in life and in all class examinations and peace. During holidays, kindly come and stay with me.

May Lord bless you. With regards, Prem and OM,

—Sivananda

Precious advice which every student should write on the tablet of his heart and follow if he desires to grow into a superman.

15TH SEPTEMBER, 1949

PROTECTOR OF REFUGEES

Early in the morning Siva went to Sri Swami Premanandaji's room and spoke to him (and those of us who were there) as follows:

'A young man has come to the Ashram. He has resigned his job, given up his home and everything and has made up his mind to stay here itself. That elderly man has also done the same thing. They were sure that they would get admission here: that is why they have so boldly ventured out. How can we refuse them admission? Whatever rule we might choose to follow in regard to the admission of inmates, how are we to apply the rule to people like this?

'No doubt, our finances are low. But the God who sent these people here should provide the wherewithal for their maintenance also. We shall have to throw the burden on Him and admit them. By His grace our finances will also improve.

'The experience of the last few months clearly proves one thing. If we send away some inmates on account of our inability to maintain them, God immediately sends more and more. We sent away about 20 and one by one God has sent us and the number is almost the same now as it was before retrenchment. Those who come here are all devotees of the Lord and young men full of the spirit of renunciation and dispassion. If we don't admit them, where will they go?

'We should, therefore, reflect more deeply before we refuse admission or send people away. Our action might force them to go back to their old surroundings, or it might put them to untold suffering.

'I think what we should do is to increase our income. We should find out ways and means for that. Every Branch should vigorously collect funds for the Ashram. Every devotee who has visited the Ashram and seen what dynamic work is going on here and what service is being rendered here, should apply himself vigorously to collecting funds for the Cause. Some people must go from here also on propaganda work.'

Siva turned to a visitor from Bombay, who was standing near him:

'What do you say: am I right? You should start this at once in Matunga. You need not ever ask for money. Distribute leaflets and pamphlets, and occasionally tell them of the work that is going on here. That will do: they will automatically contribute funds. In the case of those whom you know very well, you might go to their house on the first night and tell them: 'You have got your salary today: you must give 10 per cent to the noble cause.' The work should go on. That can only be done if all co-operate in this campaign. And, the campaign should go on forever. Every month we should receive regular financial help.

'God has always been kind to us. Every crisis that has arisen in the past has passed off smoothly. He sends timely helpers. Now the time has come to expand the work further. Apply yourselves heart and soul to the task.'

19TH SEPTEMBER, 1949

FIRST BHOJAN: THEN BHAJAN

The Asst. District Magistrate of Tehri has come to have Siva's Darshan. As is usual with Siva, the visitor was first entertained to tea and refreshments.

And, in the meantime, Siva had opened his copy of 'Vedanta Jyoti' and was singing some of the songs from it. He noticed that the A.D.M. had not taken his tea.

'Your tea is getting cold. Go ahead with it.'

'Swamiji, this food we can get anywhere: I came here to have spiritual food from you.'

Smilingly Siva replied: 'First Bhojan: then Bhajan. Unless this gross physical hunger is satisfied, the mind will be unable to receive, digest and assimilate the subtle spiritual food. The old orthodox system of observing Vratas and then listening to scriptures was all right. Nowadays, the new civilisation has made man food-minded. Even to miss a Chhota-Hazri or the evening tea is a great sacrifice. When the body does not get it, the mind is there only and refuses to attend to the study of scriptures. Therefore, in those days it was first Bhajan, then Bhojan: but, now first Bhojan and then Bhajan!'

The entire party had a hearty laugh at this humorous discourse. This ADM received a number of Siva's books: and, while parting, reverently he touched Siva's feet. He was later shown round the entire Ashram. 'The Yoga Museum is unique. It is a great wonder. And, Swami Krishnanandaji's exposition of its arrangement is equally wonderful. These pictures we have seen individually. But, when they are arranged in a proper order, they convey a lot of wisdom.'

EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE....OR MARRIAGE BUREAU....OR INTRODUCTION LEAGUE

What do people take Siva to be?

Dr....is out of employment. He wants Siva to find a job for him. Is Siva conducting an employment exchange?

Engineer....has a daughter, and he is after a son-in-law. He wants Siva's help. Is Siva then the head of a marriage bureau?

A fresh recruit to the bar dreams of a lucrative practice. He asks for an introduction letter from Siva to leading Advocates, businessmen, etc. Or, perhaps in the eyes of the public, Siva is the director of an Introduction League?

Don't blame them. They are sincere, honest and well-meaning people. They themselves do not know the reason. But, they are drawn towards Siva for anything and everything. As a child thinks of its mother whether it wants milk, or a toy, or wants to ease itself or to go out into the lawn, so also these people, the devotees of Siva turn to him whenever they feel any need: and Siva supplies them everything: from the highest wisdom down to a prescription for head-ache. Siva

is ever-ready with his counsel: and he actively helps the devotee in the latter's quest, too. Siva does not trifle with the devotee's requests considering them beneath his dignity to be asked such 'unspiritual' things. Hear what he himself says:

WORK AND MEDITATION

Siva was talking to Swami Adwayanandaji. 'Oh, Swamiji, please look into the Post Office. It now looks like the G.P.O. in a big city. Look at the number of packets and parcels: the number of magazine bundles that go out every day. Swami X would say, 'Oh, this work is all Vikshep.' But, what can a Sanyasin do? He cannot meditate all the twenty-four hours. The daily routine of Sanyasins therefore becomes 'Eat roti: answer calls of nature: form small groups of three and four and talk about every blessed thing in the world—this Kshetra is doing this: that Sadhu is doing that. They will sit up in the evening and open a big Vedantic book and start discussion: it will very soon turn again into the usual ruts—the worldly topic, scandal-mongering and gossip. I have no time even to take food. Even with 12 per cent sugar I have to keep myself busy always. Every man should engage himself in strenuous work. The body and the mind should be every busy. And, if the work is of a spiritual nature, the mind is automatically kept well above material thoughts and schemes. People are also benefited. Occasionally, one should close his eyes and feel 'I am Akarta, I am Abhokta: I am Sakshi. Aham Brahmasmi: Sivoham: Satchidananda Swaroopoham.' That is, I think, the best Sadhana. You have got several faculties: these faculties will fade away if they are not used properly. The Indriyas only should not be allowed to engage themselves to wrong actions. They should be used properly. One man observed Mowna for 12 hours: and when he broke the Mowna and was asked to deliver a lecture, he could not utter a word. If one starts saying—'This is spiritual: this will cause Vikshep,' etc.,—and so forcedly restrains the Indriyas and denies the use of his faculties, he will only deaden them and put them out of commission. That is not proper Sadhana. Direct all the Indriyas in the proper channel. Use all your faculties properly. Then, Atma Jnana will come by itself.'

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN 4.12.0 AND 5 IS ONE RUPEE

Swami Adwayanandaji has brought with him an able artist and painter. As soon as Siva entered the office, he met this artist and greeting him: OM Namo Narayanaya.' and said, turning to Swami A.: 'He is a great asset to the Society itself. Six months he can be in South India, and six months here.'

'Ask him to paint some Drama curtains for the Ashram. We have a Drama for every occasion. But, we always use mere cloth as curtains. The first one may depict the Ashram, Himalayas and Ganga. Another one representing Devatas—Ganesha, Subramanya, Vishnu, etc. Like that we can go on.' Suddenly Siva's expression changed, and he continued with a boyish smile:

'If we ask all of a sudden, money for three canvases, these people will refuse: we have to be careful. First, we should ask for money to buy the canvas, then for colours, then for brushes, then for another curtain and so on. If you ask Rs. 3000,

you will only get a refusal. But, if you ask six times Rs. 500 on every occasion, you will get. That is the people's mentality.'

'Similarly with books also. If you price a book Rs. 5, people will not purchase. 'Oh, this is too much,' they will say. Just say it is Rs. 4.12.0, they will readily take it. To them it is not a matter of four annas, but one rupee—that book costs *five* and this costs *four* and something. We should learn the ways of the world and adapt ourselves. That is the secret of success.'

24TH SEPTEMBER, 1949

PUNJAB LECTURE TOUR MEMOIRS

Sri Ram Piyari Trivedi, Head Postmaster, Dehra Dun, has come. He reverently touched Siva's feet and sat on a bench near him in the office.

'From Fyzabad?' queried Siva.

'How well you remember, Swamiji. It is a great wonder. Now, I have been posted to Dehra Dun as the Head Postmaster there. I am coming from Dehra Dun.'

'Swamiji, I still remember your instructions to me when we had your Darshan at Fyzabad 15 years ago. You told then to do Kirtan, to practise Japa and Dhyan. By your grace and blessings, we have been doing what little we can in this regard, Swamiji.'

'Oh, yes, I remember I came to your house also.'

'Yes, Swamiji, and you did Kirtan in our house. It was really a great blessing of the Lord.'

'A good, noble soul,' said Siva after the visitor left. How well the true devotee and the loving Guru remember each other. And, with what reverence and faith the devotee remembers and adheres to the holy commands of his Guru!

25TH SEPTEMBER, 1949

ANANDA KUTIR: VAIKUNTHA ON EARTH

Sri T.R. Ganapathirama Iyer of Tinnevely has written:

'Please place this letter at the feet of Sri Swamiji Maharaj. Of late my heart has become feeble but I have not become weak of mind. Please send by VPP Ganges water, say about eight ounces. Please send also holy Prasad. I am focusing my attention on the lotus feet of Lord Sri Krishna and also Swamiji. I have also instructed my son to send you, when this mortal coil falls, the bones for immersion in the Ganges. With prostrations at the feet of Swamiji Maharaj.'

Obviously, he could neither write nor even sign the letter.

Here is Siva's reply:

OM Namō Narayanaya. Adorations and salutations. Thy kind letter. Sent a parcel of Ganges water, Prasad etc., Tulasi Kumkum, bael, and Ghasma. Kirtan, Prayer, Mrityunjaya Mantra Japa, Archana are being conducted in the temple for thy peace. May Lord bless you.

Thou art a devotee of Lord Krishna. Thou hast done Jnana Yajna, by distributing freely Bhagavatam, etc. Thou hast acquired great merit. You need not be afraid. The celestial car will take you to the abode of Lord Krishna....

—Sivananda.

And, explaining the significance, Siva said:

'This is a branch office of Vaikuntha. People who wish to go to Vaikuntha may take their passport from here. If they get a chit from here, they will get ready admission.'

'Think of the amount of the Lord's service that is turned out here. Kirtan, temple Pujas, magazines, leaflets, books, attendance on visitors, Sadhus and the poor, Pitru Yajna, Jnana Yajna, and then the Japa, meditation and Swadhyaya of individual Sadhaks and common Satsang. Just think of the amount of service to humanity turned out every day. This service earns for us the privilege of direct communication with Lord Krishna, Lord Siva and Devi. We have only to send a chit to Lord Krishna—so-and-so is coming tomorrow—and His messengers will be ready with the Vimana (celestial car).

'Sri Ganapathirama Iyer has done great service. He has printed thousands of copies of a handy Bhagavatam—selected verses from it, with English translation—and has distributed them free to all devotees. That is charity of no mean merit. And, even in the last moments of his life, he does not forget the lotus feet of the Lord. That is the surest indication of the effect this Jnana Yajna has had on his Antahkarana. Such noble souls have no fear. Their places in Vaikuntha are reserved.'

27TH SEPTEMBER, 1949

GLIMPSES OF EARLY LIFE

The thought of a young man crossing the sea and going over to Malaya to practise as a doctor there (especially when this event relates to the first quarter of this century, when South Indian Brahmins were highly orthodox) gives rise in us to the picture of an Indian of advanced views or 'cultured' (!) or 'civilised'—all of which mean that the young man has imbibed many of the European customs and so is essentially unorthodox. Siva went over the Malaya from India, crossing the ocean. But he was none of these: he was, on the contrary, an orthodox South Indian Brahmin with just as much faith in his scriptures, and as much regard for the ancient customs and manners of his community as had his contemporary who would have refused to travel by train or a motor-car. Hear what Sri K.S.

Chellamier says. C. was Siva's school-mate. Siva chose to become a doctor: C. entered the Educational Service and retired from the Travancore Education Service as a Principal of a College.

Rev. Swamiji,

Do you remember our school days when we used to call you by your nickname of 'Madisanchi'?

'Madisanchi' is a South Indian expression for an extremely orthodox man. Madisanchi is a bag in which the orthodox Brahmin carries dry clothes, pure and unpolluted, as well as the paraphernalia necessary for applying the caste-mark. He would carry all these things to the bathing ghat. The bag is supposed to protect its contents from being polluted, either by a man who has not had a bath touching them, or some one else going near them.

Nowadays when the majority of people belong to the 'civilised' group, it is easy to earn the title 'Madisanchi'. But in the days of Siva's boyhood, when most of the people of the South were orthodox, to earn this nickname, one had to live a rigorous (Puritanic) orthodox life.

A strict adherence to orthodox customs and manners is a part of Siva. Another part of his personality is unquestioning service. Service often swallows orthodoxy: but when this overwhelming consideration is not there, orthodoxy holds full sway. That is the secret. That is why this Madisanchi boarded the steamer unhesitatingly when the call of service was heard by him. On reaching the Malayan soil, orthodoxy was again resumed!

Even now, if a 'Chandala' comes to the dispensary to be dressed, Siva would very readily attend on him and would never consider himself polluted. But, when Vji offered to perform Archana to the Devi (during the Durga Puja at night), Siva stopped him: 'No, no: not with the shirt on. Tomorrow, take a bath specially before the Puja, apply Bhasma and Kumkum on your forehead and then do the Puja.'

29TH SEPTEMBER, 1949

SECRETS REVEALED

A newspaper cutting from one of the Burmese papers, sent by a devotee from Burma, surprised us all. It contained the report of a gala opening ceremony of a Divine Life Society's branch at Singapore.

'One more lively centre for Divine Life!' commenced Siva. And, as he pushed up his spectacles above his forehead, we were ready and eager to listen to him.

'There should be at least three people, able and energetic, to attend to the work of stirring up branches into intense activity. Regular despatches should go to the branches every month. Letters from branches should be answered promptly. Messages should be sent for the opening ceremony, anniversary, etc. Some one should keep track of the progress and inspire the branch office-bearers every now and then to greater and greater peaks of activity.'

'The institution has grown more rapidly than anyone could have anticipated. However many efficient workers come, we still find that we are short of workers and that everyone who works here is over-worked.

'The most important thing is to keep constant track of the work that is going on, and the persons that we come into contact with. My address-book helps me in that. You see: I have put the address-book under lock and key nowadays. It is the most precious thing for me. It is the channel through which I can serve the world. I have asked Purushotthamji to take particular care of the two trunks of manuscripts in my Kutir. Even if there is a flood and all other things in my Kutir are destroyed, I will not allow these two trunks to be destroyed. Put me in a forest a hundred miles away from here: but give me my address-book and those two trunks, I shall begin all over again and build up the institution from there.

'In the address-book I have addresses of every sort of person—Ministers, Maharajahs, Mutts and Ashrams, Professors, Philosophers and Scientists. As soon as I get an address, my work begins. I may get the address in any manner—through letters I receive from so many people, from the corners of journals that I get, from books that we get for review or as gifts for the library. I am always watchful for addresses. And the moment I get an address, I at once enter it in the register. Now, the man is registered. At once I write a letter, send a packet of leaflets, some books also, have the address entered in the magazine register and the issues of 'The Divine Life' despatched to him, enter the name in the Prasad List, etc. etc. Previously, the moment I got an address, I will start a regular campaign with letters. On one day the man will receive three letters. And, for the first two weeks there will be a regular flow of divine life into his house. One day he will receive the magazine, the next day a letter, the third day a packet of leaflets, another day Prasad, then books and so on.'



OCTOBER, 1949

1ST OCTOBER, 1949

YOU LIVE HERE?

Sri X desired to get Mantra Diksha from Siva. He went to Siva's Kutir on the bank of the Ganges early in the morning. Siva took him to the Ganges which flows kissing the walls of Sivas Kutir, and initiated him into the Lord's Name. Later the new disciple was entertained by the Guru (!) to a light repast.

Siva took him round the Kutir. 'It is a beautiful Kutir,' explained Siva before they entered Siva's apartments. 'It has a splendid view of the Himalayas and the Ganges. If you sit here on the veranda or even if you are within the room, you will constantly hear the Pranava-Nada of Ganga.'

They both went in and came out in a few minutes.

'You are living in this Kutir, Swamiji?' the visitor asked, obviously astonished at the fact. 'Why....it is as ill-ventilated as a prison-cell. You cannot get any light in the rooms, except at midday. They are not rooms: they are caves, and too small even for that. And, you work in that room which is not sufficient to accommodate your manuscripts and books. You cannot move in it without treading on something else. The bed-room is damp and one cannot even breathe in it. I wonder how you live in it?'

'Though I get a positive feeling of spiritual elation when I am in the room, I think I will not be able to keep body and soul together for six months if I lived in this Kutir. Why don't you change into a better suite of rooms, Swamiji?'

'No, no: I am all right here,' replied Siva the Mahatyagi and Mahatapasvi. The visitor bowed, again in bewildered amusement, and left.

2ND OCTOBER, 1949

SANYAS AND THE WORLD

Sri Sabha Ratnam Iyer, M.A., B.T., LL.B., of Nagpur, who came here to attend the birthday celebrations and who stayed on till Navaratri, met Siva early in the morning while the latter was coming to the office.

'When you go back to Nagpur, consider that you are already a Sanyasin and behave as such. Be unattached to the family. Are you ready for Sanyas? Will you actually embrace Sanyasa now?' asked Siva characteristically taking the conversation to a climax.

'I am ready, Swamiji. But, I have a few daughters to be married. That is the only responsibility. I feel it is a great burden, Swamiji. This family hinders my wholeheartedly plunging into Nivritti Marga.'

'The world is no hindrance. Lord Krishna assures you in the Gita that one can be a true Sanyasi and a true Tyagi even while remaining in the world of active life.'

Live in the family: but let not the family live in you. Let your house become an Ashram. It will be your headquarters for the present. From there you will spread the message of divine life. Take Ram Nam from Mohalla to Mohalla. Inspire everyone. Conduct common meditation. God has given you a very good voice. You can address an audience of 50,000 without a loud-speaker. Goddess Saraswati lives on your tongue: you have vast knowledge of the Puranas, the Gita, and other Sastras, too. You are a Sri Vidya Upasaka, too. Mother will surely bless you with Moksha. You have been here for some time. You know how to conduct Sadhana classes.'

'Yes, Swamiji: I shall certainly conduct classes in Nagpur on the same lines as the classes are conducted here. Especially, I liked very much the Ram-Nama Japa Kirtan that you conducted last night. The whole Hall was filled with Ram-Nama vibrations only. Every one felt elevated. Incidentally, I saw on your forehead the digit of the moon, too, as is to be found on the forehead of Lord Siva. I have no doubt in my mind that you are Lord Siva Himself, Swamiji.'

(Incidentally, during his lecture-tours in the Punjab, as he was doing Kirtan and dancing one night, several devotees of the place saw a brilliant aura surrounding Siva. It was clearly visible to the naked eye of the devotees. All were thrilled: their devotion towards Siva increased: and Siva's divine life message, too, found ready receptacles in them.)

BHIKSHU REKHA ON THE FACE

'OM Namō Narayanaya', Siva was at the office entrance. A few of us were just then coming out of the office on our way to the Kshetra for Bhiksha.

Though we did not mention the fact, Siva somehow knew it.

'What about the Khiksha programme?'

'We are just now going, Swamiji.'

'No, no: you need not go. Your health will suffer: and consequently, the work will suffer. I see the Bhikshu-Rekha on your forehead. You need not worry now. Training or no training, you will always be prepared and capable of begging your Bhiksha.'

'As you wish, Swamiji,' we said and the idea dropped out of our head.

Incidentally, Siva told us a very interest anecdote of his own life.

'When I was coming away from Malaya, bound for Banaras, someone met me on the ship and suddenly exclaimed: 'You have got the Bhikshu Rekha on your forehead.' Even then he could find out that I would soon beg for alms and wander about. Soon afterwards, I reached Banaras and found that the man was right in his prediction.'

Sri Swami Chidanandaji had also joined us, then.

'Money or no money, you must take care of your body. If you are not looking after this instrument of the Lord, then you are not worshipping Durga properly. The

best worship of Durga is to maintain this body in a proper condition, to enable it to work out His Will in the best manner possible.'

'When I was at the Swarg Ashram, I never touched oil. Now, I must keep several kinds of oil. All the cells are vibrating so fast that there is intense heat in the body. When I was at the Swarg Ashram I slept on the floor. But, now I have got a nice bed: for that is essential for the work that has to be turned out. I do rough the body sometimes: and for the same of keeping up the Titiksha, I rub the body against the walls. But often I do not have time even for that. There is work to do. Service has a great and more pressing demand on our attention. All that your body needs you must give. You have practised enough Titiksha. If you go on in the same fashion, your body will break-down: you will become useless. You must take nutritious food. You are all gigantic brain-workers. You must have barrels of fruit-juices. Now, I have got twenty bottles of various medicine: some for my diabetes, some for my stomach, etc. etc. I have got different things for cleaning the teeth—tooth-paste, tooth powder, mouth gargle, etc.'

'Nowadays we are not making any arrangement for people who would like to spend their days in exclusive meditation. Krishnanandaji, Achyutanandaji, and others like them should be at once provided with Kutirs where they can carry on their meditation in seclusion. Premanandaji should also be given a room somewhere up the hill. He is greatly overworked. He needs immediate relief and rest. Food, milk, fruits, biscuits, coffee and tea—everything that they need should automatically reach their Kutirs without their asking. We know their requirements and these should be provided.'

'Money will come: money must come: very soon there will be crores and crores. You won't be able even to count the money. Big Seths and Zamindars will pick up the currency notes thrown away by you. Believe me: such a time must come. You can best help that if you all work hard. Every day our work is increasing. Every day more and more people are contacted by us. The message is spreading.'

'Previously, I myself used to keep accounts. All the first account-books are in my handwriting only. In those days, I myself used to prepare the packets of leaflets and pamphlets for dispatch. Every day we used to work far into the night, tying the packets. Now there are half a dozen people for this work. Those days if someone gave us Rs. 25 we used to sit up the whole night and prepare a pamphlet for printing. Three petromax lights were burning in the Ashram when there was hardly enough food for all the inmates, when several inmates had to take Bhiksha from the Kshetras. Paramanandaji, Narayanaswamiji, Nijabodhaswamiji, Saswatswamiji—all of us used to work the whole night: and early next morning we would post all the packets.'

'Those days we had no accommodation either. The Dharmashala verandah was our Satsang Bhavan. One or two dilapidated Kutirs were all that we could live in. Slowly, we began to occupy the other disused rooms. It was all East India Co. business. We just got into the Kutirs and they were ours. We had then an income of about Rs. 50 a month. We had a debt of Rs. 17. When the income grew to hundreds, the debt also grew to hundreds. When the income grew to thousands, the debt-position also proportionately grew to thousands. We should not be

discouraged. He is only training us. Later on, He will shower so much money on us that we will not be able to count it.'

3RD OCTOBER 1949

WHERE IS THE SCORPION?

Someone noticed a scorpion outside the office. A few visitors crowded round the insect. One wanted it to be killed: another was too compassionate to allow that and said: 'Cut its tail and let it go.'

Siva heard this: 'Cut whose tail? The scorpion's? But, why don't you cut your tongue? Man's tongue is more poisonous than the scorpion's tail. See: the scorpion will not sting a man unless the man places his foot on it or in some way, intentionally or unintentionally, tries to harm it. But look at man himself. Without any provocation whatsoever, he will go out of his way and abuse someone, ridicule someone, vilify someone, injure someone. Man's tongue is much worse than the scorpion's sting.'

Everyone was thrilled to listen to this inspired talk. And the scorpion (perhaps heaving a sigh of relief at Siva's advocacy of its cause) went its own way.

TENNIS AND SANYASA

Winter has slowly set in, with its pleasant mornings and evenings. It is the time for games and body-building exercises. Siva and a few of us were on the terrace opposite the office hall. Govindaswamiji was coming towards the Ashram from Rishikesh. Siva remembered at once that he was one of the badminton players of the Ashram and that we used to play during the winter.

'Oh Govindaswamiji, it is time now to start badminton. Please arrange the court, and for the bats and balls. You are the captain.'

Then he turned towards us and said: 'Some people imagine that Sanyasins should not play tennis. I have no such notions. Sanyas has nothing to do with what you need to keep this body, the temple of the Lord and the instrument for doing Karma Yoga, and Sanyas should not prevent you from giving, within limits, what this body needs. Previously, I used to take a long evening walk. Work has increased and this became impossible. And, even while doing the work the pressure was too great and I needed relaxation every now and then. I got a tennis ball and a racket. I used to play on the wall for a few minutes. After these few minutes, I would be ready for another spell of work. Play, exercise, practice of Asanas and Pranayama—all are necessary. Even today I do not miss my Asana and Pranayama. Sitting on the bed, I perform some exercises, sitting on the bed, I do some simple Asanas and some Pranayama also. These things keep my body fit for the work that the Lord has entrusted to me. I keep His instrument clean and healthy.'

'Titiksha and self-denial are necessary. They are the most essential parts of one's Sadhana. Otherwise, one will be prone to commit mistakes, and one will become a luxury-lover. I have chronic lumbago. If you ask a doctor for his advice, he will

forbid me from touching Ganges water. But I cannot live without bathing in the Ganges. I swim in the Ganges also. God knows my heart: therefore, He has somehow arranged that this Ganges bath should not affect my health.

'This lumbago trouble does not allow nowadays to serve food in the Pangat every day. But as a measure of Sadhana, and also as an exercise, I would often imagine a Pangat sitting on my verandah and begin serving them out of imaginary buckets of dhal and vegetable in my hands, bending before each diner: 'Dhal, Bhagavan', 'Vegetable, Bhagavan'. Sadhana should be intelligent. You should know what you wish to achieve through Sadhana. Then alone will Sadhana be fruitful. Be sincere in your aspirations. Then God will guide you from within what you should do.'

DOG OR GOD?

Swami Yoganandaji joined the party of Sanyasins listening to Siva's words of wisdom. Behind him ran a dog—also eager to join the group. Siva noticed the dog, and enquired: 'Is the dog all right now?'

'Yes, Swamiji: the wound on its neck has healed completely.'

'Why not? Thanks to the ever-compassionate Chidanandaji, the dog received such treatment here as a Maharajah will not get at the hands of his own doctor and nurse. Every day he used to bandage it with his own hands, cleaning the wound with his own hands, unmindful of the nasty smell that the wound emitted. No one but he could have done this. To him it was not a dog, but God Himself. His is a unique example of a saint seeing the same Atman in the Brahmin, the elephant, horse, pariah and a dog, as described by Lord Krishna in the Gita. All of you should learn this wonderful method of developing the heart and cultivating the Adwaita-Bhavana. Only then is Self-realisation possible.'

Swami Yoganandaji then related how Siva himself used to do such Seva to cows, dogs and donkeys as an essential item of his Sadhana. 'Swamiji would invariably feed the monkeys of the locality, and the dogs and the cows, that would all crowd round him when he took food. Before he even sat for his dinner, he would take some food and feed the fish of the Ganges. Only then could he have his own dinner.'

'Service has ever been Swamiji's passion in life. Swamiji would handle dangerous cases of cholera and typhoid and serve the patients day and night, remaining with them and cleaning their bed-pans with his own hands. Lepers, too, are his favourites: he takes the keenest interest in their welfare. By example and precept, he has taught us that serving every living being, without the last trace of Ghrina, hatred or ill-feeling, with heart full of love and Atma-Bhava, alone can purify the heart rapidly and make it a fit receptacle for Atma-Jnana.'

THE GLORY OF THE THIRD EYE

Next to join the group was Hari Badri Narayan, the youngster from South Africa who is now studying medicine at the Lucknow University.

'Hariji, your lecture in the morning was wonderful. How fluently you speak both in English and in Hindi. You were too shy to speak even with friends, when you came here. Now you have become an orator. As soon as you go back to Lucknow,

this time, you should organise the students of the Medical College and form a youth Section of the Divine Life Society. Hold Sunday classes. Teach the other boys Asans, Pranayam and physical exercises. You will be doing a great service to these boys. And, you will also be getting the training necessary for you to become a first-class propagandist when you go back to Africa. You will be able to clarify your own ideas, too.'

'Yes, Swamiji: I shall certainly do so. With your blessings, I am sure of success.'

* * * *

This young lad arrived at the Ashram in September 1947, along with Sri S.R. Padayachie of South Africa. He wanted to study medicine: but did not know what to do about it. Siva gave him shelter in his own Ashram: and then wrote letters to several professors to get him fixed up in an Indian University. And, he was able to get a seat in the Medical College at Lucknow.

Siva found out his spiritual Samskaras, at the first sight. Through his 'third-eye' he was able to detect that he would one day turn out to be a good preacher and so trained him in the art of speaking. Siva found out, too, that he was a good actor and gave him frequent opportunities of taking part in the dramas staged at the Ashram. What we see now with our two eyes, Siva could see long ago with this third eye.

* * * *

Here is Bhat, our new inmate. He, too, took part in the Devi Mahatmya Drama. He acted wonderfully well. He is a first-class comic actor. Siva greeted him and said:

'Bhatji, you are the director of the dramatic society here. Don't feel shy to act in the Ashram plays. Don't think that it is against Sadhana to act in dramas. Think of the good that you are doing to the vast multitudes of spectators, when you act in a spiritual play. What a great learned man cannot do by a year's lecturing, you can do in a minute—you can drive your lessons directly into the spectator's heart and it will forever remain embedded there. That is the secret. The whole world is a big drama, a play kept up by the Lord Himself. You and I are already actors in this Play. We dance and sing as He makes us do. For a wise man, the world provides daily lessons. Why should you then feel shy to act a drama within this huge drama? Develop this faculty. You should hereafter organise a drama for every occasion.

The rapidity with which Siva sees through the Third Eye, the inner contents of everyone, the hidden faculties, is really amazing. The moment he perceives the hidden faculties, he will do everything to bring them out: and a genius is born.

RESPECT AND REVERENCE: THEIR SEAT

Subramaniam was coming along the road on a bicycle when he found Siva emerging from his Kutir. At once, S. alighted from the cycle, took off the towel which he had wound round the head as a turban, and adjusted his Dhoti!

Siva smiled and said: 'All these formalities are not necessary for me. Love and respect have their seat in the heart: and you should have love and reverence for elders in your heart. That I will know! These external formalities do not have much significance for me.'

LARGE HEART ATTRACTS AND ENCHANTS

And, Siva continued: 'You are going about in the hot sun, making purchases at Rishikesh and supervising the construction work. Do not hesitate to take all that you need: you must have a cool drink now, and half an hour later you should take a hot drink. If you feel like taking some fruits in the bazaar, do not hesitate. You need not submit any bills even. You have perfect liberty to do everything to keep your body in perfect health.'

It is this freedom that Siva gives to everyone, and it is this Heart that treats every living creature as its own self, it is this universal love and cosmic consciousness that does not exclude any living creature—that attracts and enchants. Not like the big men who, as soon as they come to power, place themselves on a high pedestal of their own construction and others on a lower level. If this great man takes the milk with almonds, he will not allow his subordinates to take even a cup of tea. He must take halwa: but his workers should be content with ground-nuts. Not so with Siva: every worker in the Ashram is as important as his own self, to him. Therefore he treats everyone with the greatest consideration. This love when it blossoms forth in the heart, attracts and enchants.

Incidentally, we are reminded of what Prof. Ganga Saran Seal said once. Prof. G. was a double-M.A. and a professor in Chandausi College. He was a great admirer of Siva, having known Siva during the latter's lecture tours in the Punjab. Once he remarked: 'Swamiji knows hypnotism. That is why thousands of people sit spell-bound, in pin-drop silence, listening to his lectures and Bhajans. Otherwise, it is impossible nowadays to command the attention of such large audiences.' When this was brought to the notice of Siva, he merely said: 'I have not even read a book on hypnotism.'

And, in fact, he knows nothing about hypnotism: and he does not encourage anyone to learn this art, either. Siva does not like Siddhis: and he warns his student from running after occult powers. The one and the only secret of his is the secret of the heart—the love that he has in the heart, and that attracts people to him, and enchants them.

TELEPHONES AND FLOWER-VASES

Siva has decided to spend more time in the office: his work has tremendously increased. His bag is full of letters which he has to answer. There is a huge list of people that is always on the table, to whom he should send books. He has a register, a ledger, with a leaf for every devotee to whom he sends books free. As the number grew, he prepared an index of these persons. And, as the number grew further, it was a problem. This register goes on serving its purpose: but now a consolidated list of the most important among the names in the register has been prepared and that is right in front of him on the table. On his left are the Big Address Book, the Free Issue Register and the Manuscripts Register. To the left

of him, on a small table is a rack full of leaflets and pamphlets, wrapped up copies of the magazine, packed copies of photographs—all ever-ready to leap into his hands and to pass on to the world at large. These are his telephones—the Registers that connect him to anyone he likes—and these are his flower-vases—the magazines, the leaflets and the photographs that adorn his table. And, Siva has decided to spend some more time at the table, unmindful of his own personal discomfort.

CONSIDERATION FOR OTHERS

And, so he emerged from his Kutir at 3 p.m. today, instead of the usual 4. He found Purushotthamanandaji's Kutir close and bolted from inside. Siva will not knock, nor call out to P. No: he very quietly opened the outer gate and slipped out, lest P. should be disturbed. He had to dress the wound on his left-hand: but that he postponed to 4 p.m. when P. will get up. 'Purushotthamanandaji is taking rest. I will have it dressed when he gets up,' said he. What consideration he shows towards those who serve him. Anyone else in his position will shout from his own Kutir for the attendant.

* * * *

This happened in October 1945, when I had just joined the Ashram. We were sitting in the office and chit-chatting. I occupied the room just adjacent to the office: this room I had bolted from inside and gone over to the office. It was past noon. It was a very hot day: and so we had partially closed the office-door also. Someone else was taking rest in my room. Siva came with his usual 'Prasad'. He found my Kutir bolted inside. He did not call out: but he quietly went to the kitchen, handed over the Prasad to someone else: 'Give it to Parthasarathy when he wakes up. He is taking rest.' I was stunned when later I was told of this. What love and what consideration. The chela is treated with respect and consideration that is due to the Guru. The Guru carries Prasad on his own head and goes out in the hot sun to the chela's Kutir: and when the chela is taking rest, has the patience, tolerance and love not to disturb the young boy, but to ensure that the Prasad reaches him when he wakes up. I think no other man in the world will do that.

5TH OCTOBER, 1949

TO YOUNG WIDOWS

Srimathi X, a young North Indian lady who had recently lost her husband in tragic circumstances, has come to Ananda Kutir for a brief stay in the belief and conviction that Siva's Darshan and Upadesh will remove her grief. She is a highly educated young lady, with advanced views on social matters: yet, she has to observe Purdah imposed upon her by family tradition.

Siva spoke to her as follows:

'You are an intelligent lady. The purpose of intelligence is proper discrimination. Try to discriminate between the Real and the unreal. Then, study Gita, especially the second chapter. You will clearly see that the physical love that you had

towards the physical form of your husband was misplaced and had to come to an end one day or the other. But if you love him in spirit: if you have spiritual communion with him: if you feel that your Self and his are one and the same, this love will be enduring, and the bliss that you obtain from it also will be everlasting. Then, you realise that he has only changed his costume and taken a new suit. You will not grieve.

‘Once you have laid this foundation of a spiritual understanding truly and well, the rest of the work will be easy. You have to keep yourself busy in humanitarian work, in selfless service of humanity with Atma-Bhav. Keep your body and mind constantly engaged in noble, divine and humanitarian service: this is the best way to ensure peace of mind and to remove grief.

‘Study Bhagavatam. You will find that the Lord has Himself stated there that He removes the pleasure-centres of Jivas when He chooses to shower His grace and blessings on the devotee. The mind will refuse to believe that what is generally considered a calamity is in fact a great blessing. The calamity shatters your belief in the permanence of things of the world: it points out clearly that everything here is fleeting and transitory. And, the calamity eventually turns your mind Godward: which, in turn, bestows peace and happiness on you. By diligent study of the Gita and other scriptures, and by proper discrimination, however, it is possible to bring your mind to believe in the existence of the Eternal Atman, and in the fact that all that happens here has the grace of the Lord behind it and so happens for your own good.’

‘Therefore, plunge yourself in selfless service. Conduct common meditation classes. Organise Gita study circles amongst the people of your locality. Spread the glory of the name of the Lord.’

‘But, Swamiji, even against my will, I have to observe Purdah. My family people will not allow me to move about freely. It was with great difficulty and in the teeth of heavy opposition that I could get through the B.A.’

‘Well: even that need not worry you. Do what you can do, within the limitations imposed by external circumstances. Gather together a few girls of your locality and educate them, mould their character, and divinise them. Teach them Gita, Ramayan, etc. Make a beginning thus. When the Lord knows that your heart yearns to expand and to render selfless service of a divine nature to all humanity, He will Himself provide you with golden opportunities.

‘Above all, be brave. Be cheerful. Develop the faculty of discrimination. Study and keep yourself absolutely busy. Training your children properly. Give them a spiritual turn of mind from the very beginning of their career. God will help you and guide you on your onward march.’

6TH OCTOBER, 1949

MEET BANERJI OF KALIBARI

Judge Gauri Prasadji, Swami Chidanandaji, Swami Omkaranandaji and myself were leaving for Dehra Dun this morning. Siva was on his way back to the Kutir

from the morning class. We took leave of him and were about to get into the tonga. Siva then mentioned casually:

‘There is one Banerji of Kalibari. I was in that Kali Mandir for some days and performed Kirtan also. Do meet him and conduct Kirtan there. He is a very nice man.’

And, we left the Ashram.

As we entered the Rishikesh railway station, we were greeted by Sri Mamraj Sing of the Tehri Government. And, he joined our party, as he, too, was going to Dehra Dun.

We reached Dehra Dun.

M. Judge Saheb and Omkarji left immediately for the Court. At the Court Judge Saheb could not find his own advocate-friends. Casually, M. took G.P. to an advocate whom the former had known. And, everything was fixed up.

In the evening, G.P took Swami C. and myself to see the Advocate. We met the young man, talked the matter over with him for over half an hour. His face clearly indicated that he was at the point of bursting forth with joy and with something that he wanted to say. At last he said it: ‘I know Swamiji Maharaj.’ We were surprised. ‘I saw him when he was in the Satyasevashram at Lakshmanjhula. I was a young lad then.’ His name which we had casually heard of assumed a new meaning for us. Instantly we shouted: ‘Are you the Banerji of Kalibari?’ He calmly said: ‘Yes.’

Now we could connect up everything that had happened since this morning. How well Siva arranges every event in proper sequence. How miraculously his hidden hand guides us. Mamrajji, whom we never expected, accompanied us to Dehra Dun. Why? In order to introduce us to the man whom Siva wanted us to meet. The two Advocates that Judge Saheb wanted to meet were not in the Court. Why? Because, we were to meet the man whom Siva wanted us to meet.

The subject of the conversation then centred entirely on Siva and Banerji’s meeting with him, twenty years ago.

‘How hard he used to work,’ B. continued. ‘Seva for him was second-nature. Seva was his great Yoga. Seva was the Open Sesame of the door to Liberation. Subsisting on the meagre Kshetra rations, he used to serve, serve and serve throughout the day. I met him along with my brother and family. During the course of the conversation we had with him, he asked me not to marry. I am now over forty: and I am still a bachelor and hope, by his blessings, to continue to be so. So strong was the impression created by his commands.’

We had Kirtan that night in the Kali Bari of the Kali temple.

12TH OCTOBER, 1949

COLINS TURNBULL

Yet another student from the West—Colins Turnbull—has come to the Ashram to drink deep from the fountain of Light.

After the night Satsang, Siva turned to C.T. and said: 'Learn Sanskrit. Study the first and second books of Bhandarkar. They will give you enough knowledge of the language to enable you to read the Vedantic texts in their original and appreciate their grandeur. You can do it in six months.'

'Yes, Swamiji. I have already begun learning Sanskrit.'

T. is leaving tomorrow and told Siva so.

'Come again. Come here whenever you want to take rest. This is your own home. From Banaras you can come here and spend your holidays here. Even from Scotland you can fly to Rishikesh for a period of rest and meditation.'

As we were walking down the Bhajan Hall, Siva said: 'All the leaders in the West should learn philosophy. Even if they acquire a theoretical knowledge of philosophy, that will be sufficient to impel them to put into practice at least a little of it. That itself will enable them to give the proper lead to the people and to govern their countries properly.' After a moment's pause, he resumed: 'Philosophy must be made a subject of compulsory study in the schools. Only that can solve the problem. But, what an irony of fate. Whereas, India ought to have given the lead in this respect and by example inspired the western universities to introduce philosophy as a compulsory subject, she has herself banned the teaching of philosophy in her schools.'

16TH OCTOBER, 1949

RECIPE FOR PEACE OF MIND

Sri R., an officer of the Government of India, has come. He wears a worried look. A look at him will suffice to show that his mind is greatly perturbed.

Siva greeted him and made him sit. He found out the trouble that afflicted the visitor.

'I come from....' began R.

'Please have your bath in the Ganges,' interrupted Siva, unwilling to let R. remind himself of his mental condition, while he is in the Abode of Bliss. 'Then, kindly go up the hill. There is a beautiful temple dedicated to Lord Viswanath. Chant Rudram there. Recite Stotras also. Then go to the Bhajan Hall where the Akhanda Maha Mantra Kirtan is going on for the last five years. Do Kirtan for an hour. By that time, food will be ready.'

R. was amazed at the programme that Siva had chalked out for him. Without another word, he left the Hall.

In the afternoon, R. met Siva in the office. He was a thoroughly changed person now. He was cheerful and in a very happy mood. As he came into the office, some Ashramites were taking Roneo-copies of the Forest University Weekly. R. took part in the work. When Siva came, he prostrated at his feet.

'Swamiji, this is really Ananda Kutir. Peace and Bliss reside here only.' Then he related his story. His duty is to bring to books bribe-takers and corrupt officers. In the discharge of his duty, however, he has to proceed against high officials. They dislike him. They make it impossible for him to carry on his work. They have forced him to go on leave. And, his conscience does not allow him to countenance dishonesty.

Siva told him: 'Lay your burden on His shoulders. He will help you. Be honest. Be truthful. If you feel that you cannot carry on due to unfavourable circumstances, resign. Take it as God's hint that you are to evolve rapidly in the spiritual path and that He intends you to do something worthier than toil in a Government office. Dedicate yourself to some spiritual institution. Through the institution, serve humanity. You will attain Moksha.'

19TH OCTOBER, 1949

COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS AND CALCULATING BRAIN

An official of the Government of India and another from the Bihar Government were having an interview with Siva. The Govt. of India man wanted to know the essence of Vedanta and Siva's method of attaining cosmic consciousness. Siva said:

'Infinite expansion of consciousness is the goal of Vedanta. Aham Brahma Asmi. I am the infinite Brahman. Bhuma. Besides me nothing else exists. I am the Soul of everything that exists. The actual realisation of this great truth is the goal of Vedanta.'

'Mere study of texts dealing with Vedanta will not do. We must introspect and find out the draw-backs in us. A man will come to the Ashram and will stay here for three days. At the end of his stay, he will calculate thus: 4 as per meal, 6 meals come to 1.8. Tea and milk will cost me 1.8. And, then boldly come forward with a donation of Rs. 3! The very same man will not hesitate to spend 200 rupees on the purchase of a single saree to his daughter-in-law. That is 'my' daughter-in-law: this is 'an' Ashram. I should not spend on something which is 'mine' but not on something which is other than 'mine'. So long as this attitude is there, how can cosmic consciousness dawn in him? Practical realisation of Vedantic truths is possible only if you give up all this petty-mindedness. Give your all to some good institution. Renounce. Renounce. Renounce. Give. Give. And give. Then and then alone will your eyes be opened and then alone will you have cosmic consciousness or Brahma-Jnana.'

Surely, one who lives with Siva even for a few days, moves closely with him, watches every movement, every action of his closely and with inquisitive vision—he will not need a word from Siva's lips. For, Siva is a living commentary on the

bold utterance of the Upanishadic seers. His very life and every-day actions will provide one with ample illustration of what those sages must have meant when they uttered those great truths.

And, when Siva talks, on Vedanta, he always gives it a practical turn. He has no patience for polemics.

HOW TO SERVE THE SICK?

'Oh Madi Swamiji, did you take the temperature of Balammal in the evening?' Siva asked, as he was coming out of the Bhajan Hall after the night Satsang.

'I did not go there in the evening, Swamiji.'

At once Siva went to the patient's room. And, he would not leave the place until every minute detail in connection with the patient's requirements had been attended to.

Siva, then, said: 'Put yourself in the patient's place. That is the best way to ensure attention to the minutest details. If you consider that you are the doctor, you will neglect some things. Even if you consider yourself a nurse, you will miss or forget some things. Think for a moment that you yourself are the patient. What are the things you will need? See that all those things are available to the patient. You must enter into the patient's spirit. That is real service.'

'There must be a bed-pan. This is most important, especially in the case of aged patients, like this lady. There should be light, matches, water in a bucket and a tumbler. All these things should be neatly arranged in the room so that the patient can reach out to them without much difficulty. You should pay particular attention to the arrangement of the bed. Even the slightest carelessness in this regard will deprive the patient of nature's most powerful remedy—sleep. Haphazard making of the bed will not do. What might be a mild discomfort to a healthy man will be unbearable horror to a sick man—bear this always in mind.'

'Viswanathan and Ramakrishnan are training themselves in service. They have willingness to learn. They have eagerness to serve. You should not lose one opportunity of service. Then and then alone will this selfless service become a part of you.'

'Lord Dattatreya says in the very first Sloka of the Avadhuta Gita that Adwaitic realisation is impossible for one unless there is God's grace. God's grace can be obtained only through sincere, untiring selfless service and Upasana. Service of the sick is the greatest form of selfless service, which will at once clean the heart and invoke God's grace into it.'

24TH OCTOBER, 1949

THE LESSON WOMAN NEEDS MOST

Three Siamese girl-students of Banaras University have come to the Ashram to stay for a couple of days and learn what they could, of Siva and his philosophy. Siva entertained them nicely on their arrival: gave them several books with his

autographed blessings: and after they had listened to the Gramophone records of Siva's Kirtans, had them taken round the Ashram. They were shown the Yoga Museum also.

In the course of their conversation with Siva, he told them: 'The impact of Western civilisation on Eastern culture has had the baneful result of making the Eastern men and women worship their body instead of the soul. This is especially true of the ladies. They spend all their time in beautifying their body. In spite of all the beauty-aids, no one will be able to prevent old age and death. In a moment all this physical beauty will vanish. Feel and realise that real beauty is in the Soul or the Atman alone. All other beauties are evanescent. Therefore, do not attach much importance to them. Meditate on the Atma, the Beauty of beauties. This Atma is imperishable: therefore, the attention that you bestow on It will be really worthwhile. The Atma never ages: It never dies. Realise this Truth. Then, and then alone have you learned to beautify yourself really and truly.'

FOOD AND THE EATER ARE ONE

During the night Satsang, a South Indian devotee recited a Mantra from the Sama Veda: 'Aham Annam, Aham Annadah'. After he had concluded, Siva explained the significance, in a few words, especially for the benefit of the Siamese visitors.

The Vedic seer has, at a moment of Cosmic Consciousness, ecstatically sung: 'Oh I am the food. I am the eater of the food.' This only goes to prove that in reality the objects and their enjoyer within are one and the same, and that the duality and plurality that are perceived through the senses are false and illusory.

'Once this truth is recognised, and one comes to feel the oneness of the objects and the enjoyer, then desire for objective enjoyment will vanish. True Vairagya will dawn in man. He will yearn to perceive and realise that Seer within, that Enjoyer within Who Himself is All. When desires have vanished and Para Vairagya dawns in man, he soon crosses beyond Maya and Samsara and attains Nirvana very soon.'

OM MANI PADME HUM

Such is the catholicity of Siva and his consideration for the views and feelings of others, that today, at the end of his Kirtans and Bhajans (in the course of which he had chosen to include many of his songs and poems on Vairagya and Vedanta) he included along with his Maha Mantra Kirtan, the Buddhistic Mantra, also (in the same tune)....

*Om Mani Padme Hum, Mani Padme Hum, Mani Padma Hum,
Mani Padme Hum*

25TH OCTOBER, 1949

ROLLING STONE GATHERS NO MOSS

Sri Swami X's eagerness for the Parivrajak life brought forth the following Upadesha from the lips of Siva:

'An occasional spell of Parivrajak life is no doubt very good as a measure of discipline. If you are vigilant, you will be able to learn many good lessons during the wanderings, and you will be able to cultivate perfect and unconditional self-surrender to the Will of the Lord.

'But the present-day world is not suitable for a Sanyasin taking forever to the Parivrajak life. In days of yore, Paramahamsas who had had Atma Sakshatkara wandered about fearlessly: their bodily needs were attended to by the householders, and, they in their turn, blessed the householders, gave them spiritual instruction and thus carried out the Will of the Lord and preserved Dharma. Such Self-realised Parivrajakas are rare nowadays. The people, too, have lost the reverence which their ancestors had towards Sanyasins. Therefore, such Parivrajaka life nowadays is fraught with dangers and temptations.'

'You cannot practise much Sadhana during your Parivrajaka life. Morning till evening you will be concerned about yourself. Walking and walking will make you tired: and the rest of the time you will only worry about your food. You cannot do much selfless service. You cannot practise much Dhyana, either. Stick to one place. Serve the humanity from there. Purify the heart through service and worship. Meditate and realise.'

WHY SIVA CAME TO RISHIKESH?

'When I came away from Malaya and took to the wandering life, I was soon tired of it. I wanted seclusion and meditation—which were hard to get during the wandering life. I wanted books for study. I found out that these three things were essential for a Sadhu if he was to carry on his spiritual practices—service, Bhajan, and meditation—uninterruptedly, viz., food, medical care and library. I went to many places on the way. But none of them satisfied me, till I reached Rishikesh where I found all the three, besides a most wonderful and delightful place for Dhyana. When you find such a place, always stick to it and never move from there. Find out every opportunity of serving humanity. Watch, watch, and watch. Serve and then do Bhajan: then serve again. Then meditate—go on rotating these three. You will have rapid spiritual progress.'

27TH OCTOBER, 1949

SADHU ELEMENT VS. BABU ELEMENT

Sri S. and Sri J. have left the Ashram. Another Ashramite had also been instigated by Sri J. to leave the Ashram, but had a miraculous escape as he had to go to Dehra Dun on the appointed day. When the matter was brought to Siva's notice by this Ashramite, with the request that he, too, might be allowed to follow them

for a short while, to help them settle down somewhere, Siva gave us the following Upadesha:

'I thought that Sri J. was a quiet worker and efficient. He appeared to be very good, simple and humble: but now he has proved that his inside was filled with venom. It was God's grace that has save you. He has not only ruined himself, but has done a great disservice to Sri S. and the Ashram, too, by enticing Sri S. also away.

'Only people with good, spiritual Samskaras will stay here. Others will go away. You will not find a place like this anywhere else in the world. You have all conveniences here *plus* Ganges, Himalayas and seclusion. A good library, a dispensary, temple, Bhajan Hall, food and clothing—everything you have here. You have splendid opportunities of serving humanity. Identify yourself heart and soul with the institution. Make it your own. If they have gone, do not bother yourself now. What have you to do with them? If they have been courageous enough to go away, they will have the capacity to settle themselves down. You need not run after them. Why: I am here: and your own institution is here, which serves humanity. Why not help it instead of trying to help runaways?'

'God knows who are to stay here. He is the Antaryamin. People like Sri S. and J. may be good workers: but they do not have spiritual Samskaras. They have not got the Sadhu element.'

'You may be a very good worker. You may be a brilliant scholar. You may be able to recite the Gita, Upanishads and Brahma Sutras from end to the beginning. You may be an expert in Hatha Yogic Kriyas. All these are no good if you do not possess the Sadhu-element. What is the use of study, meditation, and bead-rolling? What is the use of standing upside down for three hours? Remember this point very well: if you do not have the Sadhu-element, you are a failure as a Sanyasin.'

'The Sadhu-element is a peculiar mixture of various noble qualities. It is an indescribable something which you will recognise at once when you see the man who has it. It is comprised of humility, fortitude, forbearance, forgiveness, tranquillity, spirit of service, adaptability, cheerful surrender to the will of the Lord, freedom from anger, lust and greed, and complete absence of the complaining spirit. One who has the Sadhu-element in him will be ever joyful and he will take everything calmly—'Everything is God's grace'. He will have no occasion to complain.'

'The Babu-element on the other hand will have nothing but complaint. If there is a little less sugar in the tea one day, if tea is given late one day, he will fly into a rage. He will be a cut-throat. His heart will be full of hatred, jealousy, greed and lust. He always hankers after power and prestige. He is fond of back-biting, scandal-mongering, plotting and diplomacy. He has a vigorous scheming brain. He is selfish, selfish and selfish to the very core of his being. When you move with him for a couple of days, you will at once know his nature: beware of such people.'

'All your Sadhana should be directed towards the development of the Sadhu-element in you, and the eradication of the Babu-element. You may be an illiterate man, unable even to talk a few words: but, if you have the Sadhu-element preponderant in you, you are a sage!'

We were all thankful to Sri J. who was instrumental in providing us with this rarest treat from Siva's lips.



NOVEMBER, 1949

4TH NOVEMBER, 1949

HOW CAN I HAVE RAM'S DARSHAN?

Sri. R.P. who has been placed in charge of the Publication League, felt a bit nervous and diffident about his capabilities. He felt that was too much of a responsible position for him to occupy with success.

As Siva entered the Office, Sri R.P. caught his eye. 'Ohji, don't be afraid of the work. I have written to Sri Mohindra and if he agrees we shall employ him as the Manager of the League. You can also assist him and get yourself thoroughly trained by him.

'Don't be afraid of work. Don't try to run away from it. You have a sweet voice: you have nicely developed the poetic faculties. You have great devotion to the Lord also.'

'Know that the best way to attain the Lord is through work and work alone. Go and remain in a cave for twelve years without doing any work. Then come back and tell me whether you have improved or degenerated. Work here ceaselessly: and do one Mala of Japa. Find out for yourself which method helps you evolve more quickly in the spiritual path. Even if you remain in a cave for twelve years you cannot have Darshan of the Lord. But, if you serve selflessly, work and work ceaselessly, and in the intervals do Japa of the Lord's name for some time daily, the Lord will at once come to you. When selfless service has purified your heart, even before you finish the first Mala of Japa, the Lord will appear before you.'

'You do not have the vision to see what a great and soul-elevating power this service has. If only you are able to see the actual change in your heart that this service brings about, and if you are mentally able to compare this with the change that cave-dwelling will bring about, then you will at once agree with me. It is lack of this knowledge that makes you dread work. It is that which makes you feel that work is waste of time and that God can be attained only through parrot-like repetition of a Mantra.

'Go and see the Sadhus who live an idle life. They have no care. They have no responsibility. They will pretend that they have attained a very high stage when they ought to give up work. All that they are concerned about is their daily Bhiksha. They can get up at 9 a.m. and prepared to go to the Kshetra. Come back, take the food and sleep. Wake up again for Bhiksha. That is their life. Man's very nature is Tamasic. You have to conquer that through intense selfless service. Then Satva will supervene.'

'It is this Tamas that prompts you from within to shirk work. It is Tamas that prompts you to go away and lead an independent life. You are sure of free food from Kshetras. This free food system should be stopped altogether. It is this alone that encourages man to revel in his Tamasic indulgence.'

'You should become a dynamic Yogi. Work alone will enable you to control your mind, to banish evil thoughts from the mind and to purify the heart. In a purified heart alone will the Lord reveal Himself. Look at me. There is 8 per cent sugar in my urine. I have so many other physical ailments. I cannot even stand for an hour at a stretch: I feel giddy. Yet, I have been working till now. You have all taken your food. But, here I am still at my work. It will take two hours for me before I can take my food.'

'You are a good worker, no doubt. But, you feel diffident. That diffidence you can conquer only when you take intense joy in service. You should love to undertake responsible work. You wish to realise God: but can you for a moment think of God's Great Responsibility? You are afraid of this petty work. And, yet, you wish to realise Him Who bears the burden of protecting and maintaining the whole universe. You think that work will interfere with your meditation. Read the life of any saint. You will find that he has practised and preached selfless service. Everyone has worked till the very end of his life. Such should be your attitude. Then and then alone can you have Darshan of Lord Rama in a minute.'

12TH NOVEMBER, 1949

YOGA – HOW MANY YEARS' COURSE?

The Jnana Yajna, according to Vedic rituals, conducted by Sr. R. Ananthakrishna Sastri, was in progress in the temple.

Two European (Swiss) tourists came to the temple to have Siva's Darshan. They had noticed, on the road leading to the temple, a big sign-board bearing the words, 'Yoga-Vedanta Forest University'. They had also seen the University's Weekly magazine. The first question that came to their lips when they met Siva was: 'How long does it take one to complete the Forest University Course on Yoga and Vedanta?'

Siva's reply was quick: 'A life-time.'

'What!'

'Yes: if you are to pass the final test of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University, which is Self-realisation, you have to dedicate your life to the study and practice of Yoga and Vedanta. It will not do just to read a few books and vomit the knowledge on your answer papers at the Examination and feel mightily pleased with yourself, thinking 'I am a great Yogi now.' Yoga and Vedanta should become part and parcel of your very being. You should not only know intellectually what Vedanta says, but you should actually feel and realise for yourself the Truth about which Yoga and Vedanta preach.'

'What a great difference between the Western universities and this one here!' thought the Europeans and went their way, bowing in humility before the great sage Siva.

24TH NOVEMBER, 1949

WORLD PACIFISTS AT ANANDA KUTIR

At 9 a.m. two ladies, Mrs. Mildred Fahrni and Mrs. Magda Trocme, delegates to the World Pacifists Conference, came into the Office accompanied by Sri Narayan of the Pashulok Ashram.

Siva's hospitality-machine was at once set in vigorous motion. It started with fruits, biscuits and tea and ended with a spoonful of Chyavanaprash. The ladies liked this immensely: and Siva gave them a tin each. He looked at Mrs. Fahrni's hair and remarked: 'Do you use hair-oil?' and without waiting for an answer, quietly passed on a bottle of the Brahmi-Amla oil. 'Besides serving as hair oil, it will cool the brain and increase your brain-power.'

Grammophone-Siva sang 'The Song of Ities' to the right of the ladies. From their left, too, they heard the same song. Bewildered, they looked this side and that. The two Sivas sang into the ladies' heart from either side.

Siva had in the meantime passed on a number of books, specially autographed by him, to the ladies.

Padmanabhan was very busy taking photographs and movie-films, too. Mrs. Fahrni, a camera-enthusiast, noticed this. As soon as we walked out of the D.J. Hall, she said: 'Now, may I take a snap of you, Swamiji?' Siva posed for a picture: then, all of us did so, too. We went to the Yoga Museum. The lay-out of the Museum was explained to them. They listened to the explanation with eager interest.

Then we went to the Art Studio and Mrs. Mildred was absorbed in the study of the huge albums of photographs that had accumulated there. One album contained a photograph of Siva in the Purvasharam in Malaya. 'Is this you, Swamiji?' asked Mildred, apparently puzzled at the difference between then and now.

'Yes, yes. I was very thin then!' said Siva. 'Thinness and fatness belong to the body. The soul is bodiless.'

From there we went to the Bhajan Hall. Siva explained: 'Here the Great Mantra is continuously repeated throughout the day. That has been going on for the last six years. This Mantra occurs in the Upanishads. It is in praise of the Lord. It is very potent. It is said that in this Iron Age the repetition of this Mantra alone will lead one to God-realisation.'

Siva asked a young Brahmachari to chant Sri Rudram. 'This is a Vedic chant in praise of Lord Siva. All His attributes are enumerated. A very significant thing about this chant is that He is considered as the Best of everything—good and bad. That is point out to us that the same Consciousness pervades all that is good and all that is (or, more accurately, seems to be) bad, too. That should be the attitude of the wise man.'

'Do you worship only Hindu gods here, Swamiji?' asked Mrs. Trocme.

'No, no. I sing the names of all gods of all religions, all prophets and saviours. See: here we have the picture of Lord Buddha. There you see the picture of Lord Jesus, that of Guru Nanak, etc. On every Thursday night (Guru Day) I sing the names of all these saints and prophets. So saying, Siva sang the following Kirtan:

Bhajo Lord Jesus	Bhajo Mother Mary
Bhajo St. Francis	Bhajo St. Joseph
Bhajo Lord Buddha	Bhajo Lord Mahaveer
Bhajo Guru Nanak	Bhajo Ahur Mazda

Then we went to the temple. Siva explained to them the significance of the Prasad.

'Prasad is the sacred offering to the Lord of Bhasma (holy ash) and Kumkum (vermillion), as well as bael leaves. The offering is accompanied by powerful Mantras. The Prasad is, therefore, very potent. Devotees who have faith in the Prasad derive great benefits from applying this Prasad on their forehead. Incurable diseases are cured, often, by the mere use of this Prasad. Besides, bael leaf is good for diabetes.

As we were coming out of the temple, the entire group was photographed. Mrs. Magda said: 'Swamiji, this is the best place in the whole world. Not only is the scenery superb, but the holy vibrations here are full of peace, bliss and calm.'

25TH NOVEMBER, 1949

R.A. SASTRI

Sri R. Ananthakrishna Sastri, who has been conducting a series of lectures on the Upanishads, concluded it today as he is leaving for Delhi the day after tomorrow.

With his characteristic forethought, Siva had arranged for taking due advantage of the occasion to honour the noble Sastrigal.

As soon as the Sastrigal had concluded his day's discourse and also announced that it was his last at the Ashram during his present visit, Siva garlanded him with a suddenness that literally unnerved R.A.S. S. was trembling with emotion at this great honour shown to him by a sage. Before he could give expression to his sentiments, Siva with remarkable cool-headedness began:

'It is a rare good fortune for us all to have been blessed with Sr. Sastriji's Satsang for the past nearly a month. We are thankful to God for this. To Sri Sastriji we owe a deep debt of gratitude for taking the trouble of delivering his learned discourses every day.'

'We have many lessons to learn from him. First and foremost is his punctuality. It is a virtue which every spiritual aspirant should possess in abundance. Without punctuality and regularity in Sadhana no progress is possible.'

'Sri Sastriji has developed Titiksha to an extraordinary degree. During his pilgrimage to the North Pole region where he worshipped the sun all the twenty-

four hours, in that icy cold region, he broke the ice and took his bath in the cold water early in the morning. Even here, he was regular in his early morning bath in the Ganges. It requires great will-power to do so. And, this will-power is developed through systematic and persevering effort. Steady application to the task you have undertaken will crown your efforts with sure success.'

'The great service that Sri Sastriji has rendered to the cause of the preservation and popularisation of old manuscripts, is unimaginable. To the Sadhaks all over the world, especially his researches into our ancient scriptures have been invaluable. He has (so to say) given a new life to Suta Samhita. He has translated this great scripture into Tamil also. He has translated several great Sanskrit works into English.'

'Look at his zeal for service, his intense desire to share with others the knowledge that he possesses. Even at the ripe old age of 85, he is still delivering fiery lectures on the Upanishads. You should all strive to emulate his glorious example. May God bless Sri Sastriji with many more years of service to humanity. May God bless you all.'

As we left the Hall, Sri S. remarked: 'Swamiji, when you showed me that honour, put a garland round my neck and spoke about me, I was simply trembling with emotion. I did not know what to do. I was practically not myself. I was, as it were, in a different world altogether.'

In the evening Sri S. had arranged to perform ceremonial worship of the Ganges. At four the Ghat had been nicely cleaned and all the Ashramites had taken their seats beautifully on the steps. Siva was there, too. S. and his wife began the worship. Siva was intently watching the process.

'One year's daily ceremonial worship of the Ganges like this is equal to one week's whole-hearted service to a typhoid patient, washing his clothes and removing bed-pan. Such service will at once purify the heart and bring about inner illumination,' and added after a few minutes: 'Nurses serve the patients in the hospitals. But there is no inner purification for them, because they do not have the proper Bhavana when they serve.'

Siva then noticed some inmates had also joined in the worship and were offering bael leaves to Ganga.

'Each person is offering only his own bael leaf to the Ganges. What a grand thing would it be if one has the real inner feeling that He alone offers the worship through all hands. How much more effective will that worship be.'

This last remark contains the very essence of what Siva is. He constantly identifies himself with the Supreme Consciousness in a fraction of whose reflected light numberless universes exist. He 'knows' that He and He alone works through all: and because of the depth of his realisation of this truth, he does work through all. That is for a Siddha.



DECEMBER, 1949

4TH DECEMBER, 1949

THE UNCHANGING ONE

Sri V.G. Garde and Srimathi Leelavathi have come from Roorkee. These two noble souls who have dedicated their lives to Siva, their beloved Guru, have been frequently visiting the Ashram for the last several years. Their devotion to Siva is ever on the increase. Behind all the phenomenal growth of the Society and the Ashram, they only see the miraculous hand of Siva, and their devotion to him becomes more intense.

As the couple sat near Siva in the office and were being entertained by him to a light repast, Siva pointed out to some of the Ashramites standing around them: 'Do you know him? Do you know the other man? He might be new to you,' and 'You find many new faces in the Ashram. You find that several old people have gone away. You find so many changes. But, there is one unchanging element here.'

'Yes, Swamiji. And, that is yourself. It is only this unchanging element in the Ashram that has enabled all this work to go on smoothly and efficiently in spite of the constant change here. It is this unchanging One that gives strength and power for the changing ones to carry on the work.'

GOVERNMENT vs. ASHRAM

Sri B.M. Maheshwari, Addl. District Magistrate, Tehri, walked into the Hall as Mr. and Mrs. Garde were preparing to go round the Ashram. While taking his tea, Sri B.M.M. explained to a Swami who had come along with him the most noteworthy features of the Ashram, especially the Yoga Museum.

Siva interrupted him and said: 'We have not got a generator with the help of which we are able to project 8 and 16 mm movie films. We have got a lot of films depicting the activities of the Ashram. Padmanabhan has gone to Patna. As soon as he comes back I will send word to you. You can see the films. You will greatly enjoy them.'

'I would love to, Swamiji. And, I shall bring with me a reel of movie-film which we took on the occasion of the State's merger with the U.P. We have not so far been able to see the film for want of a projector. I shall bring it with me and we shall project it here.'

I AM EVER WITH YOU

After selecting the site for the construction of a temple to house Siva's marble image, and asking Mr. Garde to prepare a plan, Siva was leaving for his Kutir. Mr. and Mrs. Garde were going to Lakshmanjhula. 'Swamiji, perhaps we may not see you again before we leave. We shall take leave of you.' They prostrated.

'I am always with you,' said Siva, hinting that the union of Guru and disciple is an eternal union of souls.

10TH DECEMBER, 1949

THEN AND NOW

Sri C.V. Narayana Iyer has come. Siva greeted him cordially. N. prostrated before Siva.

‘Ready?’ queried Siva omitting even his usual formal enquiries.

‘Yes, Swamiji, even this very moment.’

‘Oh yes. The time has come now. Guruwara is the best day. Then let it be next Guruwara (Thursday). Subhasya Seeghrum: auspicious things must be done quickly, without procrastination.’ And, Siva added, after a pause, ‘No, no. Why not tomorrow itself? Tell Krishnanandaji to get everything ready. We will have it done with proper Viraja Homam etc.’

Thus with a few minutes of his arrival at the Ashram, Sr. N. got Siva’s permission to be initiated into Sanyas.

N. had recently written to Siva and got a ready answer: ‘Yes, I will give you Sanyas. Kindly come.’ The word ‘kindly’ moved N. He said to me: ‘Perhaps it may be possible for a few aspiring souls to become a great Yogi like Swamiji. A few might even be able to do dynamic selfless service to humanity, like Swamiji. But this humility-cum-love it is impossible for one to develop. He does not write ‘You may come’: or ‘Come’: but ‘kindly come’ as though he deems it a favour done to himself.’

C.V.N. also confessed to Siva: ‘I was not ready for Sanyas when I came last time. I had not fully discharged my worldly duties. And, I had several worldly ambitions. So, you sent me back. Now, the time has come. You have called me to yourself.’

SIVA NEVER FORGETS HIS LESSONS

He is a wise man who learns from others’ experiences: a mediocre who learns by his own: a fool who learns from neither.

Ramakrishnan was explaining to Siva the location of the Bharati Memorial at Ettayapuram. Siva was trying to remember the topography of the place. When R. described the location of a street, Siva at once identified it:

‘Oh yes, yes. That was the street in which all the houses were once destroyed. There were many thatched huts in that street. Next to it was the bazaar. One of the shops caught fire, and the fire soon spread to all the thatched houses on that street. The entire thing was reduced to ashes in no time.’

Siva’s recollection of this incident is significant. He remembers other things about Ettayapuram only vaguely: but remembers the fire that destroyed the thatched huts very vividly. And, this incident taught him a lesson: ‘Never build a thatched hut. Nothing in it is safe.’ To this day, even the gods cannot persuade him to build a thatched shed for any purpose—even to provide a closed room for the purpose of stocking bricks.

11TH DECEMBER, 1949

RAGHAVACHARYAJI'S BIRTHDAY

One has to learn from Siva the art of construction thinking and acting. No looking back or thinking of pros and cons or vacillating: but sheer good action and that, too, without any premeditation.

In the afternoon at about 3, Siva was told that today the Darshana Maha Vidyalaya people are celebrating Sri Raghavacharyaji's birthday. This 'shortness' of notice could not disconcert Siva. At once he said: 'Please see if there are fruits in the kitchen. If not, as someone to go to the bazaar immediately and get fruits. Bring a plateful of fruits, nuts, and also ten rupees. Ask Padmanabhanji to clean a petromax to be sent to the Vidyalaya for the evening function.'

Within ten minutes the fruits, money, etc. were brought. Siva added to this, a Hindi book of his also.

In the evening Siva went to the Vidyalaya to take part in the celebrations.

During the course of his address to the disciples and devotees of Sri R., Siva observed:

'I have been repeating year after year my suggestion that the immediate disciples of Sri Acharyaji should sit down and commence the great work of writing his biography. It is the disciple's duty to his Master.'

'There is another, and a more important aspect to this work. It is the spiritual. Your quest is to find out that something which really exists, as distinct from that which does not exist, but appears to be. Existence never eases to be. During your waking state you see the diverse phenomena. During the dreaming state, the external vision vanishes: but you see the diverse phenomena in your own mind. But, again, in deep sleep both these phenomena disappear altogether and you pass into a state of unity within yourself. The outside world is altogether lost to you. Yet, when there is not the slightest pleasure derived from external objects, you derive an intense inner bliss. When you wake up, you feel that you slept soundly and therefore experienced an inner joy. But, during this deep sleep state when you pass into that unity, you are not conscious of the state. Ignorance veils you. If you can consciously bring about that state of unity within yourself, withdraw your mind from the Indriyas and direct all your attention to your Self, then you will consciously experience the state of bliss called Samadhi.'

'That is the real state of everyone. There is no duality in that state. Therefore, the Reality is One only. When you celebrate the birthday of Sri Acharyaji, you should feel that you are worshipping that Inner Reality, your own Self. The consciousness of this Self is more fully awakened in the Jnani than in a worldly man. That is the difference. Therefore, the worldly man and the aspiring baby-souls, when they thus worship the Jnani, get an opportunity of thinking of him and meditating upon him, thus stirring within themselves a desire to become like the Jnani. You worship that Consciousness today. That Consciousness will bless you and fulfil your spiritual ambitions. That Consciousness will show you the way

to the annihilation of ignorance. That is the secret of celebrating the birthday of saints. Saints are not in need of your honouring them. They are beyond honour and dishonour. They are here only for your sake. If you worship them with Bhav and devotion, you get in tune with their grace through which you can realise your own Self. If in that spirit you begin to write Sri Acharyaji's biography, you will be greatly benefited in your spiritual evolution.'

12TH DECEMBER, 1949

GOPAL KRISHNAN

We had intimation from the local police that Sri Jyoti Prasadji, the District Magistrate of Tehri, will be paying a visit to the Ashram in the morning.

And, he brought with him Sri Gopal Krishnan, the Finance Secretary of the U.P., Mrs. Gopala Krishnan and children.

Siva would not listen to their plea that they had just had their tea before they left Narendranagar. They took the tea as Siva's Prasad.

All the visitors eagerly listened to the gramophone records of Siva's speeches and Kirtans.

Four people were busy, in the meantime, assisting Siva in making his great gift of Vidya to the visitors. One Sadhak ran to fetch the books, another gave them to Siva, a third was noting down the names of the books presented, and a fourth was ready to pack them up. Thus the books were autographed, presented to the visitors and later packed up neatly in bundles—all within a few minutes.

'You have given us a library of books,' remarked Mrs. G., who was amazed at the rapidity with which the books flowed.

Siva autographed a few books for Sri J.P. also. 'Perhaps, I have them, Swamiji.'

'If you have them, then give these to your friends,' replied Siva whose zeal for dissemination of spiritual knowledge at any cost, is unequalled.

Siva then took them to the hall adjoining the office. He invited them to take their seats on the cement benches there and enjoy the lovely view of the Ganges and the Himalayas. They all sat drinking deep the beauty of Ananda Kutir scenery, and Siva rejoiced at their joy.

'You must come here and stay for a week. Then you will really enjoy the real beauty of the place which is filled with a kind of ineffable peace.'

'Do you allow laymen also to stay here, Swamiji?' asked Mrs. G.

'Oh yes,' replied Siva, and added after a pause, 'the layman is the saint of the future.' As he said this, one could readily see that he had suddenly receded far, far away from those around him, though for all outward appearances he still appeared to be standing close-by. He had travelled many planes of consciousness and reached the one where saints and sinners, men and women, animals and mankind, had all lost their individual identity and become one. He seemed to say:

'It is all a question of awakening the consciousness. When It is veiled a man is a sinner or a layman. When It is unveiled, he is a saint.'

And, the party led by Siva wended its way up the hill. As we neared the foot of the proposed stairway to the Mandir, Siva informed J.P.: 'There is a proposal to construct steps from here right to the Mandir up the hill,' and added, turning to the Finance Secretary, Sri G., 'but it is waiting for finance.'

'An institution like this, rendering such invaluable service to the nation by the preservation of her culture, ought to get a substantial aid from the Government of the country,' remarked Sri J.P.

Mr. and Mrs. G. evinced great interest in the Kaivalya Guha construction. It was explained to them that Siva used to meditate in the cave during the summer afternoon. 'A lovely place full of peace,' remarked Mrs. G.

From a saint's cave-dwelling the party went straight into the Ashram's Cinema Hall where they witnessed a movie-film depicting Siva's daily life. The entire party was agreeably surprised to see that the Ashram combined the most ancient with the most modern, so beautifully.

As we were returning from the Mandir, Padmanabhan was ready with his Speedgraphic. This disciple of Siva would not wait for the party to 'organise themselves' before he snapped, and there were just enough seconds for Mrs. G. to be requested to face the camera when the shutter clicked.

'Mr. and Mrs. Gopala Krishnan would love to possess a memento of their visit to the Ashram,' remarked Sri J.P.

'Certainly, and to have a photograph with Swamiji amidst us is such a precious memento,' agreed Mrs. G.

As the party bowed to take leave of Siva, he said: 'Please take them and show them the Gita Bhavan also.'

'You have just said what we have been thinking of, Swamiji,' said Sri J.P., surprised that Siva should express his thoughts!

As I was taking them to where they had to board the boat, Mr. G. who had so long been silently watching everything in the Ashram, asked: 'How long has Swamiji been here?'

'A little over twenty-five years.'

'This Society has been functioning here for the past twenty-five years?'

'No, no. The Society was started by Swamiji in 1936. In 1923 Swamiji came straight from Malaya to Swarg Ashram on the other side of the Ganges where he performed intense Tapasya. He entered Rishikesh with what clothes there were on his person—and they were all that he owned. What you see here today is what has grown around him during the course of the last ten years.'

This greatly surprised the party: 'Such growth within so short a time. What was all this before?'

‘A mere jungle.’

13TH DECEMBER, 1949

RUINOUS EXISTENCE

Sri R. has come to the Ashram. He took Brahmacharya Diksha from Siva some years ago. He was intelligent. He had a great opinion about his own intellectual merits. He poured over books and gained a lot of theoretical knowledge of Vedanta, etc. Ashram-life held no more charm for him. He took to the life of a wandering monk. He liked it. Today he has come back.

‘You like the wandering, care-free life, I think?’ asked Siva.

‘No, Swamiji. Now I have determined to stick to your lotus feet and serve you with all my heart.’

‘Aha! It took you such a long time to realise the futility of this nomadic life? Sanyas is not an order of life which should be embraced for the sake of Namaskars or garlands or for good food. Sanyas is for those who are made of sterner stuff. Continuous peeling of the outer coverings is necessary—That is renunciation. Till you get Atma-Jnana, this process of renunciation should continue.

‘Your preaching will have no value until you acquire that inner purity born of renunciation. Renunciation alone will give you the strength to preach and power to your words. Without renunciation, you become a slave to the householders. Even the respectability which your outward appearance indicative of your Ashram in life gradually fades away.

‘Constant mixing with householders for winning their respect and admiration, a desire to preach to others without caring for the reformation of your own self, and an innate craving for comforts and a little pleasure, have robbed you of the very yearning for liberation, have incapacitated you for Sadhana. You have lost during these few years of wandering life all that you might have gained during many lives of intense Sadhana.

‘It is essential for a Sadhaka to remain for a period in seclusion and practise intense Sadhana. Work is necessary. You should serve humanity. Seclusion and Seva are possible only if you remain at an ideal place for a considerable time. A rolling stone gathers no moss. I have created the best field for you. Here you can practise both seclusion and Seva also. From this Ashram you can serve the whole world. And, yet you will ever remain alone, untainted by worldliness.

‘I am glad you have at least now recognised the mistake of leaving this place and leading a wandering life. Hereafter do not even think of such a life. Stick to this place. You have ample opportunities of effecting a rapid evolution here.

14TH DECEMBER, 1949

DR. BAL KISHEN

‘Swamiji, I have been wanting to have your Darshan for a considerable time now. Sometime back I came to the house of the retired Judge living across the Ganga: and, though he himself was wanting to take me here, I had no time then to come to this Ashram. Now God has given me the opportunity.’

And, the visitor introduced himself as Dr. Bal Kishen, District Health Officer of Tehri-Garhwal.

‘As your dispensary is run by a charitable institution and is also doing wonderful work among the village-folk, it will be possible to persuade the Government to grant an annual subsidy,’ said the D.H.O.

‘All great works are accomplished through the willing and whole-hearted cooperation of several people. See there is the Kumbha Mela. And, on that account there is Mela here, of several people. The doctor, the Minister, the Municipal Chairman, the Policeman, and the Sanyasi also—all these together only can achieve the glorious work,’ remarked Siva when Dr. Bal Kishen was about to take leave of him.

Finally, Siva said: ‘You have got a period of very intense activity before you. Later you will have rest. Rest, then intense activity—alternately.’

‘Rest is a rare thing, Swamiji. Activity and tense activity, alternately,’ said the doctor.

‘Then, come here often. You will return fully re-charged with spiritual energy. You will feel more fit to do more intense work.’

CHIDANANDAJI RETURNS FROM PATNA

The party deputed by Siva to represent him at the inauguration of the Bihar Branch of the Divine Life Society by His excellency the Governor of Bihar, on the 3rd December, 1949, at Patna, has returned to the Ashram this morning.

‘You have simply thrilled the entire Patna and the whole of Bihar, too,’ greeted Siva as Chidanandaji bowed to him.

‘Throughout, by Swamiji’s grace, there has been a good response and a great eagerness on the part of the people everywhere to learn about the Ashram, the work and the Divine Life Message. The inaugural function at Patna was a great success, Swamiji.’

Vishnuji could not contain himself and interrupted with the remark: ‘Chidanandaji’s address at the inaugural function was thrilling, Swamiji. His voice was admirably suited to the mike. The whole audience of high officials of the Bihar Government and the students of the Bihar National College listened spell-bound to Chidanandaji. As Chidanandaji stood on the platform, he was like Vivekananda standing on the platform of the Parliament of Religions in Chicago.’

Vji continued: 'We had taken a lot of leaflets and magazines, Swamiji. And, Chidanandaji went on distributing them to everyone he met in the train, on the station platforms, to the railway staff, etc. We met several Engineers on the way who were returning from the Engineering University inauguration at Roorkee. Someone in the party met with an accident and Chidanandaji served him nicely. This created a great impression among them. In Patna itself, there were two miraculous experiences. A.K. Sinha's wife was down with fever and the temperature ran up to 102. He was worried if she would be able to attend the inaugural function the next day. Chidanandaji told him: 'She will be all right tomorrow.' And the next morning the fever had completely left her. At the ladies' meeting Sri A.K. Sinha's son was thinking of requesting Chidanandaji to deliver a talk of Sthree Dharma. Strangely enough, even before he could express his idea, Chidanandaji began his speech on Sthree Dharma. Sri Sinha's son was surprised and he said: 'I was going to ask you to speak on this very subject, Swamiji: I do not know how you read my thought.' On the train or bus, everywhere we went, Chidanandaji would distribute half the sweets and fruits that we purchased to the co-passengers. On the platform, he would distribute fruits purchased to the public, along with magazines and leaflets. He has great Prachar work during this trip, Swamiji.'

C. was in the meantime busy pulling out of the box what he brought with him, several tins of sweetmeats, etc. There were three pots of Sandila Laddus also.

Oh, Sandilya Laddus? Come, bring here, I will distribute them to the office people.'

Someone in the office corrected Siva. 'But is not Sandilya Laddu, Swamiji: it is Sandila Laddu. It is made at a place called Sandila.

'But, Sandilya suits me. It reminds me of sage Sandilya. Every time I eat these Laddus, I have an opportunity of thinking of sage Sandilya.'

JNANA YAJNA vs PROFIT

The 'Divine Life' magazine is running on a loss for the past two or three years. There has been a suggestion from one of the Trustees that the Magazine may be suspended for a year or two till the financial position of the Society was a little better.

Siva remarked: 'I cannot think of stopping a magazine, whatever be the loss. Actually, I am thinking of starting a few more Magazines. Because, we had just started the Weekly and therefore the workers here had to bear this additional burden of work, I have commenced printing my health articles in the form of small pamphlets, though I wanted to start one Health Magazine. Every month I will give one pamphlet on health, and distribute copies of this: it amounts to conducting a health magazine. When we have more workers, we shall start a proper health magazine.

'It does not matter if we incur a little loss in the beginning. How much knowledge we give the public. God will give us money when He thinks fit. We have to go on working. If today we are getting ten thousand rupees a month, it is due to the work that we did ten years ago. The effect of the increased volume of work that

we have undertaken today will be seen after ten years. Money is pouring forth now. Later on, gold will flow into the Society as from an ocean. I have therefore told Ram Mohan to go on sending sample copies of the Magazine, Weekly, etc., to every address he can lay his hands on.

'The Weekly is simply stirring the people today. People do not have the power of sustenance to keep up spiritual thoughts in their mind, amidst the din and bustle of day-to-day city existence: the Weekly serves them nicely. Every week it re-awakens them. What a lot of great thoughts it conveys to them. Oh, Vishnu Swami, every day you should send specimen copies to ten or fifteen people. Go on sending free. Serve, serve and serve. Serve motivelessly. God will reward you in due time.

15TH DECEMBER, 1949

SINCERE REPENTANCE

There was a suggestion that J, an inmate who has recently left the Ashram, might be requested to join Sri Narayanaswamiji in Calcutta and assist the latter in his work. This was placed before Siva, whose reply was firm and ready.

'No, no. If they have gone away out of hatred, ill-will and anger, let them go. Do not recall them. A wicked man will behave wickedly towards everyone. If you send him to Calcutta, he will quarrel with Narayanaswamiji.

'On the other hand, if he sincerely feels that he was wrong and that he should not have left the Ashram: if he sincerely repents for nurturing ill-feelings towards you all, then I will most readily welcome him back to the Ashram. After all it is very natural for human beings to err: it is natural for one man to misunderstand another and such misunderstanding will naturally breed some sort of ill-will and fight. But a sincere Sadhaka will reflect later on, repent for his mistake and reform himself. If he does so, then it shows that he has good spiritual Samskaras. If he does not, then it shows that he has none.

'If these two people have gone away, four new people of great ability have already come. Hundreds of graduates, MAs and dynamic workers are simply awaiting a call from here. God will provide us with workers. His work will go on.'

16TH DECEMBER, 1949

ADVICE TO DOCTORS

Dr. Garg of Mussoorie has come.

It was a miracle. Siva was thinking of going to Dehra Dun to get his eyes examined. We waited for the winter, and for the past one week he has been seriously thinking of going to Dehra Dun! His health has not been too well and there was some reluctance on our part to let him undertake this tiresome journey to Dehra Dun.

'For a very long time, Swamiji, I have been studying your works: and I have chosen you as my Gurudev. It has been my ardent desire to have your Darshan. God has fulfilled it today.'

'You are in Mussoorie?'

'Yes, Swamiji: I practise in Mussoorie. But at present I am undergoing specialised training under one Dr. Rev. Sutherland, of the Mission Hospital. Jagadhri.'

Siva then got his glasses tested by Garg who said that they were simple glasses and need not be changed unless they were positively useless.

'I am very glad to hear that. You have saved me a lot of trouble. I can utilise the time I would have spent on the Dehra Dun trip to more service here itself.'

Siva then revealed the secret of his good eye-sight: 'I am very regular in my Suryanamaskar, recitation of the Twelve Names of Surya and the Dhyana Mantra. I meditate on the rising sun. I do not take salt on Sundays. I am very regular in my Asan-Pranayam practice. Therefore, it is by the grace of Lord Surya I have good eye-sight. With good eye-sight you can do more Seva to mankind. Eye is the most important organ. Without eyesight you are as good as dead. Instead of serving others, there should be a dozen people to serve you.'

Dr. Garg described the noble qualities of Dr. Sutherland. Siva said:

'Kindly request Dr. Sutherland on my behalf to visit this place once before he leaves for England. He should stay here at least for a week. There is a small dispensary here which he can make use of for serving the poor people of the locality when he is here.'

'You should also come here whenever you get the opportunity. Come and stay for a week at least. You will have plenty of opportunity of rendering selfless service to the poor people. The Ashram dispensary is at your disposal. Every time some doctor-aspirant comes here, I take work from them. Dr. Mangalam, Dr. Sundari, Dr. Het Ram, Dr. Lall Dina, Dr. Prahlad—all these people when they come here automatically make the dispensary their own and begin to serve the people.'

'The medical profession is a noble profession. Through it you can very easily purify the mind and the heart. God-realisation is a matter of days and hours if you serve the patients sincerely and with Bhav. You should feel thankful to the patients for giving you the opportunity of serving them. The Bhav you can develop if you feel that you are serving the Lord Himself in the patient.'

'Never accept fees from the poor people. Serve them with all your heart and soul. Their prayer is a greater reward than even lakhs of rupees. If possible, you will have to give them special diet, milk and fruits, etc. at your own expense. Then you will have rapid self-purification.'

'I am very happy to hear of the noble qualities of Dr. Sutherland. Indeed, he is a real and practical Karma Yogi. To whichever nation or to whichever religion he might belong, he is a true Hindu, a true Brahmin and an ideal Yogi. The Lord will reveal Himself to such men, very quickly. You should also strive to become like him.'

18TH DECEMBER, 1949

THE RAT

After the party of World Pacifists who came to meet Siva had left, there was another group of visitors from Dehra Dun—a Punjabi professor and family. This professor is one of the silent admirers of Siva, one who has for a long time been studying his works and following his teachings.

‘Swamiji, your name has become a bye-word in the whole of Dehra-Dun.’

There was a discussion about the publication of books and the stocking of books, etc.

‘Here we have racks and racks of books. There is scarcity of workers and, therefore, there is lack of proper supervision. Rats eat away the books. There is a great loss of good reading matter.’

‘Swamiji, please use good rat traps, catch them and leave them far, far away. There is an ointment, Swamiji: it will help you to eliminate the rat- nuisance altogether.’

‘Oh yes, sometime told me about it. It is a great sin to think of using the ointment. It kills the rats, they say. It is unthinkable. Even its manufacture should be banned. Rats may be a nuisance. But they, too, are God’s creation. We have no right to kill them. The Lord lives in them, too.’

‘Then, Swamiji, you should employ all the various methods of eliminating the rats.’

The Prophet of the Yoga of Synthesis smiled and said, ‘So here, too, you advocate the combined method.’

‘Yes, Swamiji. You should not use the same trap twice on consecutive days, without washing it thoroughly. Once a rat is caught in a trap, the next day no rat will go near this trap: they know by smell that a rat was caught in it. It should be thoroughly cleaned before being used again. The same kind of edible should not be used on successive days. Various kinds of traps may be used. The same as your Yoga of Synthesis, Swamiji. The result is sure success.’

19TH DECEMBER, 1949

A TRUSTEE OF HOLY THOUGHTS

The morning University class came to a close with Sri Swami Krishnanandaji’s and Sri Swami Sadanandaji’s lectures.

‘Sadanandaji, kindly expand the notes you had when you were talking into a nice article, as soon as you go to your room. Later on some other work will come and you will forget these ideas.’

‘Few people here are as much students of the University as I am. I have written so many books: yet, even today I feel that I am a student. Therefore, I intently listen

to the lectures in the class. If I get one new idea, then I will develop it nicely into a short poem. To this one idea I will add several of my own—contiguous ideas that throw more light on the subject. Then it will be included in my manuscript. The whole world will be benefited.

‘We should be ever prepared to receive new ideas. We should always be a student. Then only will there be improvement within oneself. Some people will be foolishly imagining that they have registered the ideas in their hearts. It may be true that they have an extraordinary power of grasping ideas: they may have very good memory, too. But time will efface all the ideas. If you record the ideas in a note-book, you have preserved them for all time.’

The Tamil poetic biographer of Siva caught his eye at this stage. He says that he has handed the manuscript over to Siva himself, whereas the latter does not have it.

‘To me the manuscripts are more valuable than anything else in the world. I take great care of the manuscripts. I have got two steel trunks full of manuscripts. Several manuscripts are in preparation. Some articles are being typed every day, and these I carefully add to the bundles and count the pages every time. Every month I devote one or two days to the sorting out of the articles so that no mistakes occur in the arrangement of manuscripts. All this work I myself do. I know where each article has been placed. One or two books have been taken up for reprinting. I know that there is some additional matter to be included in the book, though this matter was collected some two years ago. When the book goes to the press, I take out this additional matter and send it.’

‘The holy thoughts will elevate several thousands of aspirants. The thoughts belong to God. We are all His channels, His means of communication. Therefore, they are of great value to me. Tasker Town Branch published a monthly Bulletin containing some extracts from my books and articles. They were all wonderful selections. As soon as about ten bulletins were published, I brought the entire matter together in the form of a small pamphlet. It is now of great use to several Sadhakas.’

‘I have now practically finished my work. Therefore, I am concentrating on printing other people’s writings.’

‘Obviously, that the secret of encouraging people to write his own biography: and taking a keen interest in getting them published. It hastens the aspirant-author’s evolution.’

‘Sadanandaji, when you talk, you sometimes talk too fast for people to understand. Sometimes the words are not clear. See, when Chidanandaji speaks, he lays emphasis on every word, even at the cost of speed. This might give some people the impression that he is a slow speaker: but this is most beneficial to the listeners. Each word will get itself indelibly impressed on the listeners’ heart.’

‘Yes, Swamiji. I shall certainly follow your advice.’

Siva continued: ‘One should not only feel that he is an eternal student, but that he is an eternal Sadhaka also. He should be ever vigilant. He should be humble and

simple. However great a care one takes, the thief will silently enter the heart and spoil everything.

'Yesterday it seems Sri Swami A. came to the kitchen and asked for Bhiksha. Someone there told him, 'You will have to get Swamiji's or Chidanandaji's permission.' He came to me and even though I was busy in the office, I attended to him and ensured that he got his Bhiksha.'

'Because we wanted to practise some economy in our expenditure, we said that food distribution would be regulated and that the Secretary's permission should be obtained if any extra item of expenditure were to be incurred. This is taken to mean that for every little thing, one has to run to the Secretary or to me. On the other hand, if we are to say, 'Be a little lenient', they will feed every passerby or waste foodstuff.'

'The man in charge of the kitchen should feel that he should cooperate fully with the Secretary. When a situation like yesterday's arises, he should himself take the decision considering himself to be Chidanandaji or myself and placing himself in our position.'

'I know that there is some justification for turning the man out: the man in charge of the kitchen will say, 'If this man is allowed to take Bhiksha for one day, he will come daily for a month and it will be difficult to stop him later on.' That is also true. It is very difficult to be in charge of the kitchen.'

'You must always remember that people who have come here have renounced the world. You cannot expect them to care for anything in the world. They will resent rules and regulations: it is very difficult to bring them under one form of discipline. Temperaments differ: each man's Sadhana is his own. No two men's minds will agree. One rule cannot be applied to all Sadhaks. If you insist on everyone bowing to your rules, then people will go away. We will lose good workers; and we will be spoiling their career also.'

'Do not talk of rules and discipline. You have to achieve the same result by some other method. Have a sympathetic heart. Touch everyone's feet with Bhav and humility. Serve, serve and serve. Always request with folded palms. Extract work through love and prostrations. Then you can get a lot of work from all. Then people will instinctively obey you without your imposing any rule on them. You will at the same time rapidly purify yourself and hasten the day of your enlightenment.'

20TH DECEMBER, 1949

A GREAT WONDER

The morning class went on till 7 a.m. As soon as we got up, Siva noticed Sri Mohindra among those attending.

'You were here for the Upanishad class?' queried Siva.

'No, Swamiji: I came a little later.'

‘Oh, what a great loss. People come here from great distances, renouncing the world, to enjoy the Satsang of Sadhus and Sanyasins. It is not easy to get a learned Anubhava-Jnani Sanyasin like Swami Krishnanandaji to explain the truths of the Vedanta so lucidly to you. How beautifully and thrillingly he explains the Isavasya Upanishad. Only if you have performed hard Tapasya in hundreds of previous births will you be able to sit at the feet of Jnanis like him and learn the Vedantic truths. Such is the mysterious nature of Maya that even though you have been given by the Lord the greatest opportunity of actually living here you do not take the fullest advantage of the Satsang.’

‘Look at me. With all the physical ailments that I have I get up at 3 a.m., finish my morning work and remain waiting for the bell to ring. As soon as I hear the bell, I rush to the Bhajan Hall. I sometimes get giddy while walking: so, I am carrying a walking stick even though I do not use it. I did not wish to use a walking stick. Now I have merely to carry it, in case I should feel giddy on the way.’

‘You are now hale and hearty: and you remain in bed till 7 in the morning. Such is the nature of the world. Big Zamindars die for a drop of Ganges water in the plains: but people here have no faith in Ganges water. You must daily read Sankaracharya’s words: how he has praised a drop of Ganges water. Then only will faith be generated in you.’

‘Some people have a limited vision and a narrow understanding. They think that a little Havan, a little OM chanting, or reading of Upanishads will give them Brahma Jnana. Others think that worldly life alone is the best and the renunciation is a cowardly act. They consider that those who have renounced have run away from the world, on account of failures in the world.’

‘Look at the wisdom that Krishnanandaji possesses. Kings and Presidents will bow at his feet. The world will pay homage to the dust of his feet. You should all take the dust of his feet and wear it on your forehead with great reverence and devotion. At what young age he has renounced the world. What must be the depth of his yearning for knowledge. What must be the intensity of his Vairagya. You cannot even think of renunciation of the world even after so much of worldly enjoyment and experience of worldly miseries. And, you would think that Krishnanandaji renounced the world because he could not thrive in this employment.’

‘He is a Dheera who renounces the world at an early age. What can the old man renounce? He does not renounce the world: the world renounces him. From birth to rebirth he lives to tell the same story of ignorance, bondage and misery.’

‘Krishnanandaji is a jewel. Chidanandaji is a jewel. Vishnudevanandaji is a jewel. Even the Governor of Bihar was thrilled by his Asana demonstrations. The Chief Minister of Bihar and the other Ministers were amazed at his skill. They all wanted to make him remain in Bihar for a month. To hear Chidanandaji speak thousands wait spell-bound in the College Hall. They were eager to hear him over and over again. People from all over the world will fall at the feet of people like Chidanandaji and Krishnanandaji, to learn the fundamentals of philosophy and Yoga. They are the real emperors.’

‘God has given the opportunity. You must watch every moment. Every morning when you get up you should reflect, ‘I might well have died last night: God has given me yet another day of life here: I should utilise this gift to the best advantage. The heart must be purified at first. Service alone can do that. But, egoism will prevent you from doing service. This Abhiman will go only by service! When an old woman is walking on the road, carrying a heavy load, does your heart bleed with sympathy for her: will you at once take the load on your own head and follow her? Then be sure that you are ready for the next step in Yoga.’

‘When I used to go on propaganda tours, people used to garland me as soon as I got down from the train at various places. But, I used to carry my luggage on my own head. When you go to the market and purchase some vegetables, you require a servant to carry the basket: you are ashamed to carry it yourself.’

‘Even that will not do. You should not only carry your own luggage, but you should carry the luggage of another man. To carry one’s own things is simple enough. There was one Dewan Jaswant Rai in the Ashram a few years ago. He wanted a violin. I got him the violin: and from the Rishikesh Railway Station to the Ashram, I carried the violin myself, for him. When the temple was being built, I myself carried baskets of bricks, etc., on my head, identifying myself with the coolies. I was happy that the Lord gave me the opportunity of doing at least that much of service in the construction of His temple.’

‘Can you forget that you are Mr. So-and So and identify yourself heart and soul, sincerely with the servants? Ask yourself.’

‘Due to old age and other bodily ailments, I am not able to do the same amount of service nowadays. But I am daily asking the mind: Are you prepared to carry cowdung on your head? Are you prepared to identify yourself with the Bhangi and clean the latrines? The mind is even today prepared for such jobs.’

‘Then comes Bhakti. People foolishly imagine that this form is imagination: that form is false: and that the Reality is formless only. There is difference of opinion between people believing in Ram as the son of Dasaratha and people believing in Ram as the all-pervading Atman. People consider Ram the son of Dasaratha, as an ordinary man: Krishna to be an ordinary man. They hardly realise that They are Paramatma Himself. Why should not the Omnipotent Paramatman take whatever form He likes?’

‘Dayanandaji would never have condemned idol worship. He only wanted to re-establish Vedic religion. Some of his followers misunderstood his teachings and began to condemn idol worship. This Murti here (pointing to the pictures of Rama and Krishna placed in the Bhajan Hall altar) is full of consciousness. Several hundreds of His devotees have incessantly uttered the Maha Mantra for several years, concentrating on this Murti. To Mira the idol of Lord Krishna was more alive than anyone else. It spoke to her: danced with her: ate butter out of her hands. You are not able to feel that consciousness in the Murti, because you are unevolved. You have come here on account of your Purva Samskaras. Do you sit in the Bhajan Hall for some time every day and sing the Maha Mantra Kirtan?’

'If you do not, you are losing a very great opportunity. You are losing your spiritual Samskaras.'

'Maya is very powerful. It will delude man in the twinkling of an eye. One has to be eternally vigilant. Satsang is very necessary. When you are in the company of the wise only you feel that there is something which is beyond your senses, beyond the mind, beyond the intellect, and beyond your egoism: and that something along is the source of bliss. In the dream state, even the mind vanishes: and yet you feel that you ARE, that you are ONE, and that you are BLISSFUL. This knowledge is absent when you are asleep: but you know on waking up that 'you' existed during sleep also, and that there was none other, and that you were happy. This one analysis of the deep sleep state will convince you thoroughly that real happiness can be had in the Atman only: and that it is only the wrong identification with the body and the mind that is the cause of misery, pain and bondage.'

'This idea will remain in your mind so long as you are in the company of wise men. It will vanish as soon as you go away from here. I have told you so many things. You have heard so much about the Atman and the Way of Attainment. But in a few minutes all this will pass out of your mind and you will begin to identify yourself with the body. Then again, Raga-Dwesha will come: along with them the hosts of pain and miseries.'

'Constant study. Constant Vichar. Constant Satsang. That is the secret of digging these ideas into the subconscious mind. Your mind must be saturated with the thoughts of Atma. You must be ever vigilant. The mind will dupe you. Ahamkara is ever waiting to deceive you. You will think that you have achieved the Samadhi Avastha. In a moment of heedlessness, the Ahamkara will assert itself and you will be lost. Because, the enemy is within yourself. Your lower mind! Vasanas are there hidden in the mind. You do not know when they will attack you and upset your progress. Never mix with worldly people: never listen to worldly talks: never think of worldly things. Then, gradually these Vasanas will die out and your mind will be completely purified. Even if you are sure that you are above evil, you should stick to this place. Even if you have to go outside for work, you should run back to Rishikesh after a very short while. In Rishikesh, you are free from external enemies; you are surrounded by holy thoughts and vibrations. Even if you don't do any Sadhana or meditation, remain here and die here itself—you are sure to take up the thread in the next birth and evolve rapidly. OM Tat Sat. Jaya Ho!'

21ST DECEMBER, 1949

WHO CAN STAY GOD'S HANDS?

With Kirtan and Prasad distribution the 18-h.p. engine was unloaded from the motor lorry and brought inside the Ashram.

Twenty-seven hours before, no one even dreamt of it. Last evening an old Punjabi lady (mother of a devotee who wanted to present an engine) met Siva and said: 'There are three engines with us at Rishikesh. And, my son has asked me to offer

one of them to your holiness as our humble gift. Kindly ask one of the chelas to inspect the engines and select the one that will serve your purpose.'

This afternoon, Padmanabhan, Subramaniam and a mechanic inspected the machines, selected one and brought it to the Ashram. What a miracle! Who can stay God's hands? As soon as the machine came, Siva remarked: 'Goddess Lakshmi has come. Let us hail Her with Kirtan and Prasad distribution. The Lord's Will is supreme. Even if you refuse to accept His gifts, they will come. Such is His All-merciful nature.'

22ND DECEMBER, 1949

NATURE OF VICHARA BUDDHI

After the morning class Siva came first out of the Bhajan Hall. Suddenly he turned round and stood near the threshold, watching one by one leave the Hall.

Sivanarayanji came out and put on his slippers.

'Oh, they were yours? I was wondering who could have left them here. In future do not leave the shoes on the way. Somebody might trip over them. Shoes must always be left away from the threshold. In the early morning, while it is still dark, some one might run into the Hall and the slippers might perform a good tooth extraction.'

'Even in these little things, one should develop the reflective Buddhi. Before doing a thing, one should think, 'What might be the consequences? In what way will it be of service to others? When this Vichara becomes continuous, one is established in righteousness. When the Vichara becomes deep-rooted and natural, one experiences Brahmic Consciousness, too. The little thing leads to the Great Experience.'

THE IDOL OF HEALTH

The percentage of sugar in Siva's urine has been persistently high. Siva has developed a slight but unyielding pain in the right arm. In his child-like simplicity, Siva said: 'It is bearable today.' (It is a week since the pain started, and Siva would not whisper about it to a soul on earth.) 'But, if it grows a little more, then the weeping stage will come,' he said and smiled.

'Has it been paining for some days past, Swamiji?' enquired Chidanandaji.

'Yes, yes: it has been there for a week.'

'We shall get Dr. Bose to examine Swamiji. But it will be helpful if Swamiji will not write too much for a couple of days at least,' said C.'

'That is death while living. It will be all right. But I have to go on with the writing,' said Siva, who a few moments before thought he could ever reach the 'weeping stage'.

A GREAT FOLLY

A newspaper edited by one of Siva's devoted disciples contains a full-page article, entitled 'Swami....—A Portrait in His Own Words'. The Swami who has recently been initiated into Sanyas by Siva has described himself in the course of this article as 'The greatest of the disciples of Siva'.

As soon as Siva finished reading the article, he remarked, 'he has reached the state of a Jivanmukta: now only Lokasamgraha and Videhamukti remain.'

After a brief pause, Siva continued: 'Swami....has no doubt one-pointed devotion to the task he has set before himself. He aspires to go to America and preach there. He is preparing himself for it. But, it is a wrong aspiration. A Sadhaka should always aspire to perfect himself. Swami....hardly realises now what he is in for, and what it means to go to America and wander about there. The zeal for spreading spiritual knowledge will soon fade away if there is not that inner illumination to sustain that zeal. He will become a prey to comfort and conveniences. He will fall a victim to temptations from all sides. It is a very difficult task to maintain the same spirit of renunciation and Vairagya even for a Jnani: for a baby-soul it is dangerous to mix with worldly people. Maya is very powerful. Beware.'

'D.J.R. was an ardent Sadhaka. He lived here for two or three years. He used to take very simple food, though before coming here he was taking rich food. He used to wear only a small towel. He used to sleep on the floor or on gunny-bags. He was always practising Sadhan. He was almost sure of rousing the Kundalini in a few months.'

'He went to Delhi 'for a few days' as he wanted to meet someone there. He stayed there for a little while. The Vairagya evaporated. His old love for horseracing re-conquered him. Just one or twice, he wanted to indulge in it. And, he fell headlong into the pit of worldliness. Twenty years have passed: he is still where Maya had dragged him. Pitiabile is the lot of such people. It is all due to heedlessness and wrong aspiration.'

'Never advertise yourself. Remain humble and simple. Aspire fervently for Moksha. God's grace will come only if you serve humanity selflessly, and pray to Him incessantly.'

23RD DECEMBER, 1949

YOGA VEDANTA FOREST UNIVERSITY

'We should develop this Forest University nicely by concentrating all our attention on it,' said Siva as soon as he entered the office this morning.'

'The University has a great future. It is the mother of Indian culture. Indian culture was born of such universities or what they called in those days, Ashrams or Gurukulas.'

'Even the work we are doing at the present time is not enough. We have only begun the work. The Weekly is doing wonderful work: it will inspire many

students all over the world. All our spiritual guidance correspondence should also go on the University letter-head.'

'The hours of the university classes are a little inconvenient for worldly people. Sanyasin-Sadhaks who have made it their sole end and aim to aspire for God-realisation would love to attend classes in Brahmamuhurtha: for that is the most favourable hour for filling the mind with spiritual ideas.'

'For the sake of the visitors and laymen-Sadhaks we should hold regular university classes in the morning between 9 and 11, and in the evening between 3 and 5. Continuous classes should be conducted so that visitors who come to the Ashram in the morning and evening and who do not, in the first instance, have the opportunity to stay on in the early morning the next day, too, can attend the university lectures.'

'The seed has been sown. The Lord will look to its success. We should also in course of time construct big school buildings: and professors' quarters with a good library for each professor, and other conveniences. More and more professors will come. The message of Sanyas will spread. The glory of divine life will spread far and wide. Ministers and Governors will come and get initiated into Sanyas. To them, too, the message should go that they are simply wasting their life uselessly in worldly pursuits. The world is false: Brahman alone is real. It is useless to reform the world: the only duty of man is to realise his own Self. Only this can solve the problem of life and death.'

'If the Ministers will not come, then we should compel them to come and attempt the university classes. We should do Satyagraha before their houses and offices and tell them: 'You are revelling in ignorance, like a worm rolling in filth. All your cars and bungalows, the servants and titles will fade away into nothing when the last moment comes: come, wake up now. Waste not a second more in this illusory game. Follow me to Ananda Kutir. I will teach you Brahma Vidya. You will become the King of kings.' They will all come. These people have not yet realised the futility of their positions and social status. They have yet to realise that their duty lies in other directions.'

'Students from all over the world will come. There should be a big hostel to house foreign students. There should be dozens of Sadanandajis to deliver lectures to these students.'

At this stage, Swami Sadanandaji interrupted Siva and pointed out 'Mounanandaji is still hiding himself, Swamiji. We have much to receive from him. He should also be made to attend the class and give us the knowledge that he is keeping within himself.'

'From Mouna comes dynamism: from silence comes activism. In due time you will get thundering orators and Self-realised instructors. The whole world will be presented at the university. It is absurd for people to wander about in foreign lands delivering lectures to audiences who will not be interested in spirituality. True Sadhaks will come from America and Europe. It is all His work.'

WHEN DOCTORS DIFFER?....

The wall clock in the office attracted Siva's attention.

'What is the correct time now? The time-piece in my Kutir shows one time: here this wall clock shows another: perhaps the Bhajan Hall clock shows something different from these two.'

'It is a wonderful world we live in. There are any number of 'times' in the world, indeed as many as there are nations, perhaps. Greenwich time, Indian Standard time, Bengal time, Daylight Saving time, American time, Black-man time, White-man time!'

'How absurd all this appears to a Viveki. These are all times created by you. Man made the clock: but the clock controls him, he is a slave to it. Your real nature is Satchidananda, beyond time, space and causation. You created Time in a playful mood. Sun, moon, stars, and the universe which indicate the time were all mental creations. And, yet man is a slave to them.'

'As is the nature of phenomenal things no two clocks agree. No two men have the same opinion. No two faces are exactly alike. Wonderful is creation. What a great intelligence must that Consciousness be which created all this diversity.'

'When these clocks disagree, man is bewildered. A child is born: the father looks at his watch and records the time. He later finds that his neighbour's watch differs from his by five minutes. Which is the correct time? He is bewildered. He is worried about the son's horoscope.'

'Men's minds also do not agree. Therefore, it is dangerous to allow oneself to be examined by a council of doctors. One doctor will say it is bronchitis, another will diagnose it as tuberculosis, a third will disagree with both. In the meantime, the patient may die. When doctors differ, patient dies.'

'Have faith. Stick to one path, one Guru, one Ishtam. Do Vichar. Realise your essential nature. Thou art That.'

AVERAGE ECONOMY

A strong smell of *atta* being fried in ghee invaded the office. 'Today there is Bhandara?' queried Siva.

'Yes, Swamiji. Lakshmi Havan on behalf of Pannalaji is being conducted today. There is a Bhandara also.'

'Very good. We are saying 'no money and no money' and Bhandaras go on unhampered. This is also one method of economy. One day take uppama—coffee: another day take cold rice: fast on the third day. Now on an average, you have practised economy.'

REAL VAIRAGYA

Chamalalji has sent 47 woollen blankets. They are all very costly stuff: a modest estimate would give each one a price of Rs. 25 at least.

Siva said: 'You should take a blanket. Even if you have two blankets already, you should have one of these too. Do not be shy. I have already told Chidanandaji to give you one.'

'Real renunciation consists in practising actual possessionless state as long as it is necessary for the mind to adjust itself to all conditions. Vairagya should not be mistaken for torturing the body. Formerly, I used to give away all new blankets presented to me by devotees: I would myself sleep on the floor and use only gunny. Now I have a number of blankets in my Kutir. I have to use one for the head, one for the legs, and so on. But I am collecting them only to give away. Every time I ask myself, 'Will you part with these?' and there is the reply from within, 'Yes, any moment these may be given away.' When you need a thing, use it: but have the Bhav that it is the Lord within who uses it. Nimitta Bhav. Constantly rouse up within you this Nimitta Bhav. Then you will be affected by nothing. You will be able to renounce everything in the twinkling of an eye.'

29TH DECEMBER, 1949

C.I.D. OF THE MIND

A CID officer has come, seeking information about Dasarath, a Marathi boy who has been in the Ashram for a few days now.

Siva said: 'Dasarath was a hard-working young man. He was ever busy. But he was of the Chanchala type. He wanted to go to Banaras. I gave him some money to enable to stay at Banaras for some time and come back. He came back and said he would remain here forever. Then, another inmate started on a Parivrajak life. Dasarath followed him also.'

The officer thanked Siva for the information and said: 'I am really grateful to you, Swamiji. This case has done me a good service: for, it has enabled me to have your Darshan. I have for a long time been longing to come and see you. I have been reading your books: and I am your disciple, though I had not seen you till now.'

'Become the CID officer of your own mind,' said Siva. 'Introspect. Analyse yourself. Examine yourself. Meditate. Be free.'

30TH DECEMBER, 1949

NIRGUNA MEDITATION

Siva brought with him to the office, in the morning, a poem composed by him:

SATCHIDANANDA

Sat Chit Ananda

Existence Knowledge Bliss

Truth Consciousness Bliss

Asti Bhati Priya

Life Light Love
Immortality Wisdom Happiness
All mean the same.
Love melts into bliss.

Siva read out the poem to us all.

'This will be very useful for writers on philosophical subjects, Swamiji.'

'It is ideal for meditation purposes, Swamiji.'

Siva agreed: 'This is Nurguna meditation. Think of Satchidananda. Think of Atman or Brahman. Then think of the equivalents of the attributes which nearly denote the nature of Brahman. Parallel attributes will suggest themselves to your mind. Then go on thinking of them. This is Nurguna meditation. You will have to go on thinking, and thinking. Suddenly It will flash within you.' (This last sentence was said by Siva and I have recorded it. But something that he said without words at that moment, it is impossible to record. It was a thrill to watch him say 'Suddenly It will flash within you.' The way he said it made us forget ourselves for a moment. There were the clearest indications when he said it of the unmistakable fact that he had himself experienced that 'flash' and was certain of it.)

'You should go on practising it. Do not expect the eye of intuition to be opened up in a few days. You have for thousands of lives been thinking 'I am this body': and it will take a long time to get yourself established in the realisation that you are the Atman.'

SADHUS ALL

The All World Sadhus Federation meeting concluded. The minutes book was passed round to the delegates attending the Sadhana Week. One Grihastha member felt that he could not sign it, as he was not a Sadhu.

'Who said you are not a Sadhu?' said Siva. 'You are all potential Sadhus. Deep within you all there is the Sadhu-element. That is why you are devoted to God and to divine life: that is why you may become an external and internal Sadhu. You can certainly sign the register.'

31ST DECEMBER, 1949

TYPHOID THIRD WEEK DEVOTION

Today is the sixth anniversary of the Viswanath Mandir Pratishtapana. But, today happened to be Ekadashi also. The Puja had not commenced till about 10 a.m. and Siva had come to the temple.

'The temple is dull this time. Last year there were flags and festoons: all over the place there were flowers: and there were a number of banana-poles. This year I see only four banana-poles and they have not yet been fixed.' Siva added 'This is typhoid third week devotion!'

A visitor looked enquiringly at Siva.

'Till the third week, the temperature of the typhoid patient will go on increasing. But during the third week it will begin to decline gradually. Typhoid third week devotion is devotion that is intense in the beginning and wanes away a little later!'

UNIQUE THEATRE

And, the Nataka Sabha staged the drama, 'Harischandra' under the able direction of Rampremi. R. acted excellently and had trained others also very well. Many people in the audience were shedding profuse tears during the whole show.

Siva gave a short introduction: 'Truth is God. Truth is Brahman. One who wishes to realise Brahman or God, must follow the path of truth, the path of Dharma. A man given to falsehood can never realise God. Our youngsters will now stage before you the life of one who never swerved from truth and realised God through the rigorous practice of truth. Kindly see the drama in perfect silence and attentively.'

It was not a drama as dramas are. The moment the curtain dropped and till it rose again there would be Sankirtan. Every one repeated His names. On one such occasion Siva asked Sri Suryanarayan to recite the Isavasya Upanishad. On another, two Ashramites enacted a dialogue from 'First Lessons in Vedanta'. On yet another occasion, Sri Kamla, daughter of Sri Vishnu Dutta Sastri, and Gargi, her sister, delivered beautiful lectures and sang Bhajans. At about 10.30 at night Siva got on to the platform and did Kirtan with harmonium. Then he repeated the shooting and awakening Dhwanis which stirred the audience. As he stood on the platform and roared the Garjan Dhawanis, no one could hardly feel that Siva was fasting without taking even a drop of water the whole day.

Later Siva explained: 'Whatever be the state of my health, and the state of my body, I cannot repress the desire to make people repeat the Ram Nam. I must stand up on the platform, whatever be the time, to give the names of the Lord. I have also got the dramatic instinct: and I must give something of that also to the people. 'In the Gita the Lord says: 'Nigraha Kim Karishyati'—what can restraint do? A man's nature asserts itself repeatedly. My nature is to give the Ram Nam to people, at every opportunity. Even in the last moment of my life, I must give the Ram Nam. I must cheer up people. I must make one man do Bhajan and Kirtan. I cannot restrain this. I cannot bother if I have enough physical strength to stand up and do Kirtan or not.'

The Drama concluded at about 11.45 p.m. Shortly afterwards the Bhajan Hall clock struck midnight. Siva roared OM: everyone turned to him. He then repeated the Peace Chants: 'Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah....' and added: 'It is now midnight. A New Year is born. May Lord bless you all with health, peace, happiness, and prosperity during the New Year. May you all shine as Jivanmuktas, dynamic Yogis even while living, in this very year.'



JANUARY, 1950

8TH JANUARY, 1950

LONG LIVE SIVANANDA

The night Satsang was in progress. It was fairly dark inside the Bhajan Hall as, during the Kirtan, even the lantern which is used for reading of Gita, etc. is reduced and put aside. The two Deepas that stood on either side of the Akhanda Maha Mantra Kirtan altar shone as brightly as they could, but were able to illumine only a third of the Hall, leaving the entrance to the Hall dark.

Through this dark entrance entered a dark force. Who could even think of dark force in the presence of Light?

Govindan approached Siva, axe in hand. He did not have to take much trouble to approach Siva who was sitting just next to the entrance. Does not Siva, the resplendent spiritual star, stand right at the entrance where the Sadhaka leaves behind darkness and approaches the divine light? This ocean of compassion does not mind the dangers that such a stand subjects him to: but insists on standing at this entrance, lest they who try to approach the light, should glide back into darkness.

The axe was raised: the Devas shuddered in the heaven: Vayu was restless and was whistling past outside the Bhajan Hall, crying OM. And, the axe fell. Indra, the presiding deity of Govindan's hand trembled—the axe missed its mark. The door which received the blow (blessed art thou, O inert wooden door) cried aloud its warning.

Govindan became more nervous. He raised the axe again. This time a picture on the wall stood in front and received the blow. Has not Siva identified himself with the Infinite All-pervading Essence of Existence? Yes—the picture said, and offered its head in the place of Siva's.

The two blows missed their mark: only the wooden handle of the axe struck Siva's head. Generally, as soon as Siva enters the Hall, he would remove the cloth turban he wears when he leaves his Kutir (during the winter months). But, today, he forgot. Forgot, yes, because the turban-cloth would not leave the sacred head. SO, the axe—handle could strike only the cloth-padding on Siva's head.

Siva 'woke up' to the fact that someone was trying to assault him. He thought that it was a stick with which he was being beaten. He raised the hand and said: 'Have you finished the job? Do you want to beat me more?' The raised hand received the axe, and the axe made a mark on the skin. It was not more than a scratch. Perhaps, the axe took the opportunity of kissing the saint's hand.

Vishnuswamiji who was sitting near Siva got up in one leap (he is an adept in Hatha Yoga) and hugged Govindan so tightly that the latter could not lift his hand again. V. drew Govindan out of the Hall. The crowd in the Bhajan Hall immediately realised what had happened: one or two people helped Govindan's hands and feet to be tied. And, Govindan was being removed.

As is natural in the case of gatherings, one or two people fell on the assailant and started beating him. Padmanabhan who was in the Yajnasala room heard Siva shout at the top of his voice: which drowned the crowd's noise: 'Ohji, don't beat him, don't beat him.' P. did not know what had happened. When he saw Govindan lying down and a few people beating him and that Siva was shouting 'Don't beat him', P. rescued Govindan and the latter was taken to a room nearby and locked in.

'Continue the Kirtan,' said Siva and the Kirtan, Arati and Shanti Patha were duly conducted and the Satsang came to a close.

Saswatswamiji came running to the Office Hall in the meantime and informed us of what had happened in broken words. We ran to the police station, got a couple of constables to follow us and ran up to the Bhajan Hall. As we approached the Yajnasala panting for breath, I heard....

Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah

Sarve Santu Niramayah

Sarve Bhadrani Pasyantu

Maa Kaschit Dukhabhaag Bhavet

I heaved a sigh of relief. I was sure that Siva was all right. Otherwise, no one could have had the nerve to repeat this Shanti Mantra, in such a situation. No one else can have his head on his shoulders in such a situation: no one else can have the tranquillity of mind to be able to repeat this Shanti Mantra in the midst of the chaos that would have prevailed in the Bhajan Hall. It needs a sage of Eternal Peace to brush aside such a tragic event and to repeat calmly, as usually, as though nothing had happened, the usually Shanti Mantras.

I ran to the Bhajan Hall. I saw Gurudev. The mist that covered my heart began to disappear. 'Ah, after all he is all right' was the only thought. The utter gloom disappeared giving place to a curious mixture of light and gloom. That Siva could have escaped practically unhurt caused joy: that there could be someone in the world breathing as man who could even think of doing such a thing as Govindan had done, caused the gloom.

Siva has the protection of the Lord. Surely. Today's incidents have conclusively proved that. Govindan was lying in wait for Siva in the morning: he knew that Siva generally came alone all the way from his Kutir to the Bhajan Hall, for the university class. Siva would then be entirely undefended. It would be an easy job for the assailant. But....Siva did not come. He had never missed the class. We were all surprised that he did not come. I was a little worried if Siva was all right in health. Siva did not come: he was all right. Govindan made a couple of circumambulations of the Bhajan Hall, impatiently waiting for Siva. G. never used to stir out of his room before 9 a.m. when he would stir in bed. For one day in his life he attended the morning Satsang and did Kirtan also in the early morning hours: though it was the devil that gave him this opportunity.

At night, too, Siva would have removed the turban: but Siva himself is not able to say why he did not remove the turban just today.

G. had calculated the distance between the door and Siva's head and adjusted the axe aright in the first instance: but forgot to take count of the projection of the Bhajan Hall door. When the first blow missed its mark he became conscious of this factor: but when he went nearer his mark he forgot to re-adjust the axe and so missed the mark again.

All these most conclusively prove the protection of Siva by the Lord Himself.

From the Bhajan Hall after the Kirtan, we all went to the room in which G. had been kept. Quickly, the rope that bound his feet together was removed. He stood up, guarded on both sides by policemen. The crowd watched. Siva went straight to G.: bowed to him with folded palms. The police Inspector gazed at this scene in great wonderment. 'Govindaswamiji, do you want to deal some more blows? Here I am. Kindly satisfy yourself.' Govindan muttered: 'No, I do not want to beat you any more. I am satisfied.' Everyone's face indicated that these words poured ghee into the fire of wrath that they were somehow managing to extinguish.

'What harm did I do? Why did you get so angry with me?' enquired Siva in a loving manner. For this there was no reply.

Then we all left the Bhajan Hall and wended our way down the hill towards Siva's Kutir.

'What shall I do, Swamiji? Shall I register a case against this man?' asked the police Inspector.

'No, no. Just send him away from Muni-ki-reti. That is enough,' said Siva. How could one gauge the depth of his divine love? Here is one who came to kill him: and Siva would pardon him at that very moment. No one except Jesus could do this.

And, so Siva went back to his Kutir only to be greeted by an endless stream of visitors (at that hour of the night!)—many of the men and women of the locality were literally in tears (of joy and grief) when they saw Siva: but Siva coolly sat smiling radiantly.

Aged Achintyanandaji hung on his walking stick and 'ran' to Siva's Kutir to dress the wounds.

9TH JANUARY, 1950

SEE NO EVIL

It was decided last night that G. should be provided with two Ashramite-escorts and left on the Grand Trunk Express with a ticket to Salem, his native place.

Siva would not even countenance any suggestion that G. should be 'booked': 'No. We should not punish him. He only worked out my Prarabdha. Do you mean to say that anything would happen without His Will behind it? No, no. It was the Lord's will. The Lord only prompted G. to do what he did. Are 'Dyutam Chhalyatam Asmi' and 'Taskaranam Pataye' mere words? Does not the same Omnipresent Lord indwell the robber and the dacoit, the murdered and the

burglar? No, no. I will not let the police charge G. We should thank him for working out my Prarabdha so easily.'

'The Lord has spared my life because there is some more service to be performed through this body. I must go on with that service. That is all that this incident indicates to me.'

Siva went to the police station at about 11 a.m. with fruits, books, clothes, new blanket and Japa Mala. With his own hands he applied Kumkum and Bhasma on G.'s forehead. Siva prostrated to G. Vishnu Datta Sastriji and others were aghast at this sight. Siva then gave the books with his autographed blessings.

'May Lord bless you with health, long life, peace, prosperity, devotion, wisdom and Kaivalya!'

He initiated G. into the Ashtakshari Mantra, gave him the Japa Mala and the book and gave the following advice:

'Kindly repeat the Lord's name incessantly. Do regular and vigorous Japa. Forget all that happened. Only take care that the mind does not run into the old vicious grooves again, and that you are not impelled to commit the same mistakes over again. Please read good spiritual books. Do not mix with bad characters. The latent spirituality will become patent through Sadhana. Spirituality is latent in you now. If it was not at all there, you would not have come here. I have asked Saswat Swamiji and Purushottamji to accompany you till Agra and provide you with all comforts and conveniences during the journey. From Agra, you will get a ticket for Salem. Kindly write to me as soon as you reach Salem. Please write to me frequently about your welfare and your Sadhana. May God bless you.'

He then repeated OM Namō Narayanaya several times and made G. also repeat the sacred Mantra.

Special dishes, e.g., Rasam etc., were prepared and given to G. before his departure, along with Saswatji.

Siva then sent a note to the police Inspector that he did not want to proceed against G. in any manner and that the police might drop the incident out of their minds.

In the evening there was a Thanksgiving Service and prayer for the long life of Siva, in the Bhajan Hall. It was arranged by Sri Gauri Prasadji (retired judge) of Swarg Ashram. The gathering changed the Maha Mantra in chorus: and the Hall was filled with the vibrations of the Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra which was changed aloud by the entire gathering. Siva then distributed Prasad with his own hands.

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Sri G. did write as requested by Siva. On the 19th February 1950, Siva received a Tamil letter from G., which said:

I have reached Salem safely. I am grateful to you Gurudev for what you have done. I pray that any other pitfalls that may beset my path of life may also be removed by your holiness's grace. I am your humble disciple.

When Siva had read the letter, he said to Muruganandaji: 'Please put Govindan's name on the Magazine Free List. Include his address in the Prasad Register also. All free literature should be sent to him. I will send him books also. I will write to him to come again.'

Siva's supreme love had transformed Govindan, the murderer, into a good soul.



MARCH, 1950

6TH MARCH, 1950

ARE YOU INSPIRED?

Siva is nowadays writing 'Ananda Gita'. Chinmayanandaji, the literary critic and journalist, was simply struck with amazement at the simplicity with which Siva had encompassed the entire teaching of the voluminous Yoga-Vasishta within a short article of three pages.

'There have been very few people who can imitate Swamiji's style. Now that Gandhiji is no more, Swamiji is the only one in the world. To put a wealth of thought in simple sentences composed of words of one syllable is to have the firmest grip of the subject matter dealt with and to reveal the core of the topic without mincing words.' In this sentence he summed up his criticism of Siva's style.

'I admire your style of writing, and the style of many people here. Many of the words that many of you use are unknown to me. I sometimes simply gaze bewildered at the editorial-English that you all use,' said Siva.

'That is easy enough, Swamiji, if one applies himself to the task of learning the language. But what one cannot get is the simplicity of Swamiji's language. It needs learning of a different sort altogether—learning or knowledge of the Truth. Swamiji, if I may ask, do you feel when you write that you are writing, or that someone else is writing? For one thing, the volume of your writing daily makes one feel that you are merely taking down what someone else is dictating from within—i.e., inspiration from within yourself? No one can write these simply direct prose-poems, each line precisely composed, each word weighed and placed in the correct place, unless he is inspired.'

'I do not know.'

Sivapremji now came in.

'Sivaprem Swamiji, there is one more chapter with you, I think.'

'Yes, Swamiji, I shall type it at night.'

'It is all right. You can even give it tomorrow. I just wanted to make sure. It is a treasure to me. And, I cannot write it again. If the manuscript note-book is lost, the matter is lost for ever.'

Here is the answer to Chinmayanandaji's question! If Siva's writings are the effect of intellection, then surely it is possible to express the same ideas once again. The thoughts are within the boundaries of the mind: and mind can remember them and reproduce them, if necessary.

But, Siva says 'I cannot write it again.'

This reminds us of what Sri Krishna said when Arjuna, after the War, asked Him for a repetition of His Gitopadesa. Sri Krishna said: 'Oh Arjuna, I cannot repeat now what I told you then. Then I was in a high state of Yoga.'

8TH MARCH, 1950

A GALA DAY OF CELEBRATION

None planned. No one expected: and the entire day proved to be one of continuous celebrations.

Paramanandaji was busy early in the morning at about 4.20 waking up people in the Ashram. At 5 a.m. sharp everyone assembled on the verandah of the Mandir. Then there was a procession. At the Mela Office there was special Kirtan, Chidanandaji leading. C. sank into a profound meditation and trance, his face lit up with a special bliss-aura. As we were leaving the Mela Office Srimathi Karina remarked: 'Do you know what was most beautiful in the Kirtan here? It was Chidanandaji's face. It was radiant. He was all peace and bliss.'

At five a tom-tom was heard outside the Ashram. People began to crowd round the crier. And, to everybody's surprise, he began to announce: 'In Swami Sivanandaji's Ashram there has come a Punjabi doctor, eye-specialist. Swami Sivanandaji has arranged that he will give free treatment for all eye diseases, from the 10th March onwards. No fees will be collected. The treatment will be entirely free. All eye-patients might go to Sivananda Ashram between 1 and 3 p.m. from 10th March.'

The truth is this. The Government has opened a dispensary at Muni-ki-reti to serve the Kumbha Mela pilgrims. A doctor was also posted there. This doctor met Siva and told him that he was an eye specialist. At once Siva commandeered the doctor's services: 'Oh Doctor Saheb, this is the best opportunity for you to render some good service to the people of the locality here. You can perform some cataract operations while you are here. If necessary, we can admit ten people at a time in the Ashram, give them food and accommodation and arrange for their cataract operation here itself. Dhrishti Dana is the greatest form of charity. Therefore, I will call this Dhrishti Dana Yajna. You will earn great merit by this Yajna and will earn God's blessings and Moksha also. I will have the news tom-tommed.'

Led by Siva we all got into the boat. Kirtan of the Lord's name rent the air and people standing on the roads on both the banks wondered: 'Is this Deva Loka? Is this Lord Siva Himself, with His Sankirtan Party?'

In the Gita Bhavan, we were told that Sri Jayadayalji was not there. Siva said: 'It does not matter. Go to the Satsang Hall. We shall do Kirtan there.'

No invitation: no reception: no welcome: no introduction: no request. Siva with the seventy odd disciples walked into Hall as if it were his own and conducted Sankirtan.

There was a grand Ganga Puja at the Viswanath Ghat, which had been specially illumined for the purpose, and the celebrations came to a happy close.

9TH MARCH, 1950

REAL CHARITY

In the evening, a batch of people was going along the road, singing songs to the accompaniment of musical instruments. Siva called them and took them into the Mela Office. After making them sing the Lord's names for some time, he reverently gave them Rs. 5 and some fruits as his love-offerings.

Later in the evening it was pointed out to Siva that they were beedi vendors.

'You mean to suggest that because they were beedi vendors, we should not have given them Rs. 5? No, no. That should not be our attitude. Charity is charity. We should not discriminate in the matter of charity. Does the sun discriminate and shine only on good people? Does Ganga practise discrimination and give water only to good people? Does a mango tree yield its fruits only to good people? Does air refuse to enter the nostrils of wicked people? Everyone is Lord Narayana Himself. Everyone is your own Atman. Have the Virat Bhavana always. That is the road to Moksha.'

10TH MARCH, 1950

PROF. PATHY OF THE LONDON UNIVERSITY

Sri Prem Nath (son of Sri Ram Rattan of Dehra Dun) brought with him Sri Prof. Pathy of the University of London. The Professor was keenly interested in the activities of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University. Siva explained to him the origin and the work of the university.

'How many students are there here, Swamiji?'

'At present there are only a handful of students, those living here. Three inmates are also here to study Yoga and Vedanta. And, the Forest University Weekly, which is the official organ of the University, has a circulation of more than 750.'

'You wonder perhaps why the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University has so few students? It is because one of the fundamental qualifications for admission into the University is Vairagya or dispassion which alone can inspire a man to seek a knowledge of Yoga and Vedanta. This turning away from the objective enjoyment of the world is very difficult of attainment, very few can possess it. These few alone are fit to be the students of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University.'

'Secular Universities are flooded with applications for admission: thousands of students wish to become B.A.s and M.A.s. All of them want to become I.C.S.-men. This attracts more men, because it provides them with the maximum scope for sensual enjoyment.'

'There are no degrees in this University. There is no period of study also. One has to study Yoga all his life to attain perfectly. There is only one degree that can be awarded in it—Atma-Jnana. It is the greatest of all degrees: M.A., Ph.D. and I.C.S. are nothing when compared to this supreme degree. This degree of Atma-Jnana cannot be conferred on the student by any authority on earth. It has to be earned by oneself: it has to be realised and experienced. It is not a piece of paper or a badge: it is an invisible crown of glory whose effulgence will be felt by those who approach the person wearing it. People will not shudder at his sight, as they do when they see a Minister or high official: they would love to be near him, they would love to talk to him, they would be inspired in his very presence, they would enjoy great peace and happiness in his presence, their problems will be solved at his mere sight, they would feel as though the worldly burden which was so long oppressing them has suddenly been lifted off their shoulders as soon as they approach him.'

'This Atma-Jnana degree holder does not distinguish himself by travelling in a lovely motor-car or aeroplane, by wearing silk suits, and smoking costly cigarettes or pipe. He is humble, simple and often passes unnoticed—one among the crowd, yet he is distinctly above the common run of humanity. He is like a child. He is fond of being one with all. He does not want to shine as any superman. Yet, everyone who approaches him feels that this man is no man but God on earth.'

'I am grateful to you, Swamiji, for your explanation. You are perfectly true in your comparisons of the secular universities and this unique spiritual university. I shall see that this University gets the recognition it deserves. Often public help goes to universities that do not deserve it. There is a bogus private university in America that awards Ph.D.s and M.A.s for a few dollars. I am very glad that you have decided against the award of any such degrees for students of this university. I shall be grateful if you can ask the Manager to send me a copy of the Forest University Weekly, which I shall study diligently.'

14TH MARCH, 1950

AHAMKARA YOGA

'Do you know what Ahamkara Yoga is?' asked Siva when he entered the office.

'No, Swamiji.'

'I will tell you. Everyone who wishes to practise the Yoga of Synthesis should have a clear knowledge of this new Yoga also. This Ahamkara Yoga is 'the other side' of the Yoga of Synthesis: one has to be extremely vigilant in order to avoid it. At any moment a Sadhaka might become a follower of Ahamkara Yoga.'

'The first type of Ahamkara Yogi is the Swatantrananda. Out of sheer necessity (not because the disciple deserves it) the Guru gives the gerua cloth and initiates the disciple into Brahmacharya. It may be for the purpose of enabling the disciple to get Bhiksha from the Kshetra, or in order to keep his Poorvashram family away from him. For obvious reasons the Guru does not initiate him into the holy order

of Sanyas. But the disciple goes away, shaves his head and throws away the sacred thread; thenceforward he shines as a Paramahansa Sanyasin. He soon meets with his downfall. This is one type of Ahamkara Yoga.'

'A young man comes to the Ashram. He has good spiritual Samskaras: and has good Bhav for service. In order to encourage him I give him Sanyasa also. He composes some songs and poems. I wish to develop this faculty in him and so appreciate his poems. He succumbs to pride and imagines that through meditation (without the botheration of service) he will be able to develop his talents more easily and quickly. He wants to go to Uttarkashi for deep meditation. He wants to lead a Parivrajak life. What is a Parivrajak life? How can one experience the mysterious ways in which the Lord helps and protects the devotee? Only by surrendering oneself completely into the hands of the Lord. But, this boy does not have this faith in the Lord. He is not prepared to surrender himself completely. He keeps fifty rupees in the handbag which he carries with him: and he expects God to reveal His grace, and 'If you do not help, O God, I have got the money with me.' This is another kind of Ahamkara Yoga.'

'One Sadhaka wants to practise Kundalini Yoga. This is very difficult and needs expert guidance. The Sadhaka foolishly goes on practising Pranayama. He thinks by merely holding his breath, he will be able to awaken the Kundalini. What will happen when the Kundalini is really awakened—he does not know. What the Sadhanba is—he does not know. He does not also want to do any service: he does not believe in Nishkamy Karma Yoga: he only feeds his egoism by resorting to the cave-life. He has to have some conveniences and comforts which cave-life does not provide him. He neglects his health: he neglects the real Sadhana. His body falls a prey to disease and decay: his mind is overpowered by egoism. He perishes. This is yet another kind of Ahamkara Yoga.'

'Here is another Sadhaka who thinks that he is proof against all these pitfalls. He is a Jnana Yogi. He believes the entire world to be a false show. Brahman alone is the truth. He delivers lectures on the Prasthanatraya. He longs to be appreciated by people of this false world. He is unable to control a small evil habit—smoking; but proclaims loudly 'The world of names and forms is false.' This is another kind of Ahamkara Yoga.'

'To learn the Prasthanatraya by heart is very easy. To deliver thrilling lectures for days on end on one Sloka of the Gita, one Sutra or one Mantra of the Upanishads, is easy enough. To stop the breath, the pulse-beating or the pulsating of the heart, and to exhibit various other Siddhis is also easy. To shave one's head is very, very easy: and to put on the orange robe and roam about as a Paramahansa Parivrajaka Acharya is very simple. But to put down the Ahamkara or egoism is very difficult. To be humble and simple, to serve everyone with Atma-Bhav or Narayana-Bhav is very, very difficult. Such selfless service alone can enable you to conquer your egoism. The service will have to be done over a protracted period of time. Go on serving and praying to the Lord. Curb your egoism. Shave your inner being of Ahamkara. Then you will really shine as a Paramahansa. Then the Kundalini will awaken Herself automatically and illumine you. Then the wisdom of the Prasthanatraya will dawn in you without any effort.'

‘That is real Sadhana. That Sadhana which does not aim at the curbing of one’s egoism, but which only goes to feed one’s egoism, is the very opposite of Sadhana and is no Sadhana at all. One should embrace Sanyasa, one should take to Parivrajak life, one should practise Pranayama and other limbs of Yoga, one should study the Prasthanatraya and meditate also: but all these should invariably be accompanied by an internal Sadhana of egolessness. With this all other forms of Sadhana become fruitful: without this they cause greater bondage to Samsara.’

27TH MARCH, 1950

THIS IS MY METHOD

Dr. Kailas Nath, the young Punjabi doctor who has been posted to Muni-ki-reti for the Kumbha Mela Government dispensary, was attending on a patient in the Ashram Operation Theatre (Ganga Kutir). Srimathi Karina was assisting him.

After the evening Satsang, Siva entered the Ganga Kutir. ‘Om Namō Narayanaya, Doctor Saheb. Om Namō Narayanaya, lady Doctor!’

‘Srimathi Karina is doing intense Sadhana. She keeps herself ever busy. Morning meditation, Asans, Gita study, Hindi study, attending Satsang, and assisting the doctor in the eye clinic. Good.’

He stood there watching the doctor giving an injection to the patient.

‘The Drishti Dana Centre is a bit dull these days, I think,’ began Siva.

‘Yes, Swamiji. So far in this Yajna we have operated upon ten cases of cataract. All of them, thanks to our grace and blessings, have been successful, in spite of the patient’s non-cooperation.’

‘I have been thinking why more and more people are not coming here daily. Except for the tom-tom and distribution of leaflets, we have not done any intensive campaign to procure patients for the Yajna. What you should do is to go to Rishikesh and stand at a prominent place and deliver a lecture on the importance of keeping the eyes healthy and of preserving the eye-sight. You should explain to the people the anatomy of the eyes, and also give them some general hints on the hygiene of the eyes. All people will be benefited and they will get confidence in you also. People will then know that you are earnestly interested in serving them. They will then flock to you.’

‘You must not feel shy. You must boldly assure them; ‘Come to me. I will restore your eye-sight. I will give you new vision. I have so far cured ten people of cataract. People who were unable to see a huge elephant standing before them a few days ago, are now able to thread a needle.’ You should not feel that this is self-praise. You should even make a few slides describing the state of the patient before your operation and after—how he came to the dispensary, feeling his way with a stick, and how after a few days he walks about cheerfully with his eye-sight fully restored. You should show a short reel of movie-film also, depicting yourself conducting the operation. Do not think that you are thereby praising yourself, or

boasting. You need not be afraid of criticism also. Let people criticise you or say that you are boastful and arrogant. But, really suffering people will flock to you; you can do a lot of service. That is what is wanted. You should always seek newer and newer avenues of serving people: you should find out novel methods of serving the public. This is Aggressive Nishkama Karma Yoga. This is my method.'

Later Siva took the doctor to his Kutir. The doctor remarked: 'Oh, the room is full of files and files and books all round.'

Siva replied: 'Yes, yes: I will show you. That steel almirah is full of unpublished manuscripts. They are my treasure: therefore, I keep them in a fire-proof cabinet. This is my Durbar,' so saying Siva sat down on his seat opposite his writing desk. 'This Gaddi (a rolled bed used as a backrest by Seths generally) was given to me by someone several years ago. I did not use it: I thought it was an old man's luxury. It has been lying in the Kutir for a number of years. Just recently I thought that I might as well lie behind my back here and so placed it here. These are the books in the making. This is the seventh book of poems. This is a book which I am writing on Naturopathy. This is Ananda Gita. Those are the life-books. This is the spiritual lessons bundle. 'My Magazine' of Madras is publishing these spiritual lessons since the last twenty years. That bundle is correspondence with spiritual aspirants and contains their letters to me and my replies. I go through my replies once again and take out useful paragraphs of general interest and convert them into spiritual lessons. The letter inspired one: and the book 'Spiritual Lessons' will inspire thousands.'

'I keep two dozen note-books ever-ready for writing. Not one thought should be lost. These people, when I give them matter for typing, sometimes delay the return of the note-book. So, I make more and more note-books. I keep some here; I keep some in the office also, so that any moment I will be able to write. I keep several fountain-pens all filled with ink and ready. I keep one pair of spectacles here, another in the almirah as spare, a third one in the office. No time should be lost in searching for them: work is of paramount importance. I keep several torch-lights—some near the bed, some near this seat, some near the easy-chair on which I take rest. Even at the dead of night, if a good thought comes, it must at once be recorded.'

Then like a child he showed the doctor three watches that were in the Kutir. 'One will be here, another in the bed-room. They enable me to be punctual in my work. Work is of supreme importance. That is my method of work.'

'Swamiji, you are doing so much of work every day. You are writing on so many subjects. I simply do not know how it is possible for you. How do you get all these thoughts, always inspiring and a perennial flow of them! We may be able to get a flash of good thoughts occasionally: we may be able to get a gush of several thoughts for a few days perhaps. But the gush of random thoughts won't all be inspiring; and inspiring thoughts won't gush forth like Ganga. But you seem to have acquired both. What is the secret, Swamiji?'

'I do not know.'

‘Everything here seems to be unique, Swamiji. There is a lot to learn from you. I wish I could sit always at your feet and learn your unique methods of service.’

‘Yes. Yes. And, what do you think of the people here. They are all unique in their own way. Some are poets, some are doctors, some are orators, some are Jnanis, some are great thinkers. Look at Purushottam! He is a unique cook: and he is a unique binder, too. Look at this binding. The book is bound with a tin-cover. It has been made water-proof and fire-proof also. And, Dr. Krishnadas is a doctor and a poet also.’

‘Yes, Swamiji. K. will in course of time make a very good doctor. He has got the aptitude; and he is eager to learn. And, Swami Chidanandaji, too.’

‘Oh, Chidanandaji? He is a genius. You have not read his writings? I will give you his book, ‘Light Fountain’. It is highly inspiring. He is an inspiring orator. He recently addressed the Bihar Provincial Branch inauguration, presided over by the Governor of Bihar. People were thrilled. He has a pure heart full of universal love. That gives him the magic touch; he can cure a person by mere touch. People always go to him for treatment, even when there is a highly qualified doctor here. He knows the scorpion Mantra, too. It works like magic for him. The poison comes down in a minute. He repeats the Mantra—any Mantra—once and he attains Siddhi in it. He is a saint. He should have been a great Yogi in his previous birth also. It is very difficult to find a person like him nowadays. He is a rare genius.’

‘Have you seen the Kaivalya Guha?’

‘Yes, Swamiji. That is another unique feature here. Do you go there daily?’

‘Previously I used to go in the afternoon. Nowadays I do not. Work has increased so much. I now feel that everything is Guha.’ (He pointed to his chest, almost involuntarily, indicating that the heart is the real Kaivalya Guha.) I go from here to the office: and then come back here. Service is of paramount importance. That is my method of work.’

Then Siva showed the doctor the easy-chair on which he takes rest occasionally. ‘This is another unique thing here. You can’t get the like of it even for a hundred rupees now. It was purchased long, long ago. When you lie down on it, you feel as though you are in bed.’ So saying, Siva actually got into the chair. ‘If it is cold, then I pull this *razai* on. As he said this he enacted it also—just as a child taking the greatest delight in showing its toys.

‘People think that a Sanyasin should not have this or use that,’ said Siva tapping a call-bell playfully. ‘But I have no such notion. Service is the thing. Work, work and work for the welfare of humanity. Keep the instruments—the body and the mind—in a fit and healthy condition for the work. I am a different Sanyasin. I like to serve. People imagine that a Sanyasin should always be grave and should always sit like this (he closed his eyes and sat erect) and thus give the impression to people that he is a Jivanmukta. But I am of a different type. Work should be your meditation. That is my method.’

The doctor had finished his milk. Siva suddenly said: 'Your mother will be waiting for you. Om Namō Narayanaya,' and bowed.

'I have learnt a lot today, Swamiji. I had read your book 'Siva Gita', your autobiography. At first when I opened the book and read a couple of pages, I felt strange thoughts creeping into my mind. I felt, 'What is this? All....'

'Self-glorification?' prompted Siva.

The doctor burst into laughter. 'Yes, Swamiji. That was what I thought at first. But, as I read it a second time, a thought flashed upon me. You have revealed the secret of your life though that book: and, what is more, you have provided the reader with a pattern of Perfect Life. You want that people should live such a life as you have portrayed in the book.'

'Aim at serving the people. Do not bother if the people criticise you. That is my method.'

28TH MARCH 1950

RAMANAVAMI SADHANA

The Ramanavami Sadhana commenced on the 21st March. The Ashramites had been asked to do some Malas of 'Om Sri Ramaya Namah' (Rama Shadakshara) Japa and take part in the Ramayana-Navha Parayanam.

Siva added to this the daily 'enactment' of one Kandam from his 'Ramayana Drama.'

'Sadhana on such special occasions should be intense, even though it is for a short period. These nine days everyone should be Rama-mayam. Rama Nama Japa, reading of the Ramayana (both the Tulasidas Ramayana and the Valmiki Ramayana), and at night Ramayana Drama also. Thus will the Sadhana even during these nine days be an intense one. Everyone will be filled with the glory of Ram. Whatever you do, you should have intense application to it. That is the secret of success. If you serve, serve intensely, with all your heart and soul. If you worship the Lord, give your heart and soul to Him. If you meditate, meditate intensely. That is the secret of rapid progress in the spiritual path.'

This morning as soon as Siva entered the office, he greeted us 'Jaya Ram ji ki'. Thus began the Ramanavami day. We had morning meditation class and a prabhat pheri also with 'Sri Ram Jaya Ram Jaya Jaya Ram' Kirtan.

This morning's office-Kirtan was also full of Ram. During the entire week on every occasion Siva has been reciting the Sloka....

Sri Rama Rama Rameti Rame Rame Manorame

Sahasranama Tat Tulyam Rama Nama Varanane

In the temple the Havan of Rama Mantra is going on. Alongside sit Siva and the devotees while Sri Purnabodhji and Swami Krishnanandaji and Sri Ramprem give readings from Stotra Ratnakara, Tulasidas Ramayana and Valmiki

Ramayana. Siva's gramophone records of 'Sangeeta Ramayana' were played. Sri Rao Saheb N.G. Venkatese Iyer of Salem recited Siva's 'Hanuman Chaleesa'.

WHERE IS EVIL?

After Kirtan Siva delivered the following discourse:

'Ram is para Brahman. Sita is Maya. Ram *minus* Sita is Para Brahman alone. Worship of Ram is adoration of Brahman. Through Rama's worship one can easily attain knowledge of Brahman. Sita is the illusory power of the Lord Himself that veils the Jiva's realisation of the real Swaroopa of Rama. The *why* of this illusory power you cannot know.'

'How did Karma arise? How did evil come about? What is the origin of phenomena? From the Satchidananda Para Brahman how did Asat Jada Duhkha come? If Rama is Satchidananda Para Brahman and He and He alone pervades all, why do we find evil and misery in this world? These questions are transcendental. They are Atiprasnas. The finite intellect cannot understand the mystery, which is beyond the speech and the mind. Intellect can grasp only things relating to the senses and the mind. One cannot get a solution to this eternal question except through the realisation of the Satchidananda Para Brahman Rama.'

'In reality, evil does not exist. There is no evil except in your imagination. All is that Satchidananda Para Brahman Ram. The existence of evil is due to our wrong perception. It is only in the Vyavaharic sense that there is evil. And that evil exists to glorify the good. This evil has co-existed with good in all periods of time. In Satya Yuga the percentage of evil might have been less. In Kali Yuga the percentage may be more. But there has always been evil in the world. There is, beside this external evil, the ceaseless fight between the Subha Vasanas and the Asubha Vasanas within man.'

'Similarly in the world also there are Deivic societies and Asuric societies. The Deivic forces always work for the welfare of humanity and for the final emancipation of man from the bondage of Samsara. They work for the establishment of real communism in the world.'

'Real communism is Vedanta which preaches oneness and equality. Real communism is divine life which ennoble every man and prompts him to see his own Self in every living creature. Real communism is divine life which demands of everyone to share what he has with others, to work for the welfare of all. It is not this Asuric communism which destroys temples and burns the devotees of the Lord.'

'There is another Asuric movement in the South. It is the self-respect movement. Real self-respect is also good. That is divine life which respects all as one's own Self. It strives to take man towards God through worship of His Form and repetition of His Name. But, this Asuric self-respect movement pulls down temples and burns Ramayana.'

'At the same time, there spring up Daivic institutions which strive to establish Dharma, to bring about real communism and self-respect. These institutions are

run by the devotees of God, Sadhakas and Siddhas. They lead the people along the path of divine life. Through conferences and propaganda, they uphold Dharma, devotion to God and knowledge of the Self. The Theosophical Society has been holding regular conferences. There are other institutions conducting Sankirtan Conferences and spiritual conferences. The Divine Life Society has also been conducting such conferences. The first Conference was held at Villupuram by Dr. Mani. Three conferences were conducted by the pious and noble Venkataramiah (Swami Ramanada). The great work was given new life to by Dr. Mangalam and Sri S.V. Iyer of Tambaram. The thread was taken up and the work is carried on by others. Sri Rao Saheb N.G. Venkatesa Iyer conducted the Second Divine Life Conference last year at Salem.'

'Rao Saheb V. is a noble pious soul who is striving his level best to spread the glory of the Lord's name. He is a dynamic selfless worker with a noble and magnanimous heart. The Conference was a great success. Sri V. went from lane to lane, from house to house and stirred the people to tread the path of divine life and attain the Lord's Sayujya. To such a noble soul I give this little love-offering of mine in the form of an award—M.S.G.S., which means 'Member, Sivananda Gyana Sabha'.

'The Sivananda Gyana Sabha is there where people sing Lord's Name. The Sabha is there where man runs to the aid of his sick and ailing brother. The Sabha is there where man meditates on the Almighty. The Sabha is there where Atma-Vichar is done.

'Sri Venkatesa Iyer is a great Karma Yogi. Living in the world, carrying on his worldly duties, amidst worldly distractions and family burdens, he has been boldly working for the spiritual uplift of the world.

'It is very easy to retire to a cave. You will pretend to meditate for some time: after six months, Tamas will set in. You will not know where you are. How easy it is not to tell a lie when you have no one to talk to. How easy it is to control your anger when no one approaches you, much less opposes you. What is there in controlling the mind when there are no distractions at all? The real glory of a real Yogi or Jnani lies in being able to control the mind and to engage himself in Marka Yoga for the good of humanity, while yet living in the world. Even a little of the practice of this Yoga at once purifies you. Sri V. is a Dheera who has been serving humanity and leading the divine life, while yet living in the world. May God bless him. May God bless you all. May you all become Rama-Swaroop!'

30TH MARCH, 1950

EKADASHI MAHIMA

It had been decided in the evening that today's Nama Ramayana Parayana and Sahasranama Parayana would be done in the Studio and 'broadcast' over the loudspeaker. But, Siva himself came up to the Studio (and he has been fasting without taking even a drop of water, today being Ekadashi).

Seth Pannalalji, the mighty pillar of the Sivananda Mission has generously donated a loudspeaker set to the Ashram. It has been installed in the Ashram. The entire atmosphere is stirred with the Kirtan Dhwanis, Bhajans, etc., through this loudspeaker which has been christened by Siva as the 'Anandavani Broadcasting Station'.

Siva began with the Omkara Nada and announced himself:

'Now Swami Sivananda will sing a few Kirtan Khwanis. He will do a little service to you through the loudspeaker.'

Then, he delivered the following speech in Hindi:

'Today is Ekadashi. It is only nine o'clock now. It is good on Ekadashi to keep vigil at night and sing His names. Therefore, please do not sleep now. Sit up. I will sing the Maha Mantra Kirtan. All of you who hear me also sing the Kirtan along with me. You will quickly attain the Lord's grace.'

'Ekadashi is a very auspicious day. I do not know how many of you observed fast today. Fasting on Ekadashi is a potent means of eradicating Avidya and of attaining purity of mind and through the purity, the grace of the Lord. You will attain health and longevity also. You will develop a powerful will. If you are too old to fast completely, then take a little fruits and milk. If you have not fasted today, at least fast from the next Ekadashi. I shall be grateful to you.'

Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare

'This is a great Mantra which occurs in the Kalisantharana Upanishad. It does not contain any special Bija Aksharas: therefore, it can be repeated at all times without bothering about Suchi or Asuchi. Eating, sleeping, walking, taking food—at all times repeat this Mantra. You will quickly attain Moksha.'

'In Kali Yuga conditions are not very favourable for Sadhaks to practise Hatha Yoga. Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga require very keen intellect. In this Yuga it is only the Name of the Lord that can take you to the other shore of immortality. Serve all selflessly. Repeat the Lord's name. You will easily attain Moksha.'

In the same tune:

Sarva Sharman Parityajya Maamekam Sharanam Vraja

Aham Twaa Sarvapapbhyo Mokshayishyami Maa Shucha

What you have you learnt, tell me frankly,

From the Bihar and Quetta earth quakes?

'Death may come at any moment. Are you ready? Nothing that you have now will follow you, except the Nama-Khajana (treasure of repetition of the Lord's Name). Father, mother, wife, son and friends: bungalows, motor cars and coats: property, titles and name-fame—these will not follow you after death. When your throat is choked, your relatives will only be searching for your iron-safe key and bank

pass-book. At that time, when you leave this world, only this Nama-Khajana will prove to be a real friend. So, go on hoarding this Name-wealth.'

Then Siva sang various Kirtans.

'Now I shall sing one English song that will inspire you very much. I used to sing it during my tours in the Punjab and people would sing and dance, forgetting themselves. Another Kirtan they liked was 'Gopiavallabh Radheshyam'. They would sing so excitedly that they would not know when their *pagri* (headgear) fell off.

'The song I am going to sing is a tonic, it is a panacea for all human ills. It is the Chidananda Song. In a few words it reminds you that you are the Satchidananda Atma, ever blissful, and full of knowledge. All your sufferings are due to wrong identification of the Self with this perishable inert body. You have forgotten your real nature and, therefore, imagine you are suffering. Now, wake up and sing'....

Chidananda Chidananda Chidananda Hum

Har-halme Almastha Satchidananda Hum

'You may be poverty-stricken: it may be days since you have had a morsel of bread. You might have lost all your property in Pakistan. Your body may be assailed by various diseases. But the moment you sing this song with Bhav a new thrill of joy will fill your entire being. You will feel that you are the Amar Atma. You will be fearless, without anxiety or worry.'

'The same song I will now sing in English. Nowadays there is a lot of talk about the replacement of English by Hindi. People do not tolerate their brethren speaking the English language. Such an attitude is unfortunate. English also has come out of OM, the mother of all languages. Like Hindi, English also has a rich diction. English has now come to be spoken in all the Western countries. We cannot live completely isolated from the West. There will always be businessmen in India wishing to go overseas: students who will go to Western universities for further advanced studies. They must know English. We must have a broad Vision. India's culture is Vedantic culture. Vedanta is universal religion. Our vision also should be universal, not narrow and bigoted. Develop Hindi by all means. Popularise Hindi by all means. But do not hate English: give it also a place.'

Knowledge-Bliss, Knowledge-Bliss Bliss Absolute

In all conditions I am Knowledge-Bliss Absolute

'Do not identify yourself with this little perishable body and suffer. Identify yourself with the Atman and be ever blissful. The nature of the Atman is described in another song'....

OM Antaratma

Nitya Suddha Buddha

Nirakara Kutastha

Yyapak Swayam Jyoti Purna Para Brahma

Sakshi Drashta Turiya

Santam Sivam Adwaitam

Amala Vimala Achala

Avang-Mano-Gochara

Anandamaya Chidanandamaya

Anandamaya Chidanandamaya (OM)

'Some people do not like Vedant. They like only Bhakti. They think Vedant is opposed to Bhakti. Some others like only Hatha Yoga and think that only through Hatha Yoga they can awaken the Kundalini. All Yogas are one. They lead to the same goal. A Bhakta may say that he does not want Moksha. But, when in Para Bhakti he becomes one with the Lord, he attains Moksha. A Jnani may not wish to awaken the Kundalini: but in deep meditation, the Kundalini will awaken itself and proceed towards the Sahasrara. Only in the preliminary exercises do these Yogas differ. All culminate in the same Supreme Nirvikalpa Samadhi.'



APRIL, 1950

1ST APRIL, 1950

SUCH IS LIFE IN THIS WORLD

Sr. G.C. Sharma writes to Siva:

Revered Gurudeva,

I hope your holiness is in receipt of my last letter. I am extremely worried now- adays. Although I know very well that worrying will not help materially in any way, yet I am helpless. My worries are based on the following facts:

I lost my job that was fetching me Rs. 300 per month. My own son aged 17 years is missing since 18.2.50. My other son is very badly indisposed. Last but not least, I had started some business on a small scale in partnership with three gentlemen. One of the partners proved to be of criminal brain, and the whole thing is going to be turned out as nothing.

Revered Gurudev, you know my heart very well. I have absolutely no place for shelter except your kind self. If one's lot cannot be changed, all that I would request you to favour me is to kindly pray for my peace of mind.'

Siva remarked: 'Is not this more or less the experience of everyone at some time or the other in his life? The world is Anitya, Asukha. It is sheer foolishness to search for happiness and peace in the world. We have taken our birth in this world, as human beings, for an entirely different purpose. That purpose is to realise God. 'Having taken your birth in this world which is Anitya and Asukha, worship Me,' says the Lord. And, that is the way to salvation. Blessed are they that are in a position mentally to renounce the world. They alone enjoy peace and happiness, not others.'

3RD APRIL, 1950

THE DHARMAPURAM MAHASANNI-DHANAM AT ANANDA KUTIR

The scorching sun could not prevent Siva from going up to the temple where His Holiness the Mahasannidhanam of Dharmapuram Adheenam, of South India, had arrived. Siva met the Mahasannidhanam and took him to the studio where H.H. and party witnessed a Yoga Movie film.

Siva did the Panchakshari Kirtan. The ex-Mayor of Madras, Sri S. Ramaswamy Naidyu, who was one of the members of the party, delivered the following speech:

'It is a great wonder that Sri Swami Sivanandaji, who was born in the South, has established such a lovely Ashram on the bank of the Ganga in Rishikesh and is spreading through this great institution knowledge of ancient scripture. In the Ashram everything is permeated with the Pranava OM. In the small children who

sing the Lord's name beautifully, in the buildings of the Ashram, in the beautiful temple of Lord Viswanath, in Swamiji's talk, in Swamiji's songs, in Swamiji's form, in Swamiji's words—there is the Prana reverberant. Why: even in these sweets that we are given here, in the fruits and the coffee, there is that OM.'

'The Mahasannidhanam has been wishing to come to Rishikesh, and to pay a visit to the Ashram of Sri Swamiji also. By God's grace, this wish has today been fulfilled. I consider it a historical meeting. Never once since the days of the sixty-three Nayanmars has there been a meeting between such great saintly personalities. The previous Mahasannidhanam hardly moved out. Today the Mahasannidhanam has actually met another great Acharya, Swami Sivananda.'

'I do hope in the near future Sri Swami Sivananda might pay a visit to the Dharmapuram Adheenam in South India. It is the fervent wish of the Mahasannidhanam also. That is what the Mahasannidhanam has asked me to convey to Sri Swamiji.'

'These days when materialism is fast spreading, it is encouraging to see institutions such as this growing rapidly and spreading the counter-current of divine life. May the Almighty bless the institution with prosperity and progress to enable the sacred lore to spread throughout the world.'

Siva took H.H. to the photographic dark-room. As he was inspecting the various new additions to the studio, Chidanandaji remarked: 'Swamiji would be surprised to know that this place was a jungle, the abode of tigers, twenty years ago.'

The Mahasannidhanam said: 'Saints can work wonders through mere Sankalpa. What can Swamiji not do?'

10TH APRIL, 1950

THE BIGGEST MANSION

Sri Nagarmull Murmuria has come from Calcutta for the Kumbha Mela. He is accompanied by nearly fifty members of his family and friends, too.

'Swamiji, it s a long time since I have had your Darshan. We wish to stay here for a few days. But it appears that there is a great shortage of accommodation here due to Kumbha Mela rush.'

'Occupy any vacant room you like. Accommodate yourself in the heart. You can accommodate the whole world in it. It is the biggest mansion.'

Instruction of very great significance: He who has found his dwelling in the Atman that resides in his own heart does not hanker after mansions and forts. He is ever peaceful and contented. What is more: he finds in that heart accommodation enough for the entire universe, he identifies himself with everything, loves, all, serves all, and feels that he is one with all.

HINTS TO SPIRITUAL PROPAGANDIST

During the All-World Sadhus Federation session this morning, Siva had asked Srimathi Karin to speak: and she delivered a beautiful lecture based on her experiences in Europe.

Afterwards she was talking to Siva about delivering lectures on spiritual topics.

‘Swamiji, but it looks to me like carrying coal to Newcastle to deliver lectures on Atma and Jiva in a place like this where my knowledge of these is poorer than that of the audience.’

‘You are right. You must be practical in your lectures. Talk always what you have experienced yourself, without revealing that they are your own experiences. Think over the steps through which you have ascended, of the difficulties you have met with and overcome, of the solutions that you have used in dissolving your problems: and string them into a lecture. Everyone will appreciate it, for it will be a unique lecture, highly interesting. Sadhana is an ever-fresh blossom, ever sweet, ever fragrant, ever enchanting.’

‘Another important point you must bear in mind. Be short in your talks. Just fly past the platform like a lightning—ten or fifteen minutes, half an hour at the most. People should get something like an electric shock: they should be charmed: they should want to hear more. That is the way to keep the listeners’ appetite healthy: get up before they feel satiated. Give them time to digest what you have given; and given in small mouthfuls every time.’

‘Begin with Kirtan. And, end with Kirtan. In the middle also do some Kirtan. It will keep the audience alive to what you are talking, and bring home to their heart the lessons you wish to instil in them.’

11TH APRIL, 1950

GAIT AND CHARACTER

‘I was sitting in the office. I heard footsteps. It was like the trotting of a horse. I turned to see who it was. It was Swami....!’ said Siva and continued:

‘You can study a man’s character by his looks, his speech, and his gait also. There is no harm in wearing sandals, or shoes. A good-natured man will see that the soles of his shoes are soft. His gait will be modest, easy and soft. He will be ever mindful of not disturbing others by his rough gait. Trotting about like a horse betrays lack of manners and lack of culture.’

‘Especially so in the case of a Sanyasin. A Sanyasin is expected to walk slowly, placing each foot deliberately on the ground, taking care that he does not thereby kill any insects that might be crawling on the ground. He should practise humility. He should walk looking at his toes, always withdrawn into his own Self. But look at this young Swami! He is Rajasic. He cannot control himself. He has no regard for others: he does not care if his walking disturbs others. Such should not be your nature. You must mind these little details. Then only will the major virtues manifest themselves in you.’

AS COAL IN NEWCASTLE: SO IS YOGA IN INDIA

Sri S.N. Mitra, I.C.S., Excise Commissioner of the U.P., has come: he will stay here for a few days supervising the Mela arrangements in Rishikesh. He has been accommodated in the Ashram premises for the period of his stay here.

While light refreshments were being served to him, he was discussing certain matters with Siva. He was very happy that India had saints like Siva to guide her population along sane lines. He felt that it was India's message alone that could save the world from chaos, riots and wars.

'Spirituality is the very salt of the earth in this country,' said Siva. 'World peace can be well and truly established only when India takes over the spiritual leadership of the world.'

'Yes, Swamiji. All the other nations are steeped in materialism: and the lead materialism can give can only be towards war.'

'Each country has its own speciality, its own glory. There is something wonderful in every inch of God's creation. No nation is without its own glorious points. As Newcastle is famous for coal, as some other country is famous for iron, so also India is famous for renunciation and Yoga. Renunciation is the key to peace. Soon the world will learn to listen to India's spiritual message.'

HOW TO STUDY GITA

A young aspirant of emotional nature sat at Siva's feet and begged for instructions. Siva said: 'Study Gita regularly. Gita contains all that you need know in regard to Yoga and Sadhana. You cannot understand the real meaning of the Slokas all at once. You will have to sit at the feet of some learned, saintly personality and learn. Do Japa. Do selfless service. Purify your heart. If your mind is pure, then you will instantly understand the meaning. All knowledge is within. When you attain purity, the meaning will instantly flash on your mind.'

12TH APRIL, 1950

YOUR NAME, A BYE-WORD IN JAFFNA

Two European Sanyasins came into the office. One was a German who fled from an internment camp years ago and taking Siva's guide-book to Kailas Manasarovar, escaped into the Himalayan interior.

The moment Siva saw him, Siva recalled the past incident.

'Yes, Swamiji: you are perfectly right. I am now in Jaffna. I have a small Ashram there. This Swami is a French Sadhu and has come out to India recently. He was greatly inspired by your teachings and is now practically your follower.'

'And, Swamiji, I understand that you are shortly going to undertake a tour of South India. Kindly do visit Jaffna. I already have the personal invitation of several prominent citizens of Ceylon. We shall arrange everything there. We shall take you by plane from Madras to Jaffna and after your programme there, shall leave you safely back at Madras. You will have no difficulty at all.'

'You have no idea, Swamiji, of your influence in the South. There is practically none who has not read your books or pamphlets, and who does not literally worship you and follow your teachings. Your name is a bye-word in Ceylon. And, all are anxious to have your Darshan.'

YOUR WORD HAS LIFE-TRANSFORMING POWER

Sri S.N. Mitra was relating to Siva the measures taken by the Government to eradicate the drink-evil. The discussion drifted onto the present state of society and Sri Mitra deplored the depraved moral condition of the youth of the land. 'It would be a very good thing, Swamiji, if you can find time to write small, simple books for school children, on ethics and religion. I envisage graded series of books suitable to the school children at various stages of their career.'

'Why: there are very good writers already in the educational field, and they can write good books on these subject?'

'Yes, people can write, Swamiji. Perhaps, Dr. Sampurnanandaji is already in touch with one or two writers for books on these subjects. But what they write will be words only: and that is not what is needed. What we need is the force of spirit, a transforming power in the words that form the lessons in the book. Only you can do that. Your words have a special charm, a compelling force.'

LAST MELA EXPERIENCE

A retired Collector of the U.P. has come to witness the Kumbha Mela arrangements at Hardwar and Rishikesh. He was a Deputy Collector some years ago and was the Mela Officer in charge of the Garmukteshwar Mela. Siva at once recognised him: and the officer was astonished at Siva's memory.

'Yes, Swamiji. I was the Mela Officer at that time when you visited the Garhmukteshwar Mela. And I still remember with great joy the ecstatic Kirtan that you did at Garhmukteshwar on the occasion. As the Mela Officer I had given permission to the convening of the Satsang where you did ecstatic Kirtan: I still remember that Kirtan scene. I had posted some police officers to look after the arrangements. Soon there were fewer people at the bathing-place than at the place where your Kirtan was held. After the Mela was over, some people complained that the whole Mela had been foiled on account of my permitting you to carry on the Kirtan propaganda, which had become a more or the most important function during the Mela. But, Swamiji, that was the very purpose of the Mela—to enable people to derive inspiration from the direct contact of Realised saints. If I were appointed Mela Officer to any of the Kumbha Melas, I will do just the same thing again. Millions were benefited by your Darshan and Upadesha at that time.'

15TH APRIL, 1959

SOCIAL NATURE VS. SOLITUDE

Srimathi Karina had been invited by Dr. Kailas Nath to a tea party held by all the doctors who were on Kumbha Mela duty and whose work had come to an end. She came back for the night Satsang.

'Was the party nice?' enquired Siva. 'Did you like it?'

'I had just to endure it, Swamiji. It bored me stiff. Thank God, I had taken my Japa Mala with me and I did ten Malas of Japa during the course of the party.'

'Perhaps you wish now that you had gone?'

'Absolutely, Swamiji.'

'That is why I remain in solitude. When you get a little bit of discrimination all this worldly activity seems uninteresting and often revolting to you. You long to get out of it and to enjoy the peace of meditation in solitude. There is nothing like solitude if you wish to have peace.'

And Siva added, after a pause, 'But this social nature is very difficult to curb. Man wants to live and move in society. Man is a social animal. He wants company. He wants friends. He takes great delight in parties and social gatherings. It takes a long time to get over this craving for company. Once it is got over, then you enjoy unbroken peace.'

18TH APRIL, 1950

NON-VIOLENCE AND THE SANYASIN

Bhaskaranandaji has started a school for the refugee children in Delhi. Siva was perusing the Report of the School where it had been said that military training was given in the school to boys and girls also.

'It is good. The boys and girls will then grow up into good soldiers and courageous men and women. They will be an asset to the country.'

'What about Sanyasins? Will they begin to impart training to us also?'

A Sanyasin who was standing nearby said: 'Swamiji, in case of national emergencies, we, too, should join the army. For instance, during the recent communal riots, I was very alert and was on the look out for Muslim goondas. If any had encountered me, I would certainly have killed him.'

'No, no. That should not be a Sanyasin's attitude. Not even in defence shall a Sanyasin kill. No, not at all. Death is the most glorious thing for a Sanyasin. If you say that we must defend ourselves or others, then you will not know when you take up the offensive. And then you have, while performing the Viraja Homa, given 'Abhaya' to all beings. You have declared that no being need be afraid of you, that you will not injure anyone. You are to feel that you are not the body, and that you are the immortal all-pervading Satchidananda Atman. How can you

injure anybody? Even if your throat is cut, you should smile and laugh 'Sivoham'. There is no world for you. Whom will you defend? To a Sanyasin, Ahimsa is an absolute principle.'

22ND APRIL, 1950

SIVANANDA YATRA MANDALI

It is Sankara Jayanthi today. Paramanandaji who is organising the Sivananda Yatra Mandali (an all-India tour programme) had arranged to take a group photograph of the Mandali personnel. We went to the railway station for a picture.

After this was done, Siva stood on the railway platform in the scorching summer sun, and began to sing the Maha Mantra Kirtan, as also the 'Song of Instructions'. All the station staff were immensely delighted and benefited, too.

On returning to the Ashram, Siva remarked: 'Unless you stitch my lips, I shall go on singing Kirtan at every station platform and talk to people also, even if it results in the complete breakdown of my health.'

25TH APRIL, 1950

THE SANYASIN'S YATRA

Seth Chamanlal of Amritsar has come. He has brought his own car with him in which he wants to take Siva and party to the Ashram's farm in Bibiwala.

Though it was past midnight yesterday when Siva retired, after personally giving to Dr. Kailasnath several letters of introduction to high officials to help him in his quest of knowledge and opportunities of service. Yet, he was ready at 5.30 a.m.

In the farm, Siva requested Sri Swami Narayananandaji to give some fruits to the labourers' children. 'Please peel the orange and give.' That is Siva's method: the receiver should not be put to even that difficulty, and must be tempted to eat it at once. Then only is the offering or the worship complete.

Standing amidst the labourers in the hot sun, Siva did Kirtan for over half an hour.

From there to the Goshala of Sri Goswami Ganesh Duttji. It was not in the programme: but the Sanyasin has no programme. 'I would like to see Sri Goswamiji's Gita Mandir at Hardwar. Then we shall simply drive on the Ganges Canal Road and go back to the Ashram whenever we like.'

'Swamiji, we shall send word to the Ashram that we are not coming now.'

'No, no. Don't bother. Just go on. Let them think what they like.'

At the Goshala, Sri Ganesh Duttji was delighted to receive Siva. 'Maharaj, shall I get some tea for you, or milk?'

'Badi Kripa: we just had our breakfast.'

'When I come to your Ashram, then you flood me with your hospitality!'

Siva noticed a bottle of Horlicks in G.'s hand. Like a child he said: 'If you give me a glass of Horlicks I will take.'

G. showed us round the Goshala. Siva said: 'This is Brindavan. And, you have Lord Krishna's Amsa.' He did Kirtan.

Then G. took us to the Sanatana Dharma Pratinidhi Sabha's Gita Mandir at Hardwar, recently opened by the President of India.

There were just a few devotees in the temple at that time. Siva stood up and began to sing Kirtan. It was thrilling.

Siva said, after Kirtan: 'This is a very beautiful temple of the Lord. Sri Goswamiji, even though he still wears the white cloth, is a real Sanyasin who works for the welfare of the world. He has done very great service to Sanatana Dharma and to India. He has established many temples: he has constructed many Dharmashalas: he has brought into being many schools and colleges. He is a great philanthropist. He is an untiring worker.'

'This is the abode of the Gita. Gita is enshrined here. Gita is a universal scripture. It is the life of India: and India is the life of the world. This is a temple of Gita, from which will radiate the truth throughout the world. The whole world will be uplifted. Truman, Atlee, Stalin, all the leaders of the world will be profoundly influenced by the Gita Swadhyaya, Bhagawat Path and Kirtan that is conducted here.'

'May God bless you all. May you all become Jivanmuktas. God bless Sri Ganesh Duttji with health, long life, peace, prosperity and Kaivalya.'

G. said: 'Swamiji, you have fulfilled the purpose for which the Mandir was established. You have truly performed the opening ceremony. Today the temple has been sanctified.'

'I do not know what your programme was for today. I might have disturbed your programme. I am grateful to you for showing me round the beautiful Mandir, and for all the trouble you have taken. Badi Kripa,' said Siva.'

'Today is a great day for me, Swamiji. You have showered your blessings on us unsolicited. The day has been very well spent. I am overjoyed by your kindness.'

As we were coming back from Hardwar, Sri N. looked at the watch and said: 'Swamiji, it is half past eleven.'

'Don't look at the watch. That is the Sanyasin's principle. When you have got out of the Ashram, don't think of when to return. Thinking of the time, you may neglect the work on hand. Concentrate all your attention on the work on hand: make it most successful. Your entire life will be fruitful: and you will attain the goal of life also.'

When we reached the Ashram, Siva said: 'Today's function owes its glory to Chamanlalji.'

‘Swamiji, I thank God that I brought my car with me. You have purified the car by singing Kirtan in it. The purchase of the car has only today become purposeful.’

30TH APRIL, 1950

SATI GODAVARI

Sati Godavari of the Upasani Kanyakumari Sthan of Sakori has come to the Ashram. She and the party were performing Puja in the temple where Siva was present, too. Siva told Sri Judge Saheb who had also come:

‘A well-known saintly personality, a lady from Sakori, by name Sati Godavari Mata, has come: she is doing Puja to Lord Viswanath. She is the disciple of Sri Upasani Baba, himself a Mahapurusha, who was the disciple of Sri Sai Baba. Upasani Baba has revolutionised the customs and manners in the land by permitting his lady-disciples to offer Vedic ritualistic worship to the Lord. Sati Godavari recites the Rudram Chamakam, Purusha Suktam, etc. does Abhishekam, and worships the Lord in the ceremonial fashion. Now women all over the land will be inspired to follow Sati Godavari Mata’s example and will begin to worship the Lord. There will be a welcome regeneration of Indian womanhood. We will once again have ideal women in India, saintly women as we had in the Vedic times—Gargi, Maitreyi, Sulabha, etc.’

In the evening, during the Kirtan, Siva sang the following tunes....

Jnana Dev	Tukaram
Sainath	Upasani
Upasani	Godaari
Jnana Dev	Tukaram

Mataji felt a thrill of joy when she heard Siva uttering the names of her Gurus: she blushed and looked on the ground when she heard him repeat her own name in devout Kirtan.

After going round the Ashram, she felt: ‘How has this Sanyasin been able to do so much single-handed in so short a period? Surely he must be an Avatar.’



MAY, 1950

1ST MAY, 1950

SATI GODAVARI WORSHIPS SIVA

Sati Godavari Mata had requested for permission to do Pada Puja. Siva himself went to the Kutir in which she had been lodged.

When after the Puja, she knelt on the floor, and with great veneration touched Siva's feet with her forehead, Siva simultaneously bowed to her with folded palms. It was a great sight to see. A saint worshipping another saint.

STAMMER-CURE

Sri Hanuman Prasad Poddar of Gita Bhavan has sent a young boy to Siva. He suffers from stammering.

'Sing Kirtan: you will be all right,' said Siva and at once repeated Om Om Om thrice. He asked the boy to repeat Om along with him for a while.

'Oh, you are all right.'

'Yes, Swamiji,' said the boy, astounded at his own unshaking voice.

'Sing the Maha Mantra Kirtan,' said Siva and himself sang the Maha Mantra. The boy followed suit. All this had a miraculous effect.

'Daily sing the Maha Mantra for at least half an hour. The stammering will never come to you again.'

2ND MAY, 1950

SADHUS' CONFERENCE

When Swami Bhaskaranandaji of Delhi requested Siva to preside over a Sadhus' Conference today, Siva at first did not agree, for reasons of ill-health. When B. came and pleaded, Siva at once yielded: 'Yes, I shall come.' Then he said to us: 'I like to attend spiritual conferences and do my own bit of service in the form of Kirtan. Increasing physical ailment sometimes comes in the way. But, when even a little pressure is applied, I cannot resist. What does it matter if a little more strain is imposed upon this body, if it is for a good cause and if I am able to sing and make others sing the Lord's names?'

He was the first to go to the venue—an hour earlier!

Siva commenced the proceedings with Sankirtan. B. detailed the aim and object of the Conference and said: 'The main inspiration for the work that has been undertaken has been from Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. He has already indicated the line of action through founding the All-World Sadhus' Federation. What he has been able to do single-handed during the past ten years surpasses estimation: it is indeed a miracle: and none but a Siddha Purusha like Swamiji could have done that. It is really his inspiration that has prompted me to come

forward to call this Conference. We depend upon him to sustain us through continued blessings and paternal care, to guide us, to inspire us, to console us, and to lead us along the right path.'

Brahmji who wanted young Sanyasins to undertake the work said: 'Swami Sivanandaji is an aged youth. He does not move about from place to place doing Prachar. But he does not belong to the retired group of aged Sanyasins. Even at this age, in spite of the heavy work that he has to do in connection with the activities of his own Ashram and the Divine Life Society, he has given us a beautiful message. It is thrilling. I am amazed at his energy and enthusiasm.'

During the course of his address Siva said:

'India is the land of saints, sages and seers. Each nation has got its own speciality, its own unique feature. In the case of India, the unique feature is that she has always had on her soil saints, seers and sages galore. We can proudly say that there has not been one generation in India that has not had its saintly personages and God-realised men and women.'

'Even today many saints are carrying on the divine work of spreading the message of truth, at various places in this country. The need of the hour is to coordinate all these activities so that the mission might gain greater strength. It is only spiritually awakened Bharat that can spread the message of peace, unity, harmony and bliss. And, the Sadhus alone can do this in this land.'

'Should the Sadhus do this work? Should the Sadhus enter Vyavaharic field and preach Dharma (or should they remain in their own Kutirs and caves, spending their time in meditation?) Such Mahatmas are rare nowadays as can declare that the world did not exist in the three periods of time, and they alone can meditate all the twenty-four hours. Youngsters nowadays take a delight in reading the Yoga-Vasishttha and declaring: 'The world does not exist in the three periods of time.' If there is no salt in the dhal, if their tea is not given at the proper time, they fly into a terrific rage. These people are unfit to study Yoga Vasishttha. Yoga Vasishttha should be studied by very advanced Sadhakis. Those who have not developed Para Vairagya, those who are still in the lower stages of Sadhana, should engage themselves throughout the day in Japa, Kirtan, meditation, Swadhyaya and service also. They should serve humanity with Atma-Bhav or Narayana-Bhav. Work for work's sake. Work because such work is a necessary part of your Sadhana. This is not binding. Working with egoism is wrong. Working as a Nimitta is bondage-cutting. Even to work as a Nimitta or an instrument in the hands of the Lord is a very difficult thing: it needs complete self-surrender to the will of the Lord, and therefore complete self-abnegation or destruction of the ego.'

'Who can enter into Samadhi? Who can remain in Sahaja Samadhi Avastha throughout the day? Only a Dattatreya or Suka. Even Suka Deva who was always in Samadhi, sang the glories of the Lord. People nowadays think that they can always remain in Samadhi, even before they set their foot on the ladder of Yoga. Delusion. Their Vairagya lasts hardly for two months. They go to a cave and pretend to meditate on Brahman: they imagine it is so easy. After two months,

their hidden Vasanas, cravings and desires lull them into Tamasic super-slumber. They are of no use either to themselves or to others. They live the life of beasts.'

'How hard it is to develop even one good quality! Cultivate Yama, Niyama, first. Samadhi will supervene by itself. Cultivate Maitri, Karuna, and the other virtues that the Lord has enumerated in the Gita. When can you develop Karuna? Only if you serve humanity with Atma-Bhav or Narayana-Bhav.'

'If you wish to serve humanity, if you wish to do Prachar work, then you should have the power to influence the people. You will have to acquire this through Japa, Kirtan, meditation, Pranayam and cultivation of Deivi Sampath. Then only will people listen to you, will follow you. What a great power is stored in Ram-Nam it is impossible to describe. But, you will not believe. You have no faith in the Name of the Lord. Think of the great effect produced by one word of insult! When a man abuses you, your blood begins to boil, you at once fly at his throat. Now tell me, has word or name got power or not? If such is the power of a vulgar word, then how much more ought to be the power of the name of the Lord! Not much of argument will avail here. Have full faith. Repeat the Name of the Lord and find out the glorious effect yourself. Drink the nectar of the divine name. You will have within yourself an enormous power with which you can work wonders. You can uproot mountains: you can shake the whole world with the power of the Lord's name. You must have faith: you must have devotion for the Lord.'

'There are many people nowadays who do one Purascharana of a Mantra. They think that immediately on completion of the Purascharana they will begin to get money orders or will begin to fly in the air. Such Japa will not help you. You must thirst for God-realisation; and do Japa for the sake of God-realisation. Then and then alone will you develop Adhyatmika Shakti with which you can work for the good of humanity.'

'I am very glad that through the untiring efforts of Swami Bhaskaranandaji Maharaj, this great organisation has come into being. It is a blessing to humanity. Tyagis alone can do such work: Tyagis alone can really and truly work for the good of humanity. Na Karmana Na Prajaya Dhanena Tyagenaikenamritatwamaanasuh. Such is the glory of renunciation.'

'May this organisation flourish forever, illuminating the path to peace, harmony and happiness so that humanity might walk along this noble path and attain its goal.'

Siva attended the afternoon session, too: and was again the first to come! It was hot and someone came with a big fan. Siva declined the service saying: 'No no. I don't want it. It is good sometimes to endure the heat.' Even in his advanced age, even after achieving the Highest, Siva does not give up the elementary Sadhanas. A model for others to follow.

4TH MAY, 1950

WHY GOD CREATED MOSQUITOES?

'I can understand why God created all the good things of the world, Swamiji: but why did He create the mosquito? If it is of no use to anyone, it is a great nuisance to all,' said Rai Bahadur G.M. Modi.

'Nothing in God's creation is entirely useless. Though creation is His play, there is still a need within creation for everything that has been created. Even for the mosquito.'

'This mosquito is food for the bat and other birds. God who has created the bat and other birds has provided food for them in the mosquitoes.'

'Then, the mosquitoes act also as Secretaries to Lord Yama. Due to lack of self-control in human beings, they multiply in vast numbers. There is food scarcity and various other kinds of scarcities. There is overpopulation on the earth. These Secretaries of Lord Yama, the mosquitoes, act as carriers of the malarial germ, and they spread the disease. Many thousands die of malaria. Earth is relieved of its burden.'

'Thirdly, there is a very important function for these mosquitoes. They sting you into wakefulness. Every time they sting you, you think of the nature of the world. What a miserable place this is—this world! There are mosquitoes, scorpions, cobras, tigers and various other ferocious animals: scorching summer sun, biting winter cold, dust-storms, snow-storms: wars, riots and quarrels. How would you like to go to a place where these are absent!'

'That place where these mosquitoes are absent, is Moksha, the Kingdom of God within you. The mosquitoes remind you of that truth. They instigate you to think of God and to save yourself from the miseries of mundane existence.'

'Now you understand that mosquitoes are as necessary as anything else in creation?'

15TH MAY, 1950

NAVEENA EKALAVYA RAMAMURTI

A famous archer, Ramamurti, demonstrated some rare feats in archery before Siva who keenly appreciated them and conferred upon R. the title of 'Naveena Ekalavya'. R. said:

'The success in all these feats does not depend so much upon my own skill as on the powerful and holy presence of Sri Swamiji Maharaj. Swamiji is Lord Siva Himself. There is no doubt about this. His face beams with grace and compassion and I get his power and encouragement to perform the feats. As Lord Siva gave the Pasupata Astra to Arjuna, our Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj gives me today his blessings for success in this great Sastra. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj ki jai!'

JUNE, 1950

1ST JUNE, 1950

SOURCE OF INSPIRATION

Justice Chandrasekhara Iyer of Madras and Justice Mazumdar of Calcutta have come. Siva welcomed them with a Pranama, as usual. Slightly embarrassed C. prostrated himself before Siva.

‘Swamiji, it has been my pious wish for a considerable time now, to have your Darshan. It is my good fortune that I have the opportunity today,’ said both of them. Then C. introduced the other retired Judge to Siva: ‘Justice Mazumdar is also the President of the Kalikamlwala Kshetra Committee.’

Siva turned to M.: ‘It is very good. The kshetra is doing very good philanthropic work.’

Justice M. to C.: ‘Look! I am sitting close by Swamiji and touching him so that I may draw inspiration from him, be blessed by him and purified by him.’ And, he nestled close to Siva.

Siva then took C. to his Kutir and to the Ghat. Siva explained: ‘The Mysore Maharani used to like this Ghat very much. This is the seat on which she used to sit and meditate.’

‘Who would not like it, Swamiji? It is so lovely. The entire place is reverberant with spiritual vibrations. I thank God for giving me this opportunity to visit this holy place and have your Darshan.’

2ND JUNE, 1950

KARMA AND HEART-CULTURE

A proposal to purchase a water-pump in order to make the best use of the engine donated to the Ashram by a devotee brought Chidanandaji to the office. The discussion turned on to the financial affairs of the Society. C. was explaining that a serious financial crisis was looming large over the entire institution.

‘The financial condition of the Society may be good or bad. The Vaidji’s family ought to be supported by the Society. God wants that we should help them. Theirs is a pitiable lot. Vaidji is dead, leaving the entire family virtually on the street. They have nothing to eat, and no money to purchase their clothes with. When Vaidji was alive they were living honourably on his meagre means. Now, they have suddenly been thrown into a terrible position. What greater misfortune can there be for respectable people than to suffer from want of food and clothing? We must give them shelter, food and clothing. It is our duty. That is what God wants us to do.’

‘Sometimes such misfortunes even shake people’s faith in God. They will begin to ask, ‘Is there a God at all?’ But, Vaidji’s people are truly God-loving. They are even now regular in their Kirtan and Bhajan.’

‘Even though it is bewildering, God has His own purpose for bringing down this calamity on this poor family. He wants to create Vairagya in the lady. And, what is even more important to us, He wants to give us an opportunity for rendering selfless service. Even at the cost of incurring more expenditure, we should support them.’

‘Some foolish people will ignore such opportunities for rendering selfless service and say: ‘Oh, it is their Prarabdha. Each man has to suffer his own Karma.’ That is all very good. But, the other man’s evil Prarabdha gives YOU an opportunity to render service and purify yourself. It is foolish to let such opportunities go. It is not real Vedant: it is lip-Vedant or Vedantic perversion. It is one of the ways of the evading of our responsibility towards society and towards God. A real Vedantin will deny himself, will put himself to the greatest hardship in the service of others.’

Siva continued: ‘God wants us to serve others and to support all the people that resort to us. He who sends these people will also send the wherewithal to maintain them. Their Prarabdha will bring to the Ashram their food, clothing and maintenance. Therefore, worry not.’

3RD JUNE, 1950

IN THE ASHRAM OF THE INFINITE?

‘You are coming after a long time. Ten years?’ said Siva as Major-General A.N. Sharma bowed to him.

‘Physically yes, Swamiji. I came here in 1942 last time. But, you are always with me. I see you daily. I am never separate from you, Swamiji. This I have actually experienced through your unbounded grace.’

‘You are very busy in the service of the nation. That is also good. It is also service of the Lord.’

‘But, Swamiji, that is no service at all. Service in the Government is like machines working when the switch is put on. There is no life in such service. These people who are near you are luckier than I. I envy them. They are doing real service to humanity and to the Lord, under your saintly guidance. This is my last year of service, Swami. Next April I will surely be here.’

‘Such a good officer like you, the Government would like to retain. They cannot always find an officer with your integrity, nobility, sincerity, spirit of service, and God-fearing nature. An honest officer like you is an asset to the Government of the country.’

‘No, no Swamiji: I am only trying in my humble way to follow your teachings. I am trying to adopt your teachings in my work and daily life. I can be completely satisfied only if I come here and dedicate my life to your holy cause.’

Then Siva introduced several Ashramites, one by one, and described how each one was an expert in his own way, young men of great intelligence, education and culture.

'You are a mighty magnet, Swamiji. So, it is no wonder that you have attracted so many needles to you. You are the All here. You are the Spirit or the soul of the Ashram. They are all inspired by your rays only. To me only you exist in the Ashram.'

The General said to his daughter: 'Kamala, look, what a single man has been able to do. And, that too in such a short time. Many people complain—'I am alone. What can a lonely man do? Look at Swamiji. He came to Rishikesh alone. He had to take his Bhiksha from the Kshetra and work. Look how he has converted a jungle into a city. Look what a lot of service is being rendered by him to humanity through this institution. You can also do that, Kamala, if you apply yourself to the task.'

We were coming round the temple. Several Yatris and Sadhus were lying on the temple verandah.

'Who are these?' ask Siva.

'Yatris, Swamiji.'

'All sorts of people come here. Sadhus, Yatris, young boys who renounce the world: people who wish to take Sanyas, who wish to practise Yoga: people who have had failures in the world: people with incurable diseases—literally all sorts of people come here. I think this is more an asylum than an Ashram.'

'This is a real Ashram, Swamiji, in every sense of the term,' said the General.

'Everyone comes here and takes food in the kitchen. I do not even ask from where the man is coming. He is free to remain here as long as he likes. During his stay here, whatever be the reason for his coming here, he is trained in service, Kirtan, Yoga Asanas, etc.: and even if he leaves the Ashram later, he is a transformed personality. All people requiring mental solace and peace come here.'

Then Siva said: 'You should see Swami Chidanandaji. He is a saint He is a genius. He is a powerful speaker, writer, and there is no one like him in service. Lepers and cholera patients, even dogs and birds receive the kindest treatment at his hands. He takes the greatest delight in service. He is an able doctor by experience. I saw one day an aged Sadhu who was suffering from leprosy, lying on the roadside. I had some milk and food given to him. A little later C. personally went to the patient, led him to the Ashram, and is attending on him day in and day out. The case is so advanced that all his fingers and toes have been eaten away by the disease. The bones are sticking out in the hands. The sores are raw. No one would even dare to go near him. But C. daily dresses him, feeds him and takes motherly care of the patient. I will show you the patient.'

'There was a dog here which was suffering from an ulcer: it emitted an unbearable foul smell. C. dressed the dog daily without feeling the least Ghrina or discomfort. He found a parrot lying paralysed in the jungle: he picked it up and

provided a beautiful bed, pillow and cover, and fed it and nursed it nicely. It is very rare to find a heart like his. He is a saint truly.'

They all went into the studio. The General and his daughter were wonderstruck. Kamala asked: 'How many photos have you taken so far?' And, even before Padmanabhanji could reply, the General said: 'Infinite number. In the Ashram of the Infinite, everything is infinite.' P. then showed them the albums containing some of the photographs taken by him so far. When they had finished with one album, the General exclaimed: 'It is enough for someone to write a book of the history of the institution.' And, he looked aghast when six more albums were produced before him: 'No no, you can write seven books of the history of the Society. Marvellous.'

4TH JUNE, 1950

GENERAL SHARMA

This I.A.S. probationers accompanied Siva when he took General Sharma round the Ashram this morning. Afterwards they said: 'Swamiji, we shall take leave of you now. We are going to Garuda Chatty now: and, on our return, we shall leave for Delhi.'

'Come here again, began Siva: and spend a week or a month. Recharge yourself with fresh spiritual energy. That will stand you in good stead in your work, nay in your entire life.'

'Here is General Sharma who makes a Yoga of his office work. He has understood the secret of Karma Yoga. He has studied Gita, Upanishads and Ramayana. He takes a real interest in his official duties. He discharges them well. He thereby earns great merit here, purifies his mind and qualifies himself for the descent of divine knowledge, too.'

'You should all follow his noble example. Do not take your office work as a mere routine work imposed upon you by the government. Do not work merely in order to earn your living. Feel all the time that in your way and within your allotted sphere of work, you are serving the Lord's children.'

'You are the embodiments of wisdom. You will, each one of you, rule over your district for the protection of whose population you are responsible. You are, therefore, the Amsa of Vishnu. Remember this point very well. When you discharge your normal official duties. Therefore, feel that you are but an instrument in the hands of Lord Vishnu, and that He is doing His work of Preservation through you. That is the proper attitude of a Karma Yogi.'

'To be a perfect Karma Yogi, you should develop in yourself many virtues—the Deivi Sampath enumerated by the Lord in the Gita: Amanitwam, Adeambhitwam, Ahimsa, etc. You must be honest, truthful, loving, forgiving, humble and simple. You must be ideal citizens. You must set an example to the people over whose destinies you preside. Then and then alone will you have really justified the Lord's choice of you for this distinguished service.'

‘Please be regular in your study of the Gita. Try diligently to put into practice the Lord’s teachings in the Gita. Then you will not only win the love of the people and the government: but you will also become a saint revered and respected all over the world—you will attain Moksha in this very birth.’

General Sharma added a few words: ‘India needs honest administrators. That is what she lacks now. You remember the beautiful song in English which Swamiji sang last night—the ‘Song of Eighteen Ities’? If you bear that in mind always and strive in every way to practise the Eighteen Ities in your daily life, you would have achieved what Swamiji wants you to achieve.’

When, later, we went to the Gita Bhavan, Siva himself (in the fashion of a guide!) explained the main features of the Gita Bhavan, to General Sharma:

‘In every room there is a painting of the Lord. Along the verandahs and everywhere in the building, you will find Gita Slokas inscribed in various forms on the walls. On this verandah, there are eighteen pictures on the walls, representing the most important theme of the eighteen chapters of the Gita. In the Hall upstairs you will find marble slabs on which the entire Gita is inscribed, etc. etc.’

Jayadayalji wanted that Siva should give Darshan to an ailing devotee there: Siva let the General and his daughter examine him. ‘Diabetes,’ said the General: ‘He should take a course of insulin injections.’

‘Swamiji,’ said Sri Hanuman Prasad Poddar, ‘these orthodox people have strange sentiments about taking medicines. They think it is against the Sastras.’

‘No, no. That is wrong. Medicines are also God’s gifts to man. And, especially when they are not of animal-origin, why should he not take them? Human life is precious. Let him take insulin. It is not against the Sastras.’

The devotee, who was so adamant all throughout his illness which had already kept him in bed for the past nearly two months, now yielded and agreed to take the injection.

Siva at once closed his eyes and said: ‘Let us do Kirtan now,’ and sang the Maha Mantra thrice, and he was followed by the people around. The entire place was filled with the vibrations of the Maha Mantra. Then Siva repeated the Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra also.

He then said to the patient: ‘Repeat the Maha Mantra and the Mrityunjaya Mantra also. You will be all right. You will be in a position to go to the Satsang tomorrow. The Lord’s Omnipotent Shakti fills these Mantras.’

In the afternoon, General Sharma had expressed the desire to meditate in Siva’s Kutir for a few minutes. He had promised to come at 2.30. At 2.25 Siva noticed that the General had not come and so got out of his Kutir, ready to wake up the General, if necessary. ‘When I have something to do, I cannot even take rest. I am anxious not to miss even a little opportunity to be of service. Please call Sharmaji.’ As Siva said this, he noticed Sharmaji coming down the hill. Siva gave the General a military salute which the General reciprocated in proper form.

A little later....the car's engine hummed OM....or was it only the echo of Siva's loud OM....and the General and his daughter took leave of Siva, Ganga and the Himalayas with folded palms, which they waved again and again.

12TH JUNE, 1950

BASTI AND VAMANA DHAUTI

Sri Somareswar of Muzafarnagar performed the Jala Basti this morning. S. got into the Ganges: when the water had reached his knees, he sat down. After a complete expulsion of the breath, he did Uddiyana Bandha. All the wind in the intestines is now expelled. He released the Bandha: and did the Nauli Kriya. A vacuum is automatically created in the colon. Naturally water is drawn into the colon. S. later expelled this water. He had been able to draw a couple of pints of water: and the expelled water, too, was clean, denoting that the large colon was already clean.

Siva explained the technique and the advantage of the Kriya, to the assembled Sadhaks. 'This will keep your intestines clean and thus promote your general health. You will never suffer from constipation. You will be free from disease. You will enjoy radiant health. Not only this: all your Nadis will be purified. The Prana will pervade your entire body. You will have peace of mind and spiritual progress also. All of you should practise Basti and do it occasionally.'

S. said: 'It is all due to your grace only, Swamiji. I learnt this from your book only. I used to practice Uddiyana. One day when I did Uddiyana while yet in the water, I found that I had automatically drawn some water also in. Then I regularised the practise with the help of your book.'

Then S. and Sri Swami Satchidanandaji performed the Jala Dhauti. They drank water—five or six glassfuls—and then tickled their throat with the help of their fingers. All the water was immediately vomited, and with it phlegm and bile, too. Swami S. was able to do the Dhauti without the help of the fingers.

Siva greatly eulogised the proficiency of the two adepts and described the glory of Jala Dhauti: 'What Basti is for the lower parts of the alimentary canal, Dhauti is for the upper part. The stomach is cleaned with the help of the Dhauti. You do not need to use the stomach-tube. You will not suffer from indigestion or biliousness or from phlegm-trouble. You will have good digestion, and a clear brain. Initially you will have to take the help of your fingers to bring out the water from the stomach. By gradual practice the water will be ejected from the stomach merely by the practice of the Uddiyana Bandha.'

'Our ancients were practising these Kriyas as a matter of course. They used to cleanse their alimentary canal frequently through the Dhauti and the Basti. Therefore, they were healthy and they enjoyed long life. If you also regularly practise these exercises and Kriyas you will also enjoy radiant health and long life. May God bless you all.'

One remarkable feature during the whole performance was that when S., after performing Uddiyana inside the water, came out to eject the water from within,

Siva encouraged him to perform the act, too, right in front of him, practically with his back to Siva; and Siva's countenance did not register the least disgust to witness this none too pleasant a sight.

S. was shy in the beginning to pull his cloth up to his waist. But, Siva quickly encouraged him: 'Why do you feel shy? Throw away the cloth. All are endowed with the same organs. Just because we have been hiding them for a long time, we feel shy to expose them now. If we had from childhood hidden our face also from public view, we would feel shy to expose it to the public.'

14TH JUNE, 1950

INTELLECT AND YOGA

Srimathi K. Saberwal, Professor of Philosophy in the Lucknow University, has come. As soon as she came in to have Siva's Darshan, Siva handed her a copy of his commentary on the Brahma Sutras. A discussion ensued.

'Swamiji, how was it possible for Sri Sankaracharya to have devotion to Sakara Murti when he was an Advaitin and his philosophical treatises prove that he believed in the nameless and the formless?'

'It was because Jnana and Bhakti are essentially the same. Look at the Stotras that he has composed. They indicate clearly that he had developed devotion to a very high degree. Atma-Nivedan or self-surrender leads to Jnana. And, Jnana is synonymous with Para-Bhakti.'

'People nowadays condemn Bhakti and think that it is inferior to Jnana. They have no understanding of Bhakti. They think that they can jump at once to Jnana Yoga Sadhana. They have really no faith in God. They just acquire some intellectual conception of God. This does not serve them. Jnana Yoga without the necessary preparation is of no use.'

'Then, Swamiji, who is fit for Jnana Yoga Sadhana?'

'When there is only the veil of ignorance, when there is no Mala (impurity) in the mind and when there is no Vikshepa (vascillation) in the mind, then one can proceed to Jnana Yoga Sadhana. Mala can be removed only through Nishkamy Karma Yoga and Vikshepa through Bhakti. In the case of the vast majority of persons, all the three Yogas are necessary—Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Jnana Yoga.'

'That is perfectly true, Swamiji: your Yoga of Synthesis alone can enable Sadhaks nowadays to advance on the spiritual path. But, nowadays we have unfortunately developed the intellect which proves a hindrance at every stage. It does not allow us to have faith in God or to practise devotion. It questions and doubts.'

'Intellect ought not to be allowed to put obstacles in our way. Intellect ought to be trained in such a way that it should help us in our faith in God and Bhakti.'

'Yes, Swamiji. That way I think our grandmothers were better off than we are.'

Siva laughed.

'Meditate early in the morning and in the evening also. Do Vichar. Intellect may or may not believe in a thing which is beyond the senses and the mind. Intellect may not believe in bliss apart from objects. But, the state of deep sleep proves that bliss is in reality not in the objects or in the contact of senses with the objects.'

'By bliss is not meant pleasure! Pleasure is the other side of pain. Pleasure and pain are inseparable. Our goal is not this pleasure. Our goal is the Absolute Bliss. Brahmin or the Atman alone can be that Bliss. For in the Awareness of Brahman there is no duality; there is oneness. That is Truth. That is Consciousness also. And, in that Consciousness of Truth alone is there Bliss.'

'That Bliss is indescribable. Even the deep sleep bliss is indescribable. You wake up and say: 'I had a delightful sleep.' But, when you are asleep you are not able to describe the experience of sleep. It is like the state of a man who had lost a ring in a pond, dives into the pond, finds the ring, but is unable to say: 'I have found the ring,' and is able to say this only on coming to the surface of the water. Each one of us has to experience this bliss for oneself.'

'What a blessed thing it would be for one to realise this, Swamiji. I am tired of theory, theory, theory. I have to teach philosophy to my students. I know Vedanta in theory only. I tell them what the books contain. But, I have no knowledge of the Reality. It is a miserable state. I feel like throwing away everything and coming here and spending the rest of my life in meditation.'

'Theory is good. For it elevates your thought and brings up the ideal again and again before you. It stimulates Atma-Vichara. Gradually the Truth will dawn on you.'

'Meditate. Meditate regularly. You will understand everything.'

Then Srimathi Saberwal informed Siva that she was repeating Gayatri also.

'That is wonderful. Gayatri is a great Mantra which nicely combines Saguna and Nirguna. Now you have yourself admitted that you do combine Jnana Yoga Sadhana with Bhakti. You cannot separate them. And, besides, you are working in the University and teaching philosophy to thousands of girls. That is very great service. You are moulding their character and you are placing before them the high ideals of Vedanta. That is Nishkamya Karma Yoga of a very high degree. At the same time try to feel, 'I am Akarta: I am Abhokta: I am Sakshi: I am Satchidananda.' Then you will progress rapidly on the path of practical Sadhana.'

'That is the difficulty always, Swamiji. We do work: but we do not do it in the spirit of selfless service. We work for money or to fulfil our earthly ambitions.'

'It is true. But, by repeatedly trying to raise up the Vedantic feeling, it will one day be possible to get established in the idea. You may fail a thousand times. That need not bother you. But, after each failure, when you rise up, you will rise up stronger than you were before. Nothing is lost. Every effort takes you nearer the goal. When you get a few days' leave, come here and spend the vacation in silent contemplation and intense Sadhana. Once the mind realises that there is bliss in

Sadhana and meditation, it will not leave it. You will then be established in Yoga. May God bless you.'

15TH JUNE, 1950

NATURE CURE PROFESSOR

Sri Kameswara Sarma, son of the famous Sri K. Lakshmana Sarma of Pudukotah, the father of Nature Cure in India, has come. He was cordially received by Siva who quickly entered into a discussion with him on Naturopathy. This is Siva's secret of success with men of all types, temperaments and talents: everyone becomes *his* at first sight, for Siva with his versatile personality is at once able to engage them in their own fond game, stimulate them in their own pet topic, and make them feel that 'Here is an appreciative listener into whose ears I can pour my knowledge without being contradicted.' This is a great consolation when they do not get a friendly ear anywhere else in the world where vanity rules.

At the conclusion of a series of lectures by Sri Sarma at the Ashram, today, Siva gave the following talk:

'We are all thankful, not only thankful, but highly grateful to Sri Kameswara Sarmaji for delivering this series of lectures on the sacred science of naturopathy.'

'Nature is our kind and all-powerful mother. She protects us all in every way: she provides our food: and she gives us disease also to cleanse our system.'

'All the animals obey the laws of nature. It is only man with his little vain intellect, with his little knowledge, who violates the laws of nature and then suffers. Man is endowed with discrimination. He should be the first to obey the laws of nature and enjoy eternal life.'

'Health is most essential for a Sadhaka. Without good health, you cannot do Sadhana. Therefore, it is all the more important that all of you should take the lessons that Sri Sarmaji has taught you to heart, and put them into practice. Then only will you realise its full benefit.'

'Sri Sarmaji has been good enough to deliver his most illuminating lectures during the past three days. It is a great service to you all. He has rendered a service which you cannot easily repay. The only way you can pay your homage to him is to follow his precepts, and derive the maximum benefit from his lectures.'

'I am his foremost disciple here. I have been keenly listening to his lectures with very great interest. I have taken notes of his talks. How many of you have done so? You must at once take notes of all the lectures that you attend. Then you should put all the good ideas into actual practice. Then only will you be benefited.'

'Sri Kameswara Sarma and his revered father Lakshmana Sarma, as also his brothers, are all doing great service to the humanity. Even though they are leading the household life, they are in fact Sanyasins only. Sri Lakshmana Sarma is rendering pure selfless service unto humanity. He does not demand fees from

his patients. He effects a radical cure: and more than anything else, he leads the patients forever after along the path of life natural.'

'Only if all of you who live here practice naturopathy diligently will Sri Sarma be encouraged to come here again and again. You should take good naturopathic resolves, stick to them, and you should, when he comes here next time, show him that you have been true followers of naturopathy.'

'Be true to yourself. That is the most essential thing. All other forms of creation are true to themselves, the elements are true to themselves. But, it is only this self-willed, egoistic man who falls an easy victim to cunningness, crookedness and falsehood. Habits like keeping a pinch of salt hidden in the pocket when there is saltless diet in the Ashram (on Ekadashi day) are dangerous. That shows that you have no control over your tongue. True spiritual progress is not possible without the strictest control over the senses.'

'The mind craves for certain kinds of Rajasic and Tamasic food only because you have not trained it to enjoy Satvic food. Once you experience the bliss of fasting, you will long for the day when you can fast. You will look eagerly forward to Ekadashi. You will look eagerly forward to the saltless diet on Sunday, if you realise what incalculable benefits such a diet bestows on you.'

'Fasting is, besides being a potent curative agent, a beautiful Sadhana also. Watch: what a peaceful mind you have on the fasting day. Real prayerful mood will come only when the stomach is empty. You will meditate more peacefully and for a longer period on the day you fast.'

'It is not possible for anyone to convince you of the efficacy of fasting, or of water-cure, or of the glory of Satvic diet. You will have to practise and experience the results for yourself.'

'May you all lead the life natural and attain health and longevity. May Lord bless Sri Lakshmana Sarma and Sri Kamesvara Sarma and brothers with health, long life, peace, prosperity and Atma-Jnana.'

22ND JUNE, 1950

SIVANANDA MANDIR: FOUNDATION STONE LAID

At 10 a.m. we all assembled near the Viswanath Mandir. The happy function fixed for today then began. Chidanandaji led the Kirtan: Krishnanandaji chanted Shanti Patha. 'Sat-Guru Maharaj ki Jai'—a powerful Jaya Jay kar rose from twelve feet beneath earth's surface, where the devotees of Siva were witnessing Sri Narayanaswamiji lay the foundation stone for the Sivananda Mandir.

Sri Swami Chidanandaji then explained the significance of the great event, in an eloquent speech full of divine emotion.

'Every external ritual has got its corresponding inner significance. In what we are doing today the ritual is a very simple one: but the meaning that lies hidden in it is profound. We lay the foundation for a Mandir in which our revered Gurudev will be immortalised. At the same time, we take upon ourselves the vow that we

shall perpetuate for all time to come the great mission which he has espoused, of which he has been the founder: the mission of Sadhana, the mission of awakening man to the purpose of life, the mission of awakening the latent divinity in man. We undertake that we shall, till the last breath lasts in us, devote our entire life to this great cause. Thus, we shall make our Gurudev live in our heart forever and ever.'

THE GREATER ASHRAM

The Parliament Member, Sri Tirumala Rao, is at Ananda Kutir again, on a flying visit. Sincere believers, once they taste the joy of a saint's proximity, will never miss a chance of drinking again and again at the fountain-source of peace.

As Sri T. and party were taking their meals, Sri R. Ramakrishna of the New Delhi Secretariat, mentioned that he was acquainted with Siva since 1939, when he first visited the modest four-roomed tenement in a jungle. He admired this phenomenal growth of Siva's work.

'This is nothing,' said Sri T. 'Think of the world-wide spread of Swamiji's teachings. Just think of the millions of people who have been brought nearer to God, in whom the moral-conscience has been awakened by Swamiji's message. That is far more magnificent work than this one of building up a big Ashram, a great achievement though it is.'

Then T. turned to the several young Sanyasins who were serving him, and said: 'Look at the number of young and able men that he has drawn towards himself, and whom he is leading along the holy path.'

ASHRAMS AND FOUNDERS

A devotee said that a certain Ashram, after the passing away of the founder had lost its 'spiritual atmosphere'.

Siva at once grew grim and serene. 'The responsibility for placing his mission on sound basis lies with the saint who founds an Ashram or institution, as well as his disciples. The saint must so train his disciples that they will, on his departure from the earth-plane, be able to take over the mission from him and run it with equal efficiency.'

'At the same time, it is the duty of every true disciple to follow the footsteps of his Guru, to endeavour to grow into his likeness—to become like the Guru. He should then develop a great zeal to carry on the Guru's mission. Then and then alone will the mission be successfully carried on for all time. Look at the way the Ramakrishna Mission is organised and run.'



JULY, 1950

3RD JULY, 1950

ARE JIVANMUKTAS REBORN?

Today is the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University anniversary. It is celebrated during the morning class with special Kirtan, decoration, discourses etc. Chidanandaji presented the second annual report of the University.

After the class, Siva and Sri Tirumal Rao were talking to each other. One of the most interesting points, and the one that reflects Siva's attitude to Moksha, is this:

Sri T. asked: 'Swamiji, I find in a few places like Nagore, Shirdi, Tiruvannamalai, and the Andhra village where a boy-saint is sunk in Samadhi, and Rishikesh, ever full of Santi and a kind of spiritual bliss. May it be, Swamiji, that these places which have had the impress of the saint's personality, his Tapasya and Siddhi, on the very atmosphere, retain that sanctity for a long time?'

'Yes, yes,' was Siva's reply: 'And, not only that: the saint himself may live in those places. The liberated sage has the option to merge in Brahman or to live in a subtle form and carry on the work of Lokasamgraha, guiding aspirants, awakening in people a religious fervour and so on. This motive is manifested in some Jivanmuktas in accordance with God's Supreme Will. Therefore, the places in which the saint practised Tapas and attained Siddhi, which might again be chosen by the Invisible Spirit of the saint as its permanent abode, becomes the abode of the saint's divine qualities—peace, bliss and wisdom.'

8TH JULY, 1950

SIVANANDA YATRA MANDALI GOES FARTHER

Nature, who keeps Siva's cosmic house has sent a welcome shower in the morning, sprinkling water on the roads between Rishikesh and Hardwar, imparting to the whole landscape a freshness—a smile of joyous greeting—and to the whole atmosphere, a coolness. When the house had thus been cleaned, she lit the bright lamp, the Sun, which had temporarily been put out during the cleaning-ceremony. At 2 p.m. the sky cleared, and the vast blue canopy had just a few silk-cotton clouds hanging here and there: the sun shone brightly, but his heat had been already counteracted by the morning shower.

Suspense everywhere: what is afoot? For which God's sake is all this preparation?

Two heavily decorated buses stood at the entrance to Sivanandanagar. So much had been done so silently by Swami Paramanandaji, that Siva himself was surprised to hear at 3.15 the Anandavani Loudspeaker singing his recorded songs.

'Paramanandaji is working wonders,' said Siva as he got into the bus: and to the accompaniment of 'Sivananda Maharaj ki Jai' the vehicle leapt forward. The bus

ped forward: but faster than the car was the soul-stirring Kirtan Dhwanis that emanated from the Anandavani which travelled in the car.

We reached the Gita Mandir at Hardwar. A significant point is that Siva, though he had not been informed about the day's programme, did not ask one question about the arrangements. He was content to take things as they came: the attitude of a true Sanyasin. And, P. had seen to the minutest details of the entire celebration so that the maximum service is rendered to the citizens of Rishikesh and Hardwar. The entire day's function was carried through to success with clock-like precision.

Siva roared 'OM', and the entire audience joined him—an audience of more than 500. The building shook and responded. Then followed Kirtan. I held up the loudspeaker, but Siva brushed it aside saying: 'I don't need it.' Nor did he need it: for his voice could be heard by all even at the farthest end of the hall.

How he made them sing the Lord's names! The hall was resounding with His names. 'Kirtan is the easiest and surest way to God.' said Siva. 'It is difficult to practise Hatha Yoga, and awaken the Kundalini through Asans and Pranayama. It is difficult to study Vedanta, understand its secrets and enter into deep meditation. But it is easy to repeat the Lord's names. Kirtan cools down the three fires. Kirtan destroys the five Kleshas. Kirtan alone removes the three kinds of great obstacles—Mala, Vikshepa and Avarana—to the perception of the splendour of the Atman. Three kinds of Sadhanas are prescribed for the removal of these obstacles—Karma Yoga for the removal of Mala, Bhakti Yoga for steadying the mind and removal of Vikshepa, and Jnana Yoga for tearing the veil (Avarana) of ignorance. Kirtan alone can do all these: sing the Lord's names with Bhav and Sraddha—Mala, Vikshepa and Avarana, all the three will be removed. You will have Sakshatkara of the Supreme Lord.'

'How easy it is. You can repeat the Lord's name after or before taking bath: wherever you are you can sing His names. Even when you prepare bread, you can sing His names.'

So saying, Siva began his Kirtan (at the same time clapping his hands—as you do when you prepare bread.)

Jaya Siyua Ram Jaya Jaya Siya Ram

The audience which consisted of a large number of Punjabi women rose up to Sivas' expectations: all the women at once understood Siva, were thankful to him for this great Upadesha which they could translate into daily and hourly practice, and they repeated the Kirtan-Dhwani—most of them visibly moved—'Sadhana can be so easy!'

Immediately after, Siva sought out the usual Katha-Vachak at the Mandir who used to read the Bhagavatha and, to the astonishment of the crowd, reverently touched his feet!

A similar function at the famous Hari-ki-Pauri (the bathing ghat at Hardwar), on the bank of the holy Ganga.

After the function at the ghat, we went to the water-front. Siva visits the spacious ghat after a long time. Like a child, he admired the tower, the other newer constructions and dived into his memory to recollect the older ones: 'Yes, that temple was there previously. This is a new construction.'

'I have slept on this platform underneath the clock tower when I was in Swarg Ashram and when I used to come here with Chand Narayan Harkuli. Even when I first came to Hardwar in 1923, I had to sleep here one night, strange as it was then. I went to a Dharmashala: but someone in the Dharmashala objected to my staying there—I could not understand what the objection was as I did not know Hindi: and I quietly left the place and slept here.'

We returned to the Ashram at 11 p.m.

11TH JULY, 1950

DO IT NOW

'Not tomorrow or the day after: but now itself! They may change their mind later on and go away. We may not then have the opportunity of rendering our service to them. Bring the books now: I will sign them and you should hand them over to Sri Rao immediately,' said Siva when Nityanandaji told him that a visitor (Sri Ramachandra Rao) would be staying at the Ashram for a few days and that Siva might give him some books 'tomorrow or the day after.'

This is not a motto or an ideal with Siva. It is his inborn trait. He cannot put a thing off to 'tomorrow'—his life itself is one long illustration of this principle. Often his disciples are unable to keep pace with him: they sometimes find him a very hard taskmaster: but no one can fail to recognise that he does not tell others alone to do-it-now. He himself is zealous in his desire to do-it-now.

Siva then explained: 'This is one of the most important rules in Karma Yoga. Opportunities come and go. A Karma Yogi should take time by the forelock and do-it-now. He should be ever alert and vigilant and utilise every opportunity for service. When one thing is put off for 'tomorrow' then other similar works accumulate around it, and then the opportunity is lost. Procrastination is the greatest enemy of a Karma Yogi.'

The books were brought and Siva autographed them immediately, saying at the same time: 'What you wish to do tomorrow, do today: what you wish to do in the afternoon, do in the forenoon. Then you will grow into a real Karma Yogi.'

BANI BAI DOES KALAKSHEPAM

The Lord provided an opportunity almost immediately for the demonstration by Siva of this unique trait in him.

Sri Ramachandra Rao introduced a lady who had accompanied him to Badrinath. 'This is Bani Bai, Swamiji. For the past twenty years she has been doing Hari Katha Kalakshepam in South India. In fact, she wanted to conduct a Katha-Kalakshepam here also....'

Without a moment's hesitation, Siva said: 'Then I will have it arranged now itself. Oh Rajagopalji, ring the bell. Call Palji for Tabla. Get the harmonium and the Tanpur. Call everybody. Purushottham, bring some sugar-candy and black-pepper. Keep some water here. Vishwanath, spread the carpets. Call the neighbours also. Nityanandji, get some Prasad for distribution after the Katha.' In five minutes, Bani Bai had already commenced the Katha Kalakshepam.'

He said to her: 'You are a versatile scholar, too, besides being a first-rate musician. What a fund of knowledge and wisdom you have put into the Katha. There was ample humour, educative humour also. It was wonderful. You have Saraswati's grace.'

20TH JULY, 1950

A TEST OF TRUE SANYAS

'How is Sri S. at the Viswanath Bhag: have you sent him all the provisions necessary for his maintenance there?'

'Swamiji, I offered to do so: but S. prefers to take Bhiksha from the Kshetra and do some Seva at the garden,' replied Chidanandaji.

'It is good as a measure of training. But, why does he do so now? Is it because he had a petty quarrel with Sri P.?''

'Yes, Swamiji. Even when S. was here after the incident, he did not feel quite at home and was only waiting for the garden work to be started.'

'That is not good,' said Siva. 'The true Sanyas spirit is not properly understood even by very many Sanyasins themselves. Of course, Virakthi, solitude, observance of Mowna, living on Bhiksha, constantly chanting OM may all be some of the external characteristics of a monk, but quite apart from all this is the real inner Bhav which constitutes the basic essence of the Sanyas-spirit. This is the absolute dispassionate sameness to all the pairs of opposites—heat and cold, pain and pleasure, grief and joy, failure and success, insult and honour. The Sanyasin receives and regards them all with the same Bhav and with calm forbearance. A Sanyasin is Dwandwa-atita. To him, friend and foe are alike, and praise and blame have no difference. How is this so? Why is this so? Because the true Sanyasin is above body. His Drishti should not be based upon Dehatma-Bhavana. No, the Sanyasin always ceaselessly tries to live in the thought that he is Pure Spirit. 'Dehonaham, Jeevo Naham' is his attitude. 'Nitya Suddha Buddha Satchidanandoham' is his constant Bhavana. When he performs the Viraja Homa at the time of taking Sanyas he offers up his everything into the Kunda, including his Pancha-Koshas with the Karma and Jnana Indriyas, Pranas, Antahkarana, and Aham-Bhavana. Thus, from that moment onward, he is pure Chit. Thus he comes to regard all things that are said of, done to, or experienced by the body as having absolutely no concern with him. The Sanyasin should by all means be unshakably established in the serene tranquillity of his essential blissful spiritual nature.'

'If a Sanyasin does not strive to manifest spiritual Bhav, then who else is supposed to do this? Moving with people of diverse temperaments and simultaneously endeavouring to keep up this inner Bhav will alone help him make this Bhav pucca within him. To get easily offended by adverse criticism, a little harsh treatment or unpopularity and become agitated and to leave the place and go away—is a sign that he has failed in sticking to his Sanyas-Bhav. His ego is still grounded in the physical body only. He has been at once affected and upset by something done to the body. A Sanyasin has no body. How absurd to get 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 Sanyasin should have no Abhiman. It is Abhiman which makes one get offended easily at every trifle. Too much touchiness shows that one has not at all got rid of the idea of self-importance, the Ahamta or superior ego-sense. This is real death to a Sanyasin. Maana-Abhimana is rampant inside. Keen self-analysis alone will help sever a Sanyasin from the self-delusion that he is established in Sanyasa.'

'What to say of a little disrespect or insult: even if anyone is to beat a Sanyasin with shoe or slipper, or cut his throat with a knife—even then he should remain peaceful and perfectly unperturbed. A garland or rose flowers put around his neck or a dirty shoe hurled at his head should both mean the same to him as a Sanyasin. Of course, the perfect Bhav does not come in its fullness all at once: but even then every Sanyasin worth the name should strive every minute towards the attainment of this Atma-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 a Sanyasin somewhat for a little time. Perhaps for a whole day or even two days in some cases. Perhaps more if he was of a very sensitive nature. But, ultimately, the Sanyas-spirit must prevail. Viveka and Vichara must set working at once. 'Who am I? What is insult or honour to me—the 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.' Moreover, for what happens to the external body, who is 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 someone else for this! Thus analyses the earnest Sanyasin and keeps his peace.'

'Such actual test in the field of active service helps to indicate one's inner progress towards the ideal of Sanyas. They afford an invaluable training ground for the Sanyasin to perfect himself. To the Nivritti-Sanyasin also Vyavahara (not Loukika or secular Vyavahara, but Paramarthika, unattached selfless Vyavahara) gives much-needed scope for practical spirituality.'

'Accept all experiences in a spirit of joy. Meet all difficulties and trials with serenity and fortitude. Remember that to you there is neither trouble nor trial, for you are the Pure Atman. Sometimes some Karma may affect the mind a little. But it is a mere passing cloud only. Brush it aside, and shine again with all the effulgence of your 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 Viewpoint. Dehatma Buddhi will vanish and nothing will affect you in the least for you will never forget that you are the Pure Atman and Atman alone. Jai Ho!

21ST JULY, 1950

B.A. AT ANANDA KUTIR

'First you should give up the B.A. Abhiman. You have good learning: you are intelligent: you have very high qualifications. But, this Big Abhiman will hinder your progress. Therefore, renounce it,' said Siva to a young graduate and journalist who sought admission to the Ashram but showed his willingness to do only (or mainly) literary work.

'In the case of a spiritual aspirant B.A. should denote Be Alert, and Bow to All. You should be ever vigilant and be ever-ready to do every kind of work. You should take part in all the activities of the Ashram. Literary work alone will not do. You should help in wrapper-writing. You should learn the magazine work. You should be able to type articles for journals. You should at the same time be prepared to carry water to the kitchen, or sweep the road. Then you will shine as a true B.A. (Best Adhikari), as a pillar of the institution.'

HOW TO SERVE GOD

'I was studying this book, Swamiji: so, I could not attend the Satsang at night.' Sri K. said this when he was questioned by Siva why he was absent for the night Satsang.

'The other day you said that you had diarrhoea and so could not attend the Satsang. Now you say you were reading: so, you did not attend. Tomorrow, you will have some other excuse.'

'You should question yourself. If you don't like it, then I will not question you any more. But, you should question yourself and ask yourself: 'What for have I come here? Am I doing what is necessary to achieve my aim?'

'If you work in an office and earn Rs. 50 a month, you are ever-ready to serve the petty master there. You are ever-ready to obey him: 'Yes, Sir' you say for everything. You have renounced the whole world and come here to attain the highest wisdom. Here you should not expect a master who would bully you and extract work (Sadhaha) from you. You should be your own master. You should question yourself rigorously and even punish yourself if you are not doing all that you can to evolve.'

'Obedience, adhering to the discipline of the Ashram, humility—all these Sadhu-qualities you have to develop yourself. No one will enforce them on you. You should find out the daily routine of the place where you are staying and automatically fall in line with it. That shows you are a good aspirant. If you do not

conform to the discipline of the Ashram and go your own self-willed way, then it means you have not disciplined yourself.'

'No one need impose discipline upon you. For a moment put yourself in the other man's position. Just think for a moment that you are yourself conducting the Ashram, and that you yourself have instituted the daily Satsang. There are several Ashramites. Would you or would you not expect all of them to attend the Satsang?'

'I will, Swamiji.'

'Then, is it not your duty to attend the Satsang without even being told to do so? When there is a common function if all the people attend the function, there is a special charm in it. It would be glorious.'

29TH JULY, 1950

THE GURU TEACHES BY EXAMPLE

Today is the sacred Guru Purnima.

Since early morning several Sadhakis, Sanyasins and householders who had come from far and near to pay their homage to the great Guru on this sacred day, have been streaming in and out of Siva's Kutir.

Today Siva's ever-blissful countenance shone with a glow of That Inexpressible Something which magnetises the atmosphere, draws every one near, removes the birth-and-death fear, and makes the path clear. There is peace: and the peace permeates his entire being and overflows and floods all who bow to him. There is bliss: and this bliss is infectious, and the infection is life-long. There is depth in his eyes: and the near Siva appears to be far away: and this far-away seems to be within oneself.

Everyone went in and stretched himself on the ground before the August Presence, in one long prostration. 'I am thine, Oh Siva,' spake the heart. 'I am Thou: That thou art,' glittered the radiant message on Siva's face. Hardly a word was exchanged. Occasionally a 'May God bless you' was heard. We talked to him in the most sacred language: he blessed us in the same divine tongue. Silence was the word: a silence that was at once pregnant with the utterance of the Vedas and the Upanishads and all Sastras.

Adwaita Para Brahma Sastrigal was initiated into Sanyas with the name Adwaitananda. The economist in Siva does not permit the new recruit's old clothes to be thrown into the Ganges—as it is done in some other Maths. When these clothes can be given to someone who could wear them, why throw them into the Ganges? 'Oh Dayanandaji, give these to the health officer,' says Siva. Health Officer is what Siva calls the scavenger by. 'The clothes are dirty. They are not clean. First wash them with soap and then give them to the health officer.'

That is our Guru Siva. The gift is not an act of charity: but an offering to the Lord seated in the heart of the receiver. The instruction reflects this Bhavana. Follow his glorious example and achieve the Liberation that he has achieved. That, by

the way, was the gist of the inspiring discourse which Chidanandaji delivered on the sacred occasion. He said that a disciple, like the full moon, should faithfully and completely reflect the rays of Guru, the sun.

Guru Maharaj Guru Jaya Jaya

Sivananda Sat Guru Jaya Jaya

OM TAT SAT

SIVANANDARPANAMASTU

