

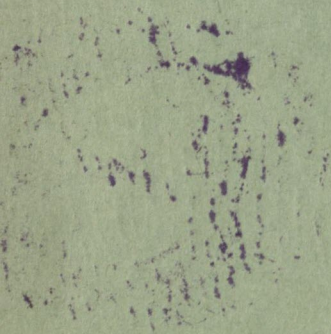
25

SWAMI SIVANANDA AND THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

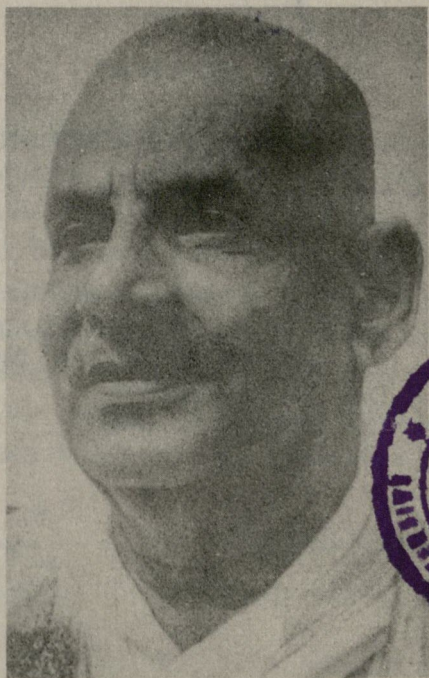


PC
294.30924
SWA

Published By
DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY
VANANDANAGAR-249 192
Garhwal, U.P., Himalayas, India
1983



SWAMI SIVANANDA
AND
THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY



Published By

THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

P.O. SHIVANANDANAGAR—249 192

Distt. Tehri-Garhwal, U.P., Himalayas, India

1983

First Edition : 1980 (2,000 Copies)
Second Edition : 1983 (5,000 Copies)

MEMO Library
Acc. No. 1468.74
Acc. by R. Nongpiy 24/4/88
Class by _____
Sub. Heading by _____
Auth. by _____
Prescribed by For FREE DISTRIBUTION

All Rights Reserved By

THE DIVINE LIFE TRUST SOCIETY
P.O. SHIVANANDA NAGAR - 249 192
Distt. TEHRI-GARHWAL
U.P., HIMALAYAS, INDIA

PC
294.50924
SWA

Printed under the Auspices of The Divine Life Society Branch
2204 Sector 22-C, Chandigarh As 1st PUSHAP for Centenary
celebrations of H.H. Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, Founder
President. And Printed by AZAD HIND STORES
Phototypesetter, Offset Printers & Stationers 34, Sector 17-E,
Chandigarh. Tel. : 26511

PREFACE

The present Handbook endeavours to provide a suitable Introduction to the great life of the Saint and Sage, Swami Sivananda, and the Institution he has established, The Divine Life Society, which might help one in acquiring an adequate knowledge of the structure, work and aims and objects of this comprehensive movement. We have a hope that in this miniature guide, we have also drawn attention to the essential fact of the spiritual constitution of the Universe.

—THE PUBLISHERS.



SWAMI SIVANANDA

The Founder

BIRTH AND BOYHOOD

On the 8th of September 1887, in the early hours of the morning, was born a boy-child in the village of Pattamadai on the banks of the river Tamraparni in South India. Sri P.S. Vengu Iyer, a Tahsildar and a great Siva-Bhakta, and Srimati Parvati Ammal, an equally great God-fearing lady, were the fortunate parents of this child. The happy couple christened this last and third son of theirs, Kuppuswamy.

Boy Kuppuswamy was intelligent and mischievous. In his boyhood itself he showed signs of renunciation and love for fellow-beings. He used to pity the poor, feed the hungry at the door, and make his father throw a pie into the hands of the pauper passing by. He often got cakes and sweetmeats from his mother and distributed them liberally to his younger companions, dogs, cats, cows and sparrows, himself not eating a bit. He used to bring flowers and *bacl* leaves for his father's Siva-Puja.

At the Rajah's High School, Ettayapuram, where he studied, Kuppuswamy always topped the class and won prizes every year. He had a sweet voice and

A UNIVERSAL OUTLOOK

Spirit, which is veritably the power of creation set in motion, keeps itself ever vigilant to maintain the purpose of creation, and it never sleeps even for a moment. It is always active in working to maintain the equilibrium and order necessary for the fulfilment of the Aim of creation. It is always intolerant about excesses and extremes of any kind. Whenever and wherever there is an intolerable excess or extreme, an over-stepping of boundaries and limits, the Spirit begins to work forcefully and brings back the powers to move in the direction of the desirable, and sets things in tune with the purposes or aims which it has in view.

At the time when Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj came to lime-light in this world, sometime in the earlier part of this century, it could be observed that there were certain movements in human history which required rectification. History is nothing but the march of the intentions of the Time-Spirit which vigorously adjusts and adapts itself to the ultimate aim and goal towards which the universe is moving. At the beginning of this century, there were two trends in social movement, which went to excesses, and they had to be checked. There was, on the one side, an excess of traditional orthodoxy, while on the other side, there was an extreme in the materialistic and economic outlook of life. We had both these

THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

WHAT IT IS AND HOW IT WORKS

BASIC PRESUPPOSITIONS

The Divine Life Society has been endeavouring to unfold the creative aspect of the Divinity within man. It is, indeed, a remarkable achievement of the Founder, His Holiness Sri Swami Sivananda, who, from the year 1926, has built up the wonderful mansion of 'Divine Life', brick by brick, on the firm foundations of purity, integrity, nobility and magnanimity. The ideals of the Society are lofty, most practical and within the reach of every human being, irrespective of position, caste, colour, country and creed. The Institution caters to the cultural needs of all ranks of people, to whatever class they may belong. Each one can tap whatever suits him the best according to his stature and intellectual or spiritual attainments. There is a physical Ganga flowing by the side of the Ashram, down from the icy regions of the Himalayas, carrying with her the message of the seers and sages of the past and the present, thus in a way keeping intact the connection between the ancient and the modern and nourishing the body and the mind of the wearied soul in its earthly sojourn. There is also available a *Jnana-Ganga* emanating from the prolific pen of the Great Master, Sri Swami Sivananda, and his direct disciples, whom the Master has chiselled and moulded into his own pattern with

AIMS AND OBJECTS OF THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED

I. To Disseminate Spiritual Knowledge

(a) By publication of books, pamphlets and magazines dealing with ancient, oriental and occidental philosophy, religion and medicine in the modern scientific manner, and their distribution on such term as may appear expedient to the Board of Trustees;

(b) By propagating the Name of the Lord, and by holding and arranging spiritual discourses and conferences and frequent Sankirtans or spiritual gatherings for singing and glorifying the Name of the Lord;

(c) By establishing training centres or societies for the practice of Yoga, for moral and spiritual Sadhanas and the revival of true culture, to enable aspirants to achieve regeneration through worship, devotion, wisdom, right action and higher meditation with systematic training in Asanas, Pranayama, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi; and

(d) By doing all such acts and things as may be necessary and conducive to the moral, spiritual and cultural uplift of mankind in general and to the attainment of the above-mentioned objects in Bhara-tavarsha in particular;

THE ROLE OF SPIRITUAL INSTITUTIONS AND THE FUNCTIONS OF THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

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

ESSENCE OF DIVINE LIFE

To speak the truth at all events, to speak sweetly with love, to practise non-violence and continence, to behold the One Lord in all beings, is Divine Life.

Love, truth and purity form the foundation of the edifice of Divine Life.

Character and devotion are the bricks and mortar, with which you have to construct the walls of the Temple of Divine Life.

The Temple of Divine Life has four pillars, viz., meditation, purity, love and righteousness in action.

Through the means of service, love and meditation, Divine Life is lived.

The secret of Divine Life lies in the spirit of service and sacrifice.

No philosophy or religion in the world can teach anything better than: "Serve, love, give, purify, meditate, realise. Be good; do good."

Purify your heart. Purity is the very essence of religion.

Mortifying the body is not Divine Life.

Physical nudity and matted locks have nothing to do with Divine Life.

Divine Life is not a rejection of life and its activities, but a transformation of it into the Divine Being.

THE NEED OF THE HOUR

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

At such junctures, there invariably appears on the scene, a person inspired by lofty ideals, who perceiving the widening gulf that is created between him and the people, at once sets about 'bridging' it in the way best suited to the particular occasion. He applies himself to bringing out the choicest gems of

THE BRANCHES OF THE SOCIETY

The Branches of the Divine Life Society are actually the ramifications of the spiritual, cultural and social aims and objectives of the Headquarters, for which the venerable Founder, Revered Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, stood and lived his life as a great example before us of the practical implementation of the ideal. Whatever the Headquarters stands for, that the Branches also stand for. The ideals of the Divine Life Society are pervasive and they apply equally to the Headquarters as well as the Branches, as also to the Members, and whoever is associated with the Divine Life Society in any manner whatsoever. It has to be mentioned at the very outset that the objective of Divine Life is not any kind of activity for the sake of activity, but activity for a higher purpose, towards which it has to be directed. All work is a means to an end and not an end in itself, though work can become an end in itself when it gets divinised and universalised. Then it reaches the status of God, which is a far-off Ideal, and as far as we people as human beings are concerned, it is a means to an end. This is the great goal that is ahead of us. Therefore the programme of the Divine Life Society Branches should be such that it should include, to the extent practicable, humanitarian ideals which comprise all that human nature requires. What man needs essentially is not easy to explain. We require food, clothing

SWAMI SIVANANDA'S CONCEPT OF DIVINE LIFE

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

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

Our mission in life is to realise that we are, in truth, immortal spirit encased in mortal human sheath. There is a divine spark in everyone. It is the life of our life. It is in its light that our mind and intellect function. Various prophets of the world

PATH TO PERFECTION

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

The practice of the moral law and ethical conduct will pave the way to the maintenance of a sound mind in a sound body. Passions and disturbing emotions disbalance the system and ruin the health of a person. A mental disturbance means the irhythmic distribution of the vital energy and the distur-

WHAT LIFE HAS TAUGHT ME

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

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

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

Side by side, the stirring events since the advent of the twentieth century had their effect upon all keen-minded people. The horrors of past and possible wars, and the consequent

The Sivananda Eye Hospital established	1.6.1956
The Sivananda Mandir consecrated ..	8.9.1956
The Sivananda Pillar consecrated ..	23.5.1958
The Sivananda Literature Institute established ..	8.9.1958
The Sivananda Literature Dissemination Committee formed ..	20.7.1959
Entered Mahasamadhi ..	14.7.1963

COMPLETE WORKS OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

I. METAPHYSICS

Principal Upanishads, I and II
 Chhandogya Upanishad
 Brihadaranyaka Upanishad
 Essence of Principal Upanishads
 Upanishad Drama
 Dialogues from the Upanishads
 Ten Upanishads
 Upanishad for Busy People
 Brahma Sutras, I and II
 Philosophy and Meditation on Om
 Srimad Bhagavad Gita
 Ethics of the Bhagavad Gita
 Essence of the Gita
 Gita for the Blind
 Gita Meditations
 Sarvagita Sara
 Jivanmukta Gita
 Moksha Gita
 Vedanta in Daily Life
 Practice of Vedanta
 Essence of Vedanta

THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER

O Adorable Lord of Mercy and Love !
Salutations and prostrations unto Thee.
Thou art Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient.
Thou art Satchidananda.
Thou art the Indweller of all beings.

Grant us an understanding heart,
Ecual vision, balanced mind,
Faith, devotion and wisdom.
Grant us inner spiritual strength
To resist temptations and to control the mind.
Free us from egoism, lust, greed, hatred,
anger and jealousy.
Fill our hearts with divine virtues.

Let us behold Thee in all these names and forms.
Let us serve Thee in all these names and forms.
Let us ever remember Thee.
Let us ever sing Thy Glories.
Let Thy Name be ever on our lips.
Let us abide in Thee for ever and ever.

—SWAMI SIVANANDA