

SWAMI SIVANANDA AND THE SPIRITUAL RENAISSANCE

SWAMI KRISHNANANDA

The Divine Life Society

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Publishers' Preface

The present booklet furnishes a systematic essay on the different facets of the philosophy and teachings of H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, with a metaphysical root, ethical stem and spiritual efflorescence. It has been the unique feature of the gospel of Sri Swamiji that he has included within its gamut the entire field of experience, and every system of thought finds in it an occasion for a final sublimation of itself. We have a firm hope that every seeking aspirant will find in this exposition of spiritual philosophy a veritable treat to his supreme satisfaction.

—THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

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The Problem Stated

The world we live in is observed to be a solid mass of matter. Even our own bodies are seen to be parts of physical nature governed by mechanistic laws, which alone appears to be all that is real. It has become commonplace today, especially in the universe of science, that life is strictly determined by the law of causality which rules over the entire scheme of the world. We are told that distinctions that are supposed to obtain between such realms of being as matter, life and mind are only superficial and are accounted for by the grades of subtlety in the manifestation and spreading of particles of matter. Even the organism of the human body, which appears to defy the laws of the universal machine that modern science envisages, is explained away as only one of the many forms of the workings of the brute force of matter, which is the ultimate stuff of all things. The natural consequence of such a theory as this is the astonishing conclusion that human life, like every other material substance in the world, is completely determined by blind causal laws, and the so-called free will of man is subservient to them, if not a mere chimera. When we protest that man is not merely matter but also mind, it is explained that mind is nothing but a subtle and ethereal exudation of forces of matter. Man is reduced to an insignificant speck in the gigantic machinery of the cosmos which works ruthlessly with its own laws, unconcerned with the weal and woe of man.

This naturalistic interpretation of life, that is fast threatening to become rampant in this modern scientific and atomic age, seems to be really the philosophy of the

common credulous man, and even of the intelligent public who have neither the patience and the leisure nor the equipment of understanding to fathom the greater depths of human experience. Hand in hand with this theory of crass materialism there is a craze for more comfort and pleasure by lessening effort and movement of every kind, and an inherent feeling that material progress conceived at its zenith should be the ultimate purpose of existence. Due to an irrational faith in the efficacy and correctness of this doctrine, the man of the world seems to have forgotten the corruption of moral values today, the fall in the mental life and the standard of present-day education, and a sense of monotony and restlessness of spirit brought about by such a view of life, in spite of his riches and material possessions.

The fact that man is not merely a humble cogwheel in the deterministic machine of a relentless universe, and that the essence of man is a spiritual principle co-extensive and co-eternal with the universal Spirit, was easily felt by many as a reaction to the very unsatisfactory and humdrum propaganda carried on by the materialists. The balance swung from the extreme of materialism holding that man is merged in physical nature to the other extreme of the idealism which propounded that man is perforce dragged on by the impetus of a cosmic spiritual Substance. The difference between these materialistic and idealistic theories is found finally to be in the conception of the ultimate stuff and constitution of the universe—the one advocating that it is matter, motion and force, and the other affirming that it is pure Mind or Spirit. But both agree in holding that man has no real choice and freedom of his own, he being

inextricably involved, merged and lost in the ultimate reality of the universe, be it material, mental or spiritual.

Unfortunate man discovered that it was hard for him, under such circumstances, to live a normal life of the enjoyment of aesthetic, religious and moral values and at the same time feel his feet well planted on Mother Earth, with her richness and grandeur, promises and mysteries, who manages in dexterous and wondrous ways to attract his attention and give him a hint that life is reality, beauty and joy, in spite of the ostensible struggle, adventure and hazard to be faced constantly; and yet that life is not all, that there is some awe-inspiring and terrible truth continuously pointed out by the phenomena of suffering, pain and death, by the restlessness of the world and the vicissitudes of life, the endless desires of man and the moral aspirations surging from within. The man of the world required a loving and sympathetic, reasonable and satisfying teaching to enable him to live as an individual, fulfilling his daily duties in life and yet aspiring for that marvellous and magnificent Beyond, which ever seems to beckon him through the tantalising veils of nature.

The beguiled minds of the growing Indian youth educated under the artful scheme chalked out by the shrewd Lord Macaulay could be easily led astray, and, as it would be natural to expect, the sublimity and the wisdom of the lives of the ancient predecessors of these young men, come through posterity, were slowly lost, and people began to move along the ruts of a so-called modernism of thinking, a rationality of approach and a scientific attitude to life, so much spoken of in these days and raised to an almost exaggerated height of apotheosis. There were many

who delighted in doubting spiritual laws, in denying the superphysical, and went even to the extent of decrying soul and God. The method employed by the alien rulers worked, indeed, like magic, and surprising was the way in which warm-blooded youth succumbed to the glamour of applied science and the utility of an industrial revolution placed before their unsuspecting eyes. People gradually shed the spiritual legacy of their forefathers and started to strut proudly under the unseen yoke of a civilisation wedded to a secret achievement of suzerainty over them—the simple sons of a hierarchy of intensely religious and spiritual heroes who had the great privilege of having declared to their brethren the deepest truths of immortal life.

Side by side, the world as a whole showed tendencies of a sceptical outlook, especially after the stress of the First World War and the revolutions brought about by the discoveries of twentieth century physics and biology, hand in hand with an insisting demand for reason in everything, and hinted that they would deal a fatal blow at all goodness, faith, morality, religion and spirituality, whatever be the conservative attitude to these time-honoured values. The situation called for a revaluation of all values and for the building of man's inner life upon a stronger foundation. There emerged, promptly and vigilantly, several powerful and authentic voices of the irresistible inner justice in the prominent fields of life's activity—politics, sociology, religion, yoga and spirituality—to correct erring minds and give articulation to the requirements of truth, law and morality. Swami Sivananda figures prominently among such leaders who brought about a thorough inner

transformation in modern India, and placed the grand spiritual values on a firmer footing and in a proper setting.

The Mission of the Philosopher-Saint

This significant want, this lacuna in the entire structure of life, this error in the aspiring spirit of man was carefully observed by the acute vision of Swami Sivananda, who made it his mission to give to the world a comprehensive philosophical theory, striking a balance between and reconciling and blending together the demands of an obstinate empiricism, and the principles and teachings of the lofty idealism that the eternal Spirit alone is real, and to design comprehensively a practice of certain synthesised techniques of inner and outer discipline to achieve perfection.

While being fully convinced of and persuaded to accept the doctrines of the metaphysic of a spiritualistic non-dualism that nought else than God can have any ultimate value, and having entered personally into the stupendous reality of experiencing this, Swami Sivananda felt the need to intelligently tackle the situations in which the human mind is involved, without disturbing or upsetting the beliefs of the ignorant, taking into consideration every aspect of man's life. We cannot teach that life in the sense-sphere is all, that the physical body and the external material world constitute the only reality; for the thoughtful nature raises the pertinent question that mind cannot be equated with matter, that love and joy refuse to be reduced to movements of electrons and protons, that the never-ending cry of the mystics and the religious men, from time immemorial, who professed to know and proclaimed the

existence of an unknown region and an unexplored reality of spiritual values, and of the clear possibility of such a thing as immortality—these cannot be set aside as mere distorted voices of morbid spirits or abnormal natures.

Nor is pretentious man, being what he is, to be satisfied by the extraordinary teaching that the world is not at all there, that what he enjoys and suffers are mere phantasms, that life is a delirium of consciousness, that precious values which are so eagerly and anxiously treasured with zealous care are but the busy activities of a confused mind engaged in a long dream in the sorrow of life's disease; for the searching senses and the understanding that enquires vehemently complain that they see a world as hard, concrete and real as anything can be, that the body has its pains and pleasures, that life has its duties, its burdens, its grief, wonders and patent meanings which cannot be brushed aside by any effort of logic, that the experience is real and cannot be abrogated as worthless by any stretch of imagination, that the visible is real and is valued, as amply testified by everyday experience. We cannot say that God created the world, for God has no desire to prompt Him to create. We cannot say that the world is God's play, for a perfect Being needs no play. We also cannot say that the world has no ultimate basis at all, for the changing phases of the physical nature and the moral urges of the inner spirit in man assert that God ought to be.

Life—A Sadhana

Swami Sivananda addresses himself to the difficult but important task of taking man as he is, a growing organism of a psychophysical character, neither wholly restricted

naturalistically by the mechanism of the material world, nor fully absorbed spiritualistically in the supermundane aim of divine existence. Man is not merely a body, a mind or a spirit, but a curious mixture of all these in a manner not comprehensible to ordinary intelligence. The Katha Upanishad says that the true 'enjoyer' or the empirical agent of knowledge and action is a composite structure of the Atman, the mind and the senses, together. Life is not merely a process of swirling masses of matter, groups of molecules, aggregates of atoms or vortices of electrical forces, occasions for the study of psychology or even metaphysics, and an idealistic soaring into the empyrean of logical thought, mental phenomena or mere psychic experience. Not even an exclusively spiritualistic consideration or an occultist interpretation can explain the mystery of life, which proves to be a superhuman work of the combination of certain characteristic elements of all these stages and strata of being at one and the same time. Man is at once a physical embodiment, a mental phenomenon and a spiritual entity. He has to appease not only the hunger of the body and the thirst of his vital forces, but has to pay equal, if not greater, attention to the demands of his psychic nature, his moral tendencies and spiritual aspirations.

Life is a synthesis of the forces manifesting in different orders and in a graduated scale the evolutionary structure of nature. In this sense, the whole of one's life is a sadhana, an integral endeavour for fullness on the part of mysterious man whose constitution, compelling attention and training, ranges at once from the lowest matter to the highest Spirit. As a body he is a creature of natural forces, subjected to the

suffering and the mortality attending upon all composite structures in the physical world. He is one with inanimate matter when taken purely as a material structure. But man's tale does not end here. He grows like a plant, feels and reacts like an animal; and insofar as the craving for food, sleep and sex is concerned, he is indistinguishable from the inhabitants of the mute kingdom. But conspicuously enough, man struggles to reach above the realm of the brute, exercises a moral consciousness totally absent in animals, and displays a marvellous understanding power and reasoning capacity in distinguishing between the true and the false, the right and the wrong, the good and the bad, the beautiful and the ugly, thus making it amply clear that while partaking of the natures of matter, life and mind—observable also in the inanimate world, the vegetable kingdom and the subhuman beings—he is also more than all these, and while including these in his individual make-up he also transcends them in an astonishing degree. The life of man is thus very complex, embracing variegated elements, exhibiting diverse characteristics and manifesting different grades of reality. If life is a sadhana, a continuous journey and movement and a story of adjusting oneself to and adapting oneself with the vast universe of a similar nature, it is not enough if we merely look at one side of the picture, but have to consider every aspect of the revelation of reality in man. This is precisely the mission of Swami Sivananda, to whom all life is yoga, and whose writings are an elaborate dissertation on integral living.

The Education of Man

The human self is constituted of a consciousness which is not pure existence but a dynamic process, being interfused, as it were, with the nature of the circumstances in which it finds itself in the world, with an environment of social elements, political restraints, moral commands, physical needs, vital urges, intellectual situations, and the like. In other words, man discovers, in his activities and in the problems he has to encounter every day, that his life is related to others' lives and undergoes growth and change as the world appears to change. We have to remember that human life is involved in the time process and hence bound by temporal laws. The human self is in the world, though not of the world.

Thus, a study of man is nothing but a reflection on the totality of situations that are comprised within the range of human knowledge, whether explicit as in the usual everyday experiences and in the themes of the physical and the psychological sciences, or implied as in philosophy, or revealed as in religion. Such a study has to include in its gamut the whole of life's problems, insofar as they affect the human self which is the aspiring individual. Man thinks, feels and wills, and does not merely exist. Hence his approach to the religious value of God, the ethical value of duty and the logical value of truth should proceed from and contain elements in the structure of his own central reality as far as he experiences them in his daily life.

Human life is conceived by Swami Sivananda as a school of education for the *jiva*, or empirical self, caught up in the meshes of ignorance, desire and activity. This

education has to be physical, intellectual, emotional, moral, active and spiritual, all at once, in a way beautifully fitted to the conditions in which one is placed. The actual technique of this education differs in its details in different individuals in accordance with their age, health, avocation, stage of evolution, social relations, etc., all of which call the attention of the soul to a variegated world. Essentially, any scheme of education should consist of methods for bringing about and effecting (1) the development of personality, (2) a knowledge of the world, (3) an adjustment of self with society, and (4) a realisation of the permanent values. By 'development of personality' what is meant is the wholesome building up of the individual, not only with reference to the internal states of body, mind and consciousness, but also in relation to the external world reaching up to it through the different levels of society. In this sense, true education is both a diving inward and a spreading outward.

Knowledge of the world is not merely a collection of facts or gathering information regarding the contents of the physical world, but forms a specific insight into its inner workings as well, at least insofar as man's inner and outer life is inextricably bound up with them. When this knowledge of one's own individuality and personality as it is involved in a world of picturesque colours and varying depths is acquired through intensive training by study, reflection and service of one's preceptor, it becomes easy for one to discover the art of adjusting oneself with society. Truly speaking, this adjustment is not possible for one who has no knowledge of the deeper spiritual nature of humanity, which constitutes society in man's practical

affairs. The aim of the individual as well as society is the realisation of the values personal, social, political and even universal—all mutually related and determined by a common goal to which all these are directed, consciously or unconsciously. Ignorant man may not be fully aware that the eternal values of life are summed up in the all-comprehensive terms ‘God’, ‘Freedom’, ‘Immortality’, and that all his daily struggles are nothing but the groping of his mind in the darkness of his ignorance to recognise these and participate in these by way of all that he sees, hears or understands.

To awaken the human spirit to this tremendous fact was the primary mission of Swami Sivananda, and his voluminous works cater variegatedly to the hungry souls who are in search of food but cannot find it for want of knowledge.

Characteristics of His Works

The writings of Swami Sivananda cover a vast range of subjects, in accordance with his plan of approaching man from every side and every aspect. These works treat, in detail, such diverse topics as anatomy and physiology; health, hygiene and sanitation; physical exercise, first aid and treatment of diseases; the discipline of the physical body through the technical Hatha Yoga processes of asanas or bodily postures, pranayama or the regulation of the vital force and of breathing, *bhandhas*, *mudras* and *kriyas*—all intricate methods of the perfection of the body to prepare it for withstanding the onslaughts of nature’s pairs of opposites such as heat and cold, hunger and thirst; an exhaustive psychological analysis of the composition,

working and behaviours of the inner man—the mental, volitional, effective, moral and rational natures, which so much influence and decide the values of life as a whole; the duties of man, his relations to family, community and nation; his position in the world and the universe; his national, international and world relations; the social, ethical and political structure of individuals; the assessment of the values, both religious and spiritual; and a comprehensive and penetrating discussion of the characteristics of the ultimate goal of human life, as well as an intensive treatment of the nature of the way leading to this goal.

In his expositions of these subjects, so very widely spread in apparently isolated universes of discourse, Swami Sivananda appeals not merely to the rational and the scientific man or the intelligentsia of society, but also to the devout, the faithful and the believing, to the common masses ignorant of higher laws, to spiritual aspirants, Sannyasins, householders, recluses, businessmen, women and children, alike. It will be observed, on a careful study of his writings, that his appeal is more to the heart and the feelings, and his admonitions are mostly of a practical nature adapted for an immediate application in the day-to-day life of man in every class of society.

His works are, strictly speaking, lengthy gospels on the different yogas: such as, (1) Jnana Yoga or the philosophical technique of the rational and the scientific intellect in unravelling the secrets of nature and living a life of the wisdom, truth and justice of the law of the Absolute; (2) Raja Yoga or the psychic and mystical way of analysing, dissecting and inhibiting the constituents and

modifications of the mind-stuff, thus enabling man to overcome its tyrannies and come to a comprehension of his position in a universality of the Spirit or the Purusha; (3) Bhakti Yoga or the way of spiritual love and devotion directed to the majestic Sovereign of the universe, the merciful and compassionate Father of all creation, by which emotions, such as those fastening man to relations with his parents, his children, his masters, his friends and his partner in life, are sublimated and ennobled by being centred in the universal nature of God who promises man, when he has surrendered his self completely to Him, with the hope of salvation; (4) Karma Yoga or the science and the art of spiritual activity, a splendid manner of converting every action and every duty in life—physical, mental, moral or spiritual—into a Yoga of the Divine, by linking it up with a ceaseless consciousness of the omnipresence of the Absolute, of the surrender of one's personality to God, or of one's standing as an unaffected witness of the movements of the internal and the external nature; (5) Hatha Yoga or the disciplining of the physical body, the nervous system and the vital forces with a view to preparing the individual for the practice of the higher yoga of inner discipline and meditation; (6) Kundalini Yoga or the bringing into activity of a highly occult force dominant and latent in the individual, by a rousing of which through a training of the prana and the mind the illimitable resources of nature are spontaneously placed at the disposal of man, and he becomes possessed of a consciousness of his true at-onement with the universe; (7) Mantra, Yantra and Tantra Yogas or the ways of certain purely mystic processes of generating spiritual forces and vibrations within, as also of

relating these to the without, through the symbology of specific sounds, formulas, diagrams and rituals intended to free man from confinement to the lower nature and raise him to the regions of the higher nature; (8) Japa Yoga or the spiritual practice of the chanting of the Divine Name or certain significant letters, words, phrases or sentences in order to bring about a condition of harmony and illumination in the inner nature of man; (9) Laya Yoga or the method of the dissolution of the mind in the Spirit by the recession of effects into causes, the merging of the grosser in the subtler, and the raising of one's consciousness and force from the lower to the higher. Swami Sivananda displays a great mastery in the synthesis of these various Yogas for the benefit of men of weak will, and assures the aspirant-world that success is bound to come when practice is backed up by sincerity, firmness and patience.

His Method of Approach

It is said that a sage of Self-realisation is like a pure crystal which has, by itself, no colour, but appears to assume the tint of any object that may be brought near it. Such a sage is supposed to behave, speak and act like a child with a child, an adult with an adult, an old man with an old man, a scholar with a scholar, and an ignorant one with an ignoramus. The idea behind this spontaneous self-expression, uninitiated by any particularised motive, intention, effort or will, is a close following of one's true nature with the Divine Will, which is immanent and active in all beings, and which has neither partiality nor prejudice, neither preference nor ill will with regard to anyone.

Swami Sivananda, in his personal life and example, as well as in his writings and speeches, reflected spontaneously, as it were, the nature manifested and exhibited by the environment around him, and acted in close keeping with a purely impersonal life. His works are not so much enunciations of principles for the guidance of the intellect and the reason—as is the case with several rationalistic works of metaphysicians—as practical instructions on the methods of the life spiritual, meant to go straight into the hearts of aspiring individuals, whether or not they have carefully thought out beforehand the conditions and the inner circumstances under which they have been prompted to take to the spiritual way of living by the inner call to discover what seems to be hidden in and is above nature. There is no circumlocution, no periphrasis, no superficial statements or throwing of unnecessary sidelights in his writings, but a clear-cut, well-defined and open path free from all mystifications and ambiguities is laid before the seeker with an intention not merely to give information but to enlighten and guide him at every step of his sadhana. His style and expression are remarkably simple, surging from the heart and the feeling of one who has had not only a vision of the perfection and the delight of God-Being but who possesses an insight into the sufferings of man, the depth of his ignorance which is hard to circumvent, and the need for illumination in the human world to lead a normal life—not only physical, mental and moral, but also spiritual, extended outward in the society, the nation and the world. The entire mass of his teachings is powerfully charged with the dominant spiritual note that all forms of life in society, whether individual or collective,

have ultimately to be based on and derive meaning and inspiration from the recognition of a boundless existence deeper than all the visible and the conceivable orders of nature. Fired with a deep anxiety to relieve the world of ignorance and pain, Swami Sivananda girt up his loins to face the situation in the best possible manner open to him, and spared no pains in harnessing all his energy for the noble divine purpose which he set before himself. His works are illustrative of almost every way of contacting man through literature—metaphysics, ethics, religion, mysticism, psychology, parables, stories, catechism, yoga, prayer, and ritual.

The student qualified to approach his spiritual literature is, as with the Yoga Vasishtha, neither one who is totally ignorant of spiritual values nor one who has attained to the apex of spiritual life. The aspirant endowed with the ethical and the moral qualifications of *yama*, *niyama* and *sadhana-chatushtaya*, who has, by his purity of mind, received monitions as to the existence of a higher life and is stirred with the zeal to grasp it and realise it in his own life, but is at the same time troubled by incapacities, doubts and lack of knowledge in regard to the proper method of approaching it and the spiritual way of conducting himself, should turn to the works of Swami Sivananda. As is usually the case with eminent spiritual philosophies and yoga techniques, most of his writings begin with a vivid and clear portrayal of the presence and the nature of suffering in the world, the detection of which is the first prerequisite and the fundamental stage of a spiritual way of life. Like Sankara, the philosopher, Swami Sivananda boldly affirms the existence of a Supreme Absolute, second to which there

can be none; and like the Buddha, he gives a colourful picture of the character of pain in life, makes a careful diagnosis of the cause of this pain, a detailed analysis of human psychical conditions, and delineates the laying out of the path running up to the ultimate perfection and peace of man, together with a dignified description of the characteristics of his final destiny.

The Philosophic Life

Swami Sivananda emphasises that life is the working out of a philosophy, and philosophy is the unravelling of the mystery of existence, an all-round consideration of the deeper implications of experience and not merely an arising of the mansions of logical systems. Philosophy is more a digging deep into the abyss of life than a flying into the air of abstract speculation. Swami Sivananda recognises that any philosophy divested of human concerns is, in the end, doomed to failure and can never appeal to the restless and inquisitive spirit of man. Philosophy, religion and life mean to him one and the same thing, and they signify not any unworldly or otherworldly concepts, but move in close association with man's demands for hunger and love, fame and power, value for life, concern for others and regard for oneself, and his ultimate aspiration for immortality in Brahman. The ringing tone of Swami Sivananda's life and teachings is that of a supernal love based on proper understanding, a love in which the obstructing barrier between man and man is broken open, and in which one easily discovers a happy way of participating in the life of others in the world.

Endless hope, which seems to be the only foundation of all human enterprises, bespeaks the remote possibility, if not the immediate fact, of a union of the personal will with the Universal Law of God. It is this love and this meaning of hope and aspiration that can assure a world brotherhood, a world government based on universal sympathy and altruistic considerations. It is this principle of humanitarianism, this relevance to the ultimate good of the human individual, and an acute perception of the necessity of rousing mankind to the presence of an Absolute, an Almighty God, that characterise the life and teachings of Swami Sivananda.

It is said that the Vedas are infinite, a statement which conveys the idea that knowledge is endless and the wonder of creation impenetrable. The scripture declares that there is no limit to God's glories and there is no cessation of man's endeavour to comprehend His nature and the path leading to Him. Swami Sivananda caught the significance of this great truth and so never felt that spiritual teachings can have an end, that one can ever be tired of teaching the spiritual way of life or of listening to spiritual instructions, or that there could be a limit to the carefulness with which the Guru has to look after the welfare of his disciples at every stage. The whole of life is teeming with spiritual import, and hence every moment is an opportunity for sadhana, an occasion to exercise unlimited caution in regard to one's spiritual practices and the chances of temptations, the thwarting, sidetracking and stagnation of mind and spirit in one's life. The philosophic life is not a strange way of deportment, but the normal flow of a well-

adjusted and perfected activity in the healthy maturity of seasoned knowledge and profound insight into Truth.

The Secret of World Peace

The inspiring teachings of Swami Sivananda constitute one long song of liberation—the liberation of the individual, the society, the community, the nation and the world—physically, intellectually, morally and spiritually. The central burden of this eternal song of all-round freedom is peace—peace to all, peace everywhere, by learning and imbibing the lesson that Life is One. Every breath that flows from man, every movement of his limbs, every turn of his behaviour, is a direct or indirect effort towards the reconstruction of his personality to suit a better purpose, to bring about an easier and happier condition of life, with liberty and peace as its emblems.

Man represents a microscopic specimen of what happens in the gigantic cosmos on a colossal scale. The aspirations, the changes in the forms of consciousness, the attempt to reach unity, freedom and happiness, which are seen to be vigorously active in man, can also be seen to be busy in the fulfilment of the purpose of the cosmos. In one's own personal life, in society and in the state, man struggles to manifest a regular system and order, abolishing chaos and confusion, an intense passion for the firm establishment of which seems to be innate in the very structure of all beings, especially in self-conscious beings in whom the development of intelligence has come to the stage of displaying the ability to know the difference between right and wrong, true and false. The universe does the same thing, with this difference that, while man strives

with insufficient knowledge, the universe moves freely with an unrestricted expression of this tendency to realise the highest truth, goodness and freedom in its own bosom.

The changes that take place in the parts are felt in the constitution of the whole. As every cell in the human body organises itself to live in accordance with the law that regulates the whole body, and as every error on the part of a cell in the execution of its meaning brings about a reaction from the entire body with the purpose of setting right the wrong that has entered into its being, so does the cosmic law correct the errors committed by the individuals constituting the cosmos. Small errors cause mild reactions, and great wrongs lead to tremendous upheavals. Even the so-called unobserved acts in the grosser world produce mighty vibrations in the subtler regions.

The entire teaching and activity of Swami Sivananda centres round an untiring stress on the possibility of individual and world peace on the basis of a knowledge and practice of this dharma, this law eternal, this rule of unity in every level of existence, in every grade of society, in every individual, every man, woman and child. This is his clarion call—the ceaseless warning to humanity that peace cannot be had by warfare, by exploitation, by domination or competition, for these bursting waves on the surface are raised by the storms of desire and greed, and that there can be no rest for man until these violent commotions cease through understanding and cooperation. Man's concept of pleasure is nothing but an outcome of his erroneous judgment of a present good, his desire is the result of a wrong idea of a future good, his pain is the consequence of a false notion of a present evil, and his fear is the corollary

of a mistaken evaluation of the nature of a future evil. All passions and their several variations are veritable diseases brought on by erroneous thinking. These are to be eradicated, for they are irrational and founded on ignorance. Man needs proper education of his faculties in the direction of the real and the good in the highest sense. The unfailing working of the classes of society and the stages of life, according to their dharma, is essential for manifesting in everyday life the peace which is at the bottom of man, the law of God which sustains all things, and for bringing Heaven itself here on Earth. For Swami Sivananda, every form of life can be transformed into a Yoga of the Divine, provided the requisite knowledge is acquired by study, contemplation and service.

The revered Mahatma Gandhi did a signal service not only in the field of politics but also in religion, philosophy and ethics, when he emphasised the aspect of Truth as God. In the assertion commonly made, viz., God is Truth, the judgment involved is likely to become questionable, for the predicate 'Truth' is referred to 'God' whose existence is presupposed or taken for granted. Naturally, those to whom the existence of God has not become an article of faith and whose rational attitude has not been convinced of it will take the assertion 'God is Truth' as not a demonstrated fact but a hypothetical proposition. But in the asseveration 'Truth is God' no such sublime inconsequence is involved, for none can deny that there is such a thing as Truth. And this Truth is identified with what we have to understand by God. Truth is the law of the universe. This law is not blind, but is intelligence itself operating everywhere. Law and law-giver in this case are

one. And likewise, to Swami Sivananda, Truth is not merely speaking the truth but 'That which is'. It is the unchanging, infinite and eternal Substance, which is at once the law and the love governing and guiding man, society, nation and world. The true significance of this Truth and of this Love is not properly assimilated in ordinary man's life, but is fully realised in the life of the superman who is not only a world ruler but also a Self ruler. It is not Nietzsche's egoistic elevation of man to power but the Self-realised sage, a veritable embodiment of the Divine, that is the ideal superman, a being who is at one and the same time a man of the world and a representative of the Absolute.

True knowledge is a knowledge of things in their essences, in their relation to the universe, in the relation of Truth. This Truth, this Law, when it is supported and protected, supports and protects everyone. "*Dharmo rakshati rakshitah.*" It is only when we realise that joy is in the fulfilment of the Law of God that we become truly free and liberated from all bondage. Dharma is the innermost nature and truth of man and of the universe, for it is the body of the Divine Will. This is real duty, and here is the secret of world peace. Swami Sivananda has been living and preaching this deathless truth, this law and order of nature, for the solidarity of the world, for all mankind to emulate and follow, and his divine mission shall be fulfilled when even a modicum of this knowledge shall succeed in throwing light into the dark corners of man's mortal nature.

Unity—The Home of Peace

Here is the essence of the law and the love that unites the world. This is the rationale behind all the gospels of world peace and the doctrines of universal love and brotherhood. Broadcasting the ancient wisdom of India, the wisdom that discovered the true relation of man to his environment, Swami Sivananda ceaselessly urges humanity to muster in forces for bringing about real peace in the world. All his teachings and messages are lessons in the attainment of unity by the integration of personality in the consciousness of the Absolute. The aim of life is the practical realisation of the eternal spiritual essence which finds itself in man in a very limited and obscure form. Every individual tries to stretch beyond himself by desiring, aspiring, longing. Desire of any kind is a disclosure, in one's conscious states, that there is something wanting, something lacking, something inadequate. Give the whole world to man; he will not be satisfied. Why? Because there is that something, beyond the world, lying outside the possession of any Earthly individual. Give him the whole of the heavens; he will still be dissatisfied because there is yet an unfulfilled want. This grievous mishap is the direct result of man's ignorance of his unity with creation. "For the magnanimous, the whole world is one family," says the scripture. There can be no peace for man unless he begins to recognise, live and serve his vast surroundings as his own Self, until he does his best at least to approximate his conduct in daily life to this sublime ideal. Peace is only in God, and the peace which we can hope to enjoy in this world depends upon the extent to which we have succeeded

in reading and manifesting this infinitude of the Spirit in our social, national and world relations. This achievement is not only a consequence of the knowledge and experience of Truth by man, but also a necessary condition of his attaining any success in his endless struggle for perfection. This is the teaching, the religion, the ethics, the philosophy and the gospel of Swami Sivananda to every son and daughter of this Earth, of every station in society. This is the hope of humanity.

Towards this end, Swami Sivananda has urged the philosophers of the world to join hands and work together as a confederation of higher rational and spiritual forces. He sends his message: "If a major world catastrophe is to be prevented in time, the foremost philosophers of the world must come forward. Theirs is this sacred duty; for the Light of Divine Knowledge, the radiance of the Universal Power that holds all beings together, that supports the whole universe and sustains it, shines through them." "It is not enough today if His Message is delivered on a battlefield, or on a Mount, or in a holy place, and allowed to take its own time to spread far and wide. Simultaneously, all over the world, everybody should hear the Word of God, and take to the right path. This is possible only through the agency of a united body of world philosophers, and therefore Divine intervention might well take that form." "Without in any way altering the fundamentals of religion, they will be able to bring about a synthesis of all religions, each religion taking what is the best from the others. Thus will a World Order emerge, through a world religion." "This World Philosophical Congress will provide the correct base for scientists, economists and politicians to build their

mansions on. Thus guided by philosophers, scientists will work for the happiness and welfare of humanity; economists will plan for the commonwealth; politicians will discover ways and means of living at peace and maintaining the peace of the world.”